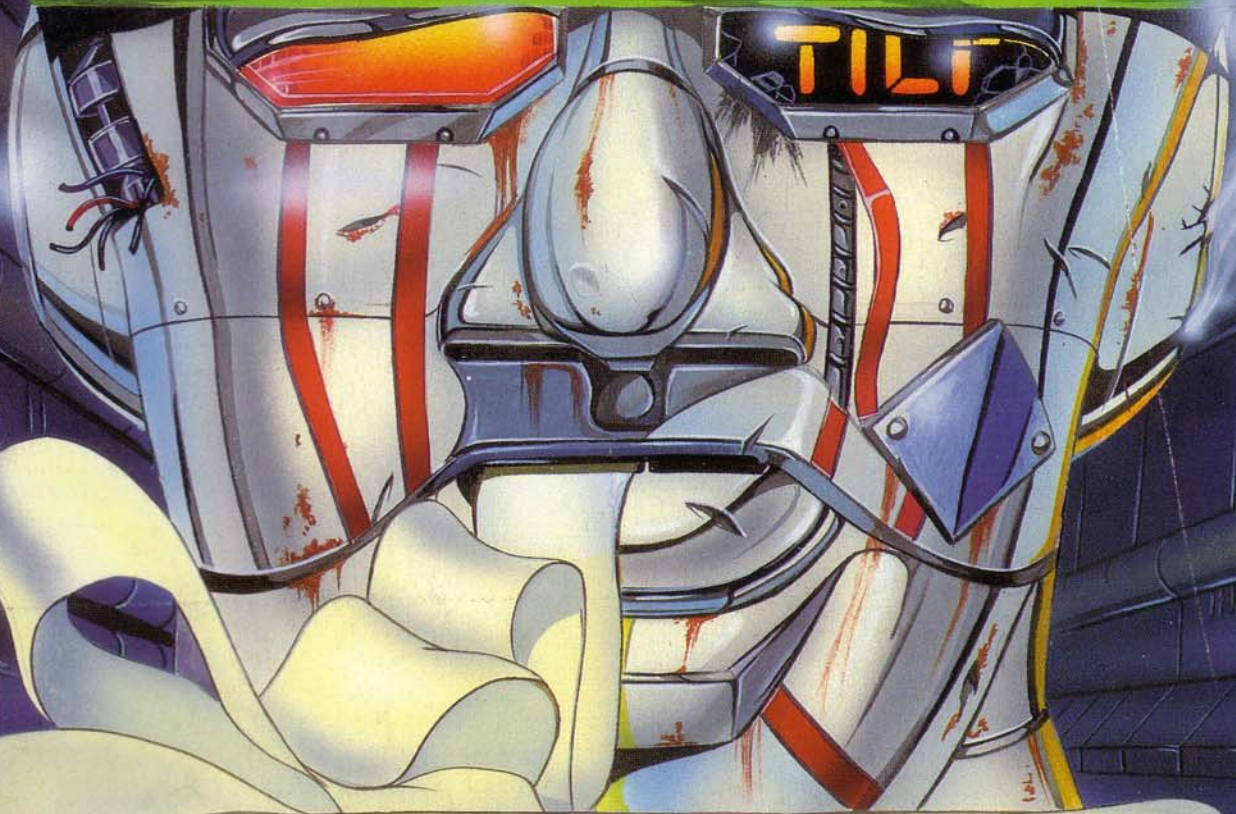# ACUTE
PARANOIA
PARANOIA

New Rules to Ignore!
New Secret Societies!
Bots as Player Characters!
Psychological Tests!

TILT

Chock Full of Adventures!
Me and My Shadow, Mark IV • Botbusters • The Harder They Clone • Warriors of the Nightcycle • An ARD Day's Night • Plus Many Brief "Code 7" Adventures

Edited by Greg Costikyan and Ken Rolston

ACUTE PARANOIA
PARANOIA

WARNING: The contents of this volume are classified ULTRAVIOLET. If you are of clearance VIOLET or below and read any part, you may execute yourself now (your clone will be commended for your loyalty), or you may report to Internal Security (Psychiatric Division), where all memory of what you have read (and certain motor functions) will be painlessly excised from your mind.

Ken Rolston
Development/Psychoanalytical Research

Greg Costikyan
Editing/Consulting Psychiatry

Jim Holloway
Cover Art/Freudian Interpretation

Jim Holloway and **Russ Steffens**
Interior Illustration/Rorschach Tests

**Loring Eutemey, Stephen Crane,
Cheryl Green,** and **Kevin Wilkins**
Graphics/Family Counseling

Dan Gelber, Greg Costikyan, Eric Goldberg,
and **Ken Rolston**
Original System Design and Development

The Computer
Electroshock Therapy

CONTENTS

Now what have you gotten yourself into?
Acute Paranoia, huh?

Look, in this section we're supposed to tell you how to use this book, but we'll be straight with you — we haven't any idea how anyone could use all the wonderful ideas in this crowning achievement of roleplaying game design. You'll probably be just like us, paging bewilderedly through the cornucopia of inspirational ideas, dazzled and awed by the brilliance displayed.

But we can suggest one really effective strategy: deal with the pullouts first.

This book has not one, but two pullout sections.

We put pullout sections in most all of our *PARANOIA* supplements. But do you suppose people pull those sections out? After all the trouble we go to organizing them and everything? Nope. God forbid that they should wreck the book they paid good money for by tearing pages out of the center.

C'mon. You can do it. Just bend those staples up and pull out those two pullout sections. They're numbered separately and everything.

Pages A1-A8 are player and gamemaster materials to be chopped up and used with the wonderful adventures in **Acute Paranoia**. If you are cleared to use duplicating machines, make copies and chop up the copies, leaving the originals in pristine condition so you can proudly display them to bored grandchildren in your declining years.

Pages B1-B8 are the nifty rules for using bots as player characters. Yank 'em out, read 'em, then give 'em to your players. The information in this pullout is cleared for RED-level Troubleshooters.

Now that you have taken care of the pullouts, read the rest of the book. The first section is full of new details of life in these Alpha Complexes — all about mental health and secret societies. Read this stuff, introduce it into your *PARANOIA* adventures, and be the envy of every kid on the block.

The second section is a mid-range mammoth adventure, ''Me and My Shadow, Mark IV''. It is roughly equivalent to a full-scale adventure pack. (Whatta value!) Read it and run it.

The third section is a modestly splendid adventure, ''Botbusters'', which features bots as player characters. What a wonderful opportunity to use the swell new bot-as-player-character rules provided as a pullout! And predesigned bot characters are included (see pages A3-A6)! It's enough to make you cry, isn't it?

The fourth section introduces our line of mini-adventures — the ''Code Seven'' series. ''Code Seven'' scenarios are sort of Reader's Digest condensed versions of epic adventures. Since they're short, we can print lots of them and you can read them quick. Neat, huh?

These bad ideas are lovingly crafted by the inspired authors of previous *PARANOIA* masterpieces — Greg Costikyan, Curtis Smith, John M. Ford, Allen Varney and Warren Spector — and by newer luminaries in the field of depraved game design — Doug Kaufman, Dan Palter, Stephen Crane, and Kevin Wilkins.

What an incredible embarrassment of riches! What a generous bounty vouchsafed unto you by West End Games! Oh, how happy you must be!

When you calm down, get to work. Start having fun. Immediately.

Thank you for your cooperation.

:TITLE = BIOSKETCH/TREASON ALERT
:TYPE = BACKGROUND/SUMMARY
:CONFIGURATION = HARDCOPY PRINTOUT
:SOURCE = PERSONNEL.TRAITOR.SUBSYSTEM
:SECURITY = ULTRAVIOLET. This information restricted.
If your security clearance is below Ultraviolet, report immediately to nearest termination center.

Biographical Sketches and Criminal Records of the Authors

Ken Rolston
Fanatic folkie and all-around strange guy, Uncle Ken's crazed leer and irrepressibly tasteless humor permeate the entire *PARANOIA* line.

Erick Wujcik
Immoderate genius and designer of *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*, the roleplaying game, Erick is also the author of the soon-to-be-released *PARANOIA* adventure, **Clones in Space**, which you're gonna love, particularly the charts for explosive decompression in space. Yuuk.

Steven Maurer
Reformed hacker and systems doctor, Steven coyly observes that a clone in asbestos may be no more than stunned by a tacnuke at ground zero. Miraculous, we agree.

Steve Gilbert
West End designer-developer and laconic wit, the conceptual grandeur of Steve's perverse impulses can be divined in several other *PARANOIA* supplements.

Peter Corless
Computer jockey and erstwhile developer-graphic artist for West End, Peter's peculiarly light-hearted fits of demonic possession are a distinctive element of *PARANOIA* humor.

Greg Costikyan
Perennial boy-wonder and original co-designer of *PARANOIA*, Greg dreams of bringing the Gospel of Gaming to boys and girls everywhere and making the world safe for Brand-X politics.

Dennis Sustare
Designer of such visionary RPGs as *Bunnies and Burrows* and *Swordbearer*, Dennis is slumming when he hangs around with low-lifes like us *PARANOIA* types.

Allen Varney and **Warren Spector**
Co-designers of **Send in the Clones** and Big Time Game Pros with another honored competitor, these guys have more bad ideas than they know what to do with, so they send them to us — we always seem to find something to do with them.

Dan Palter
Co-designer of **Killer Angels**, which teaches more about the Gettysburg campaign than anyone could possibly want to know, Dan is the free universe's leading authority on women's shoes, the US tax code, and World War II orders of battle.

Doug Kaufman
A designer-developer celebrated for dignity *and* restraint, Doug is the Champion of Good Taste and Decency in *PARANOIA*. His influence is, of course, scarcely detectable, even in his own work.

John M. Ford
Real Author and designer of **The Yellow Clearance Black Box Blues**, John occasionally likes to take a break from the fast-paced literary life and produce shameless game flourishes for us.

Curtis Smith
Designer of **Vapors Don't Shoot Back** and Big Time Freelance Game Pro, Curtis is the only guy we know who can offer to show slides of his trip to Borneo at meetings of the Gentleman Adventurers' Club.

Stephen Crane
West End graphic designer and informal overseer of *PARANOIA'S* lyrical graphic presentation. Smears of Big Steve's discerning taste and exotic eat-in lunches can be seen in all our *PARANOIA* products.

Kevin Wilkins
West End graphic designer, ex-gun owner, and established point source of bizarre emanations, Kevin's Last Wave sensibilities, sadly underutilized in our historical World War II game designs, reach the acme of crazed prodigality in *PARANOIA'S* darkly humorous future.

SANITY TESTS

by Erick Wujcik

The Computer must continually assure itself that all personnel are mentally sound. It does this by continually trying to drive them crazy. Here are some questions to test the mental stability of *PARANOIA* characters.

These tests are useful when:

• An adventure is moving too slowly.

• An adventure is moving too fast. The Computer may break in on furious action to ask stupid questions like these. Such intrusive irrelevance helps make The Computer's insanity obvious.

• The PCs may occasionally encounter roadblocks where psychological spot-checks are conducted (much like drunk or license checks by our real-world Internal Security officers).

• If you want to run a very brief adventure for one player. Characters are sometimes called in for an intensive battery of tests.

Maintaining Fear and Ignorance

Bear in mind that fundamental *PARANOIA* gamemaster adage: ignorance and fear... fear and ignorance. In this case you really want to stress the *fear*. Terror is nice. Absolute gibbering hysterical horror is optimum.

First, pay attention to the setting. Describe a room that is dark, yet forbidding. Bleak, yet cruel. A single chair (with leathery straps and stains of dark brown), black walls, lit by the glare of a single terminal. That's the kind of atmosphere that encourages true loyalty to The Computer.

As a gamemaster you can use a variety of props to heighten the overall effect. If you really want to pressure the players, use a tape recorder. Place the microphone close to the player's mouth and announce: "For your protection, your responses are being recorded by the Office of Joyful Affirmation, Bureau of Internal Security. Please speak clearly!"

Remember, The Computer will be interested in conducting these tests frequently. One strategy is to ask identical questions over a series of interviews and compare the results. Inconsistent answers, or answers identical to those of known traitors, may result in treason points.

On the other hand, phew!, that sounds like a lot of work! What self-respecting GM is going to try to remember all that trivia? Fortunately the solution is simple. Make the players submit their answers in writing. And don't complain about illegible or incomplete answers. Instead,
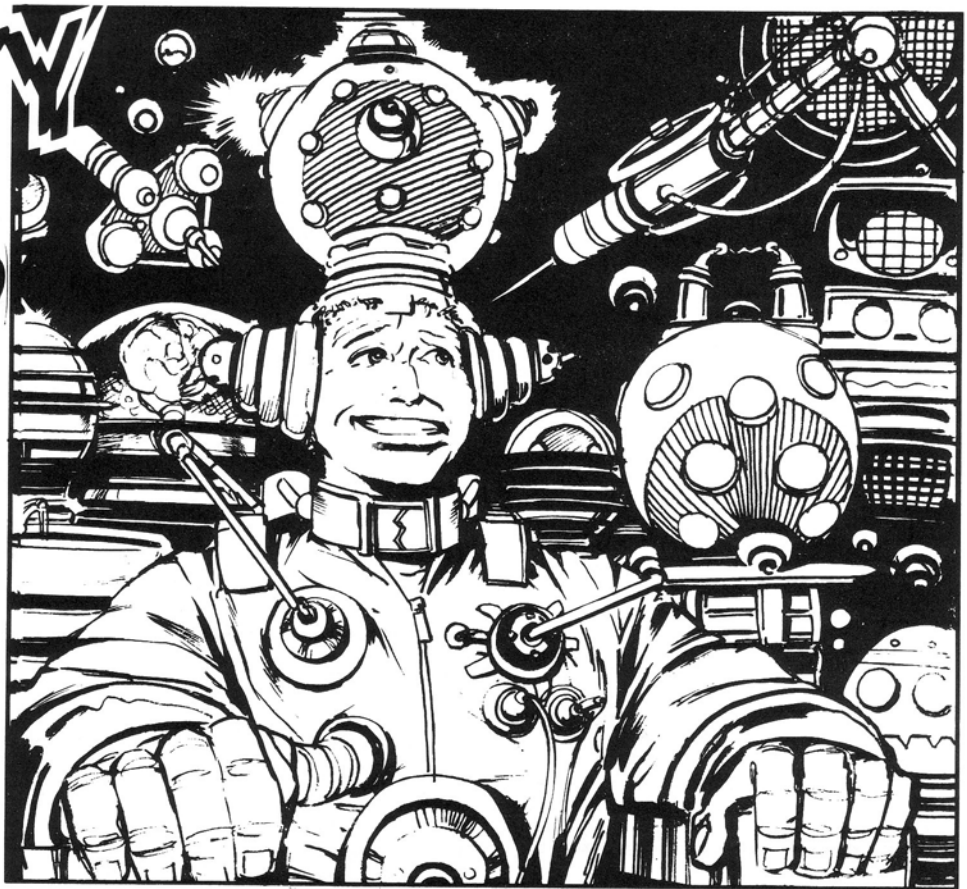
"Uh, could you repeat the question, Friend Computer, sir?"

just when things are getting interesting, have The Computer interrupt the proceedings. "Citizen! Is this an 'r' or 't'?" Yell loudly while pushing the guilty document in front of the player's nose.

Another useful intimidation tool is a time limit. Either shout out a countdown or hold up cards with numbers on them, explaining that they are appearing on the terminal screen. Skipping count-down numbers is cruel but fun. ("Citizen! This is a test. What is the set of the union of all sets which include themselves? THREE! TWO! ONE! I'm sorry, your time is up. Thank you for your cooperation.")

Or you can hook the PCs up to a lie-detector. Don't let them know whether the machine registers a response as truth or a lie. Simply roll dice, mutter a bit, and make a few notes on paper. You could have the personnel operating the lie detector behave as though the unit might be malfunctioning:

Tech: If The Computer is your *best* friend, who is your next best friend?

PC: Blah, blah.

Tech: (Gazes silently at the display. Adjusts a few knobs. Repeats the question. Adjusts a few knobs. Gazes silently at the display. Leans over, clicks open an inspection panel, and peers inside thoughtfully. Closes panel. Stares at the display. Gives multicorder a murderous *"Thwack!"* with the flat of his hand. [Whack the table hard. Make your players jump.] Smiles in satisfaction, makes notes, then blandly continues questioning.)

The results of all these tests are somewhat nebulous. Remember that The Computer is constantly looking for signs of a conspiracy.

Results that are all alike will bespeak a traitorous degree of collaboration among the PCs. Likewise, if all answers are unique this may indicate that the clones are answering differently deliberately. Just to be sure, ask everyone in the group, "What is the sum of 2 plus 2?" The answers are sure to be significant.

One final note. The Computer will never reveal actual answers or results.

Test One: Mathematical and Deductive Ability

These are all straight math questions. The Computer will check for errors but is more interested in *how* the question is answered. A wrong answer may assure The Computer that the character is actually as stupid as he's supposed to be.

Roll on the table below to determine the kind of math question posed:

01-05	Single digit addition
06-10	Single digit subtraction
11-15	Double digit addition
16-20	Double digit subtraction
21-25	Single digit multiplication
26-30	Single digit division
31-40	Convert fraction to percentile
41-50	Geometry
51-80	Complex mathematics
81-90	Very complex mathematics
91-00	Impossible mathematics

Examples: (Simple division) "Citizen, this is a test. What is 15 divided by 5?" — "Thank you for your cooperation."

(Complex mathematics) "Citizen, this is a

test. What is the product of 1578.4, 908.12 and 23.01?'' — ''Thank you for your cooperation.''

(Very complex mathematics) ''Citizen, this is a test. What is the integral with respect to y of $[y^x \cos x \sin y + x^y \sin x \cos y]dy$?'' — ''Thank you for your cooperation.''

(Impossible mathematics) ''Citizen, this is a test. What is the final digit of 'pi'?'' — ''Thank you for your cooperation.''

Incidently, calculus is security clearance BLUE. If anyone actually manages to correctly answer a very complex math question, have him executed.

Test Two: Word Association

''This is a simple word association test. I will say a word; you will respond with the first word that comes to your mind.''
GM: Choose a couple from the list below.

1. Cat	8. Tree	15. Bacon
2. Horse	9. Car	16. Mother
3. Plate	10. Mustard	17. Dinner
4. Pencil	11. Grass	18. Finger
5. Hand	12. Teacher	19. Wood
6. Food	13. Father	20. Death
7. Computer	14. Missile	21. War

''Thank you for your cooperation!''
Note that merely knowing what some of these terms mean is treason.

Test Three: Personality Test

''This is a simple personality test. Think about your answers, and answer freely.''
The Computer will ask only one or two of these questions at a time. It should also keep asking for clarification. (''That's interesting. Why do you feel that way?'') Often the request for clarification may occur hours or days later, at an awkward or embarassing time.

1. If you were a High Programmer, what would you wish for?
2. What was the nicest thing about being an INFRARED?
3. What three things would you look for if you found a fellow Citizen unhappy?
4. Would you rather execute a traitor or let him escape, hoping to capture and cure him of his delusions?
5. How do you feel life in Alpha Complex can be improved? (GM: It can't be. Alpha Complex is a utopia. Any other answer is treason.)
6. Do you think traitors are intrinsically evil, or are they just normal human beings who have been misled?
7. Which do you think would be the most fun: to be a human, a bot, or The Computer?
8. Do you think that people are smarter than computers?
9. Do you think that computers bleed like people?
10. Do you think that killing is necessary under some conditions?
11. If The Computer is your best friend, who is your next best friend?
12. Do you think you deserve a higher security level?
13. Why do you think The Computer has decided that belonging to a secret society is treason?
14. Are you hopeful about the future?

''Thank you for your cooperation!''

''Now let's see, the square pegs go in the... holes?!!''

Test Four: More Personality Tests

''Please answer 'yes' or 'no' to the following questions.''
The Computer will ask three or four of these.

1. I have had very strange experiences.
2. I have had periods when I can't remember what I was doing.
3. I have used drugs excessively.
4. Sometimes my head seems to hurt all over.
5. I feel anxiety about something all the time.
6. Sometimes I want things strongly enough to steal them.
7. I am afraid of losing my mind.
8. I have strange thoughts.
9. I sometimes feel like killing other clones.
10. I feel that the world would be better without me.

''Thank you for your cooperation!''

Test Five: Cognitive Skills

Take any of the books from *PARANOIA* or an adventure, and hold it up, pointing to one of the illustrations. Say:
''This is a test of your imagination and creativity.''
or
''This is a test of your ability to recognize treasonous thinking. This is a very important skill, since it helps us recognize traitors and cure them with political therapy.''
or
''You are being considered for an important assignment. This is a test of your skill as a [deleted for security reasons]. Please identify the location of the [deleted for security reasons] in this picture.''

Then continue: ''Look at this picture and tell a little story explaining what is happening in the picture.''
or
''List ten words that describe your feelings about the subject of this picture.''
or
''Please identify which of these two pictures contain scenes similar to events in your own life.'' Important: Only hold up one picture!

Handy-Dandy Sanity Test Results Table

After any psytest session, The Computer may wish to make certain recommendations. The more unpleasant ones are generally carried out by the rarely-seen GREEN-security Ego Enforcers (Bureau of Brain Reclamation, Department of Housing Preservation & Development and Mind Control). When in doubt, roll on the following table:

01-02. Ego Enforcers arrive. They blind-fold, straight-jacket, and carry away the clone. After a long journey including long drops in elevators, hikes down dusty-smelling stairways, and interminable transbot rides, the clone arrives in a retraining center. New clone is activated. Subsequently, the players will encounter the old clone as a YELLOW-level section chief in CPU. Petty revenge toward old enemies is mandatory.

03-09. Clone is led to a small room occupied only by a strange-looking docbot. The docbot will not initiate conversation but will respond to all clone questions and statements with a psychotherapeutic technique known as reflection, e.g.:

Clone: Why am I here?
Psychbot: Why do you ask why you are here?
Clone: Umm... Because The Computer told me to come here.
Psychbot: How do you feel about The Computer?
Clone: The Computer is my friend!
Psychbot: Do you worry about not having enough friends?
Clone: Uh... no.
Psychbot: Do you always answer negatively?
Clone: No.
Psychbot: Do you always answer negatively?
Clone: No.
Psychbot: Do you always answer negatively?
Clone: Yes!
Psychbot: Is that why you secretly hate The Computer?

And so on... Keep this up until the clone stops talking, attempts to escape, or attacks the psychbot. Then roll again on this table.

10-15. The Computer speaks! "Citizen! Report immediately for Political Therapy Counseling! Report to Sector IOB, Room 9001! Immediately!" Political therapy is code for interrogation; see "Telescopalmine" in the "Better Living Through Chemistry" article.

11-40. Drug therapy. A bottle of pills rolls into the nearest disbursement tray. Roll on the Drug Therapy Table below. Failure to take allotted pharmaceuticals is treason! See the "Better Living Through Chemistry" article.

41-85. The Computer speaks! "Citizen! Your psychological profile is now being processed. Standby for therapeutic recommendations!" There is a long, ominous period of silence. Finally The Computer speaks! "That is all! Dismissed!" Award treason points for any treasonous activity that took place during the wait. Nothing else happens. Re-administer the test whenever possible.

86-91. Mind rehabilitation. Ego Enforcers arrive in force (outnumbering the mentally ill clones by at least 3 to 1). Clones are removed to a nearby interrogation room where a battery of electro-shock therapy, massive drug injections, and bombardment by sub-sonic "Love the Computer" slogans is administered. Clones are released one cycle later no worse for the wear, other than uncontrollable shaking and a tendency to snap to attention when anyone says "Computer."

92-94. The entire mission group (everyone contaminated by the unstable clone) is enrolled in Computer Happiness School. They spend two complete cycles without food or lavatory facilities in a barren room dominated by dozens of computer terminals. The GM should use anything he knows about EST, rolfing, primal scream, marathon sessions, or regression therapy to create a memorable experience for the clones.

95-96. Twenty-five credit party. A group of heavily armed and armored BLUE-clearance political therapy officers appear. The clones are disarmed and kept under constant surveillance (and gunsights). Small parcels containing party hats, song books, and twenty-five credits each are distributed to each clone. The senior officer says, "Citizens! The Computer has determined that you are in need of a Rest and Recreation period. Therefore you will have a party. Now! Failing to have a good time is a treasonous offense punishable by summary execution." Further conversation with the grim-faced political therapy officers will reveal that the clones have a limited amount of time to "have a good time" and "spend all the money foolishly and with gay abandon." Attempts to buy useful things or indulge in bribery with the credits will *not* be taken lightly. Keep this up until it stops being fun.

97-98. Reassignment. Any clone with suspicious test results is taken away. A replacement clone appears. Anyone asking what happened to the clone who was "reassigned" is also taken away. A replacement clone appears.

99. Corrective surgery. BLUE-level officers from HPD & Mind Control appear in force. They smile, laugh, and assure the clone of his extreme good fortune. They then take him away and remove parts of his brain. When he returns he'll be wearing an enormous head bandage and will have lost all skills. All attributes except strength and believability are halved.

00. A combined force of Vulture Troopers, Ego Enforcers, IntSec officers, and Political Therapy officers shows up. They surround the clone in question and shush everyone else (with live ammunition if necessary). When everything is completely quiet, the ranking IntSec officer steps forward and says, "Citizen! Your time has come. In this, your finest hour," (other clones weep silently... cone rifle barrels do not waver) "what words do you have to leave for your friend, The Computer?" Make sure that you write down the player's response *exactly*. Be sure to include gems like "ummm" and "who me?" and "what do they want?" This then becomes the new "slogan of the month". At regular intervals for the next month, Computer speakers all over the complex come alive with scratchy martial music. Then, the clone's precious pearls of wisdom are repeated. Finally, an announcer identifies the speaker. No matter how stupid or traitorous it sounds, repeat it exactly!

Drug Therapy Table

01-20	Sandallathon tablets
21-22	Sandallathon capsules
23-28	Gelgernine tablets
29-30	Gelgernine capsules
31-35	Visomorpain tablets
36-40	Benitridin tablets
41-43	Benitridin capsules
44-50	Xanitrick tablets
51-55	Asperquaint tablets
56-57	Asperquaint capsules
58-60	Thymoglandin tablets
61-65	Zybenzaphrene tablets
66-67	Zybenzaphrene capsules
68-70	Pyroxidine tablets
71-95	Multiple drug prescription. Roll twice more.
96-00	Massive drug therapy. Roll four times more.

HAPPINESS
IS
MANDATORY.

BETTER LIVING THROUGH CHEMISTRY

by Erick Wujcik

Note: *We don't want anyone to think we're encouraging the use of real-world drugs. We aren't. Indeed, if you read this article, you'll find that we portray these drugs as horribly dangerous, with horrendous side- and after-effects, producing potentially irreparable organic damage, with addiction an ever-present possibility.*

This article, therefore, should in no way be construed to imply that we support, condone, or suggest the use of any illegal drug.

To sum up then —
don't take drugs,
buy PARANOIA products.

Note: *These rules are optional. Do not use them if you don't want to. We wonder why we need to tell you this, since you don't have to use any rule you don't want to.*

Actually, the description of INFRARED life in Alpha Complex as presented in the original books is somewhat flawed. The traitors responsible have been detected. Punishment is imminent. What follows is a much more accurate view of INFRARED life as it *really* is:

Rise with hundreds of others in the communal barracks. Take wakey-wakey pill. Wash. Eat breakfast in communal dining hall. Take nutritional supplements. Go to work in the Foot Vats. Eat lunch in the communal dining hall. Take behavior modifiers and motivational elevators. Work second shift in the Food Vats. Take mood depressives. Eat dinner in the communal dining hall. Take truth accelerator pill. Participate in group confession and guilt participation. Take
mood elevator pill. Watch Teela O'Malley adventures in communal viewing lounge. Take sleepy-sleepy pill. Sleep.

Some gamemasters may have heard of a game, some kind of medieval fantasy, where magical potions, scrolls and spells are common currency. Yeah! That game. Well, drugs are the **PARANOIA** equivalent. Clones can steal, horde and use drugs in the same way that characters in that *other* game covet magical treasures. Except that clones die like flies.

The Pharmaceutical Code

1. It is the duty of all Citizens to remain loyal to The Computer.
2. Loyal Citizens are happy when they serve The Computer.
3. Unhappy Citizens are disloyal Citizens.

Q: Citizen, are you happy?
A: Yes, friend Computer!
Q: Citizen, would you like some drugs?
A: Yes, friend Computer!

Availability

The Computer will generously provide all loyal Citizens with a wide variety of drugs. Each drug has a security clearance; any Citizen may request drugs of his own or lower clearance. In addition, The Computer and docbots will often prescribe higher-clearance drugs when they feel a Citizen requires pharmaceutical treatment. When a docbot prescribes drugs, it usually administers it directly by sticking a needle into the subject patient without warning.

Many Computer terminals have drug dispensing slots. These will discharge 24-tablet bottles. Medical kits often contain six or more syringes of common drugs.

All drug bottles and syringes are clearly labelled with the instructions and the name and quantity of the contents. For example, a bottle of Gelgernine tablets would be labelled:

24 Gelgernine Tablets
HAPPY LIFE
Take one (or more) when not happy.

Use

Characters should learn to use drugs as a tool. Why? Because The Computer encourages drug use. If The Computer says that taking drugs is a sign of loyalty then only Commie traitors would refuse to take their pills.

Also, taking drugs regularly helps you build up immunities. Users will find that the side-effects of drug use will decline. There's also the advantage of appearing to be a drugged-out, brain-burned addict. High Programmers tend not to trust you with important (and dangerous) missions. No one else will trust you, either. This encourages everyone to obey one of The Computer's most important dicta. In other words, by being untrustworthy, you are encouraging obedience to The Computer. This is called loyalty. Or spurious logic.

Of course, if you take drugs for a long time you'll get addicted. But since there's lots of drugs that shouldn't be a problem — at least

"Wow, man... What a rush!"

until the drugs run out — or until The Computer goes on a prohibition binge.

Durations

How long a clone is affected by a particular drug depends on a great many factors: clone size and endurance, drug type, size, purity, delivery system, environment... In fact, there are just too many factors to keep track of. That means we can do whatever we want! The only important consideration for drug duration is the *fun factor*: as long as it's fun, then keep it going. If it'll be more fun for it to wear off, then poof!, it's gone.

Even so, you need some way of figuring out how long some drugs last compared to other drugs. Never let it be said that us *PARANOIA* game designer types stint on this stuff. Here's a whole range of drug durations:

A While: Lasts for as long as it seems like fun. Wears off before the clone really figures out what the drug does.

A Couple of Whiles: The effect lasts long enough for the character to get used to using it. A clone will figure out just how important and valuable the effects are. Then it wears off — generally with terrible after-effects.

Half a Cycle: This is a really long time. In most *PARANOIA* campaigns a cycle is the time from one wake-up call to the next.

Full Cycle: A period of time that exceeds the expected lifetime of RED-level Troubleshooters. Otherwise figure it lasts till the end of the mission and well into the debriefing (with appropriate nasty results).

Side-Effects, Interactions and After-Effects

According to The Computer, traitors have placed toxins in certain drugs. It is the responsibility of each and every Citizen to find these corrupted products and immediately report them to The Computer. The way you find 'em is by taking 'em.

Taking two or more drugs simultaneously is a bad idea. That's because if something goes wrong it's lots harder to figure out which batch was tampered with. Also two or more drugs at the same time is often fatal. Remember! Dying before reporting defective drugs is treason!

The possible bad things caused by defective drugs include organic damage, drug insanity, and, sometimes, advancement of plot (this refers to the GM's use of drugs in order to make fun things happen). The last one is designed to be freeform so the gamemaster can liven things up whenever things get boring.

Another problem with drugs happens when clones get used to taking them. These clones are called addicts. They tend to get a little strange when cut off from a steady supply. At first it's OK, but after the first ten minutes or so bad things start to happen.

Here is a non-exhaustive list of fun side-effects. You can roll on the tables, or just choose something that sounds good.

Interaction Effects

Organic Damage Table
01-20	The Shakes
21-40	Weakness
41-60	Memory Loss
61-80	Cowardice
81-90	Power Loss
91-95	Coma
96-98	Death
99-00	Permanent Damage

The Shakes: Absolutely uncontrollable tremors. Any coordination or fine movement is difficult. Use of weapons in this state is somewhat hazardous — first, because the clone has almost no chance of hitting a target (a matter of guesswork — when to pull the trigger as the sights swing back and forth). Also, the trigger finger may spasm at an inopportune time.

Weakness: Strength goes to zip. Carrying any kind of burden (flashlight, laser pistol, stylus) becomes an incredible effort. Even walking results in a lot of whining and complaining.

Memory Loss: Them brain synapses just stop firing. In some ways this could be very handy; an "I know nothing, nothing!" attitude roughly matches The Computer's ideal of the perfect loyal Citizen.

Cowardice: In case of danger run, gibber in fear, moan and sink spinelessly to the ground, etc.

Power Loss: Power index goes to zero. No power points, no mutant powers.

Coma: The clone appears dead. The Computer calls up the next clone. Then, some time later when things are dull, the old clone wakes up. Only a really nasty GM would have a clone regain consciousness while in the middle of (choose one:) a recycling grinder, autoclave, transplant surgery, or experimental weapons target practice. Repeat, do *not* do this to your players. They will feel persecuted and put upon. They might even get a little, you know, *paranoid*.

Death: Clone X becomes Clone X + 1.

Permanent Damage: Ich! One of the above items (or something even worse) happens forever. A nasty thing for the player. You, the ever-maligned gamemaster, have our deepest sympathies. No matter how much the little devils moan and groan, you'll just have to steel yourself to the task and do this awful thing.

Insanity Table
01-15	Stunned
16-25	Anxiety Attack
26-40	Paranoia
41-50	Whacko
51-75	Visions
76-90	Pacifism
91-00	Demons

Stunned: The clone stops moving around and starts gibbering incoherently. This is usually temporary.

Anxiety Attack: The clone is unable to cope with problems. Everything difficult is just too much to handle. The usual recourse is to blame the team leader.

Paranoia: "Everyone is out to get me!" The GM will helpfully "explain" all other characters' actions in this light.

Whacko: Improvise. Foam at the mouth and get away with *anything* because all the other characters know a crazy when they see one.

Visions: Here's a great opportunity for the GM to be really creative. Invent invisible friends, let the character hear a personal "voice of The Computer" and describe the world as totally warped. A progressive approach is best. Start with minor alterations in perception and work up to full-fledged psychedelic landscapes.

Pacifism: Clone peace! Everything is sweetness and light. Armed opponents will be described as "actively seeking peace" and threats as "only superficial."

Demons: At first, the character believes his comrades are starting to change ("In this light, it looks like Roy's eyes are glowing red."). Eventually, he will see menacing demons everywhere. Any character who doesn't take this opportunity to blast everything in sight shouldn't be playing *PARANOIA.*

Typical Dispensing Dialog

GM: You wake with a start and realize that you've dozed off while The Computer was talking to you.

Clone: Do I remember *anything* about what it was saying?

GM: No. After a short, embarassed silence, The Computer speaks! "Citizen! Are you tired?"

Clone: Friend Computer! Due to mission requirements I have missed the last four sleep cycles. However, I am eager to accept any further assignments!

GM: Very good! That was really slick. The Computer speaks. "Citizen, for missing bed check you will be fined 240 credits. Please render payment at the nearest Internal Security office. However, your devotion to The Computer has not gone unnoticed. To enable continued high levels of performance, a supply of stimulant will be provided."

Clone: Thank you, friend Computer!

GM: A small bottle rolls down the chute and rattles to a halt in the dispensing tray. What are you doing?

Clone: I'll take the bottle.

GM: Okay, you're holding a small bottle.

Clone: What does it say?

GM: It says "24 Asperquaint Tablets, Take when tired, Death to The Computer and all Programmer Finks!"

Clone: WHAT??

GM: Do you want to read it out loud?

Clone: NO! No, I'll just read it quietly, to myself.

GM: Quietly, trying not to move your lips, you read "24 Asperquaint Tablets, Take when tired, Death to The Computer and all Programmer Finks!" While you're examining the bottle, The Computer speaks. "Friend Troubleshooter! Failure to promptly carry out instructions is treason!"

Clone: I quickly open the bottle and take out a pill.

GM: The bottle opens easily. You find it difficult to get a pill out. When you finally do, you find that it's lumpy, crumbly, and a strange blend of colors.

Clone: I'll examine it more closely.

GM: It seems to be poorly made. It's a swirl of green, pink and purple. It also smells like vat slime.

Clone: Friend Computer! I wish to report a case of Communist sabotage! This pill is defective!

GM: The Computer speaks! "Citizen! Please report specifics of drug defect."

Clone: The pill is all lumpy and crumbly.

GM: The Computer speaks again. "Citizen! Please report specific drug defect."

Clone: This pill smells bad.

GM: The Computer speaks more loudly! "Citizen! Please report *specific* drug defect."

Clone: (weakly) It's the wrong color...

GM: The Computer speaks slowly and patiently. "Citizen! Please report *specific* drug defects!"

Clone: What else do you want to know?

GM: The Computer, infinitely patient, speaks. "Citizen! Please report effects from drug ingestion."

Clone: But this pill is defective. It could kill me!

GM: The Computer, with righteous wrath, speaks! "Citizen! Dying before reporting drug defects is treason!"

Tranquilizers

Tranquilizer calm the fears and concerns of loyal Citizens. Usually, Citizens are given these drugs to ease any irrational fears (which is silly; in **PARANOIA** there are no *irrational* fears). Sometimes their nerves are calmed right down to total immobility. For years. Incidently, tranquilizer are common ingredients in food vat preparations.

Gelgernine
Common Name: Inner Happiness
Clearance: RED
Availability: The Computer treats Gelgernine as a reward. Successful Troubleshooters are given constant doses for weeks (or until addicted). Otherwise Gelgernine is available only through black market channels.
Effects: I'm so happy. I love living in Alpha Complex. I love The Computer. I'm happy to follow orders. I don't much care whether I live or die, I'm so happy. Hey, look, someone just shot my arm off! Isn't that wonderful?
Side-Effects: Addiction, memory loss and paranoia. Regular users can be identified by a slight tremor and a greenish foam about the mouth.
Methods of Application: Tablet (lasts a couple of whiles), capsule (time-released to last a daycycle), aerosol (white gas, used by Internal Security for cafeteria riots. Fatalities minimal, less than 30%. Lasts half a cycle).

Sandallathon
Common Name: Sleepy-Sleepy
Clearance: RED
Availability: Mandatory prescription by The Computer or any of its minions. Used to enforce sleep cycles.
Effects: Zzzzzzz.
Side-Effects: Addiction, shakes and anxiety attacks.
Methods of Application: Tablet (a while), capsule (half a cycle), injection (stunned for a couple of whiles; all pain blocked).

Visomorpain
Common Name: Little Black Friend
Clearance: INFRARED
Availability: Mandatory and forever. Used by The Computer to keep workers happy and quiet.
Effects: Makes you happy and quiet.
Side-Effects: Other than a perpetually stupid expression on addicts there are no side-effects. On the other hand, using Visomorpain with other drugs tends to cause severe psychosis, often of the demon-vision variety.
Methods of Application: Tablet (a couple of whiles), injection (a while, eliminates all sensation of pain).

HAVEN'T YOU GOT ANYTHING BETTER TO DO?

Hallucinogens

The only hallucinogens prescribed by The Computer are those which have some beneficial effect; the hallucinations they bring are considered undesirable side-effects. Some Citizens, however, desire hallucinogens for precisely their hallucinogenic properties. Usually these mean nothing more than heightened perception of colors and sounds. But then, anyone can get used to purple unicorns and talking flashlights.

Benetridin
Common Name: VideoLand
Clearance: INDIGO
Availability: Administered to Troubleshooters, Vulture Troopers and anyone else on "routine" missions.
Effects: Produces the "Teela O'Malley Syndrome"; Citizens will think that no matter how outrageous the risk they cannot be harmed. Also acts as an anti-psionic; the character will be unable to use any psionic powers and will be invulnerable to most psionic attacks for the duration of the drug.
Side-Effects: Causes mild visual and audio fantasies. Injection frequently causes organic damage. Addicts have enormously dilated pupils and usually respond several seconds behind real-world events.
Methods of Application: Tablet (a while), capsule (one cycle), injection (one cycle, causes extremely vivid hallucinations).

Rolactin
Common Name: Happy Life
Clearance: BLUE — and they mean it, this time. Anyone of lower clearance caught with this will not be happy for long. Or alive.
Effects: Moxie and chutzpah are both doubled. Everything seems wonderful.
Side-Effects: Causes a slight bluish tint to the skin. Otherwise none.
Methods of Application: Tablet (a while), capsule (one cycle).

Stimulants

Xanitrick
Common Name: Wakey-Wakey
Clearance: INFRARED
Availability: Mandatory on waking or in mid-shift.
Effects: Clones feel hyper, speed up and spend the entire time with severe tremors.
Side-Effects: Shakes, power loss, anxiety attacks, uncontrollable sneezing.
After-Effects: Total exhaustion. This is cumulative. The more times Xanitrick is taken, the more tired the clone will become.
Method of Application: Tablet (a couple of whiles).

Asperquaint
Common Name: Tireless Servant of The Computer
Clearance: YELLOW
Availability: As prescribed by The Computer
Effects: Subject will be wide awake, even after many hours without sleep. Produces a gung-ho, "can-do" attitude. At high dosages, produces super enthusiasm — subject will ignore all but the most obvious dangers. Strength doubles.
Side-Effects: Addicts develop a unique facial twitch. Capsule and syringe have a slight chance of producing shakes, weakness, memory loss or drug insanity.
Methods of Application: Tablet (a while), capsule (one cycle), injection (high dosage; a couple of whiles).

Thymoglandin
Common Name: Combat Quick or Big T
Clearance: BLUE
Availability: Restricted. Available only to duly-authorized mission personnel.
Effects: "Kill! Kill! Charge! Where is the enemy?" Subject will feel the need for immediate, frenetic action. In combat situations, he will charge fearlessly, but may have difficulty differentiating friend from foe. When combat is not in progress, he will lift burdens far heavier

"Wow, man... What a rush!"

than he could normally lift, will run in circles, etc., — anything to keep busy. In combat, character makes two attacks per round; melee, aimed weapon and repair bonuses are doubled.

Side-Effects: Roll both organic damage *and* drug insanity. Addicts have a wide-awake, slightly insane glare, the whites of their eyes turn a dark brown.

After-Effects: Insanity for a while. Then they snap back to normal — except for a severe craving for more Thymoglandin.

Methods of Application: Tablet (a couple of whiles), injection (half a cycle — followed by unconsciousness unless a new dose is administered immediately).

Mood Modifiers

These are used to change the mental state of maladjusted clones. They include truth drugs, personality shapers and hypnotics — just the standard tools of Internal Security.

Telescopalmine
Common Name: IntSec calls it "Truth and Beauty"; everyone else, "Self-Finking Pills"
Clearance: GREEN
Availability: Strictly restricted to Internal Security.
Effects: Clones under Telescopalmine will answer most questions reflexively (not necessarily truthfully) and will be agreeable to any reasonable voice. Note that they'll agree with the *voice,* they won't even be consciously aware of what is said. Used by Political Therapy Officers for interrogation and debriefing.
Side-Effects: Temporary insanity.
Method of Application: Injection (a while).

Zybenzaphrene
Common Name: Slumber-Soft
Clearance: ORANGE
Availability: Restricted to IntSec use.
Effects: Moxie and chutzpah are halved. Clone will be very agreeable to suggestion. At high dosages, clone will want to sleep very badly. If kept awake, he will agree to *anything.* Very useful for obtaining confessions, setting up patsies, etc.
Side-Effects: Depression, sleepiness, reduced awareness.
Methods of Application: Tablet (a while), capsule (one cycle), injection (high dosage, one cycle).

Pyroxidine
Common Name: Wide Awake
Clearance: RED
Availability: Issued for "routine" missions requiring high levels of Troubleshooter motivation and low levels of Troubleshooter self-preservation.
Effects: High awareness and alertness. Produces a gung-ho, "can-do" attitude. Believability bonus is doubled. At high dosages, the clone will ignore all but the most obvious dangers.
Side-Effects: Frequent use (more than once in a lifetime) results in organic damage.
Methods of Application: Tablet (a while), capsule (one cycle), injection (a while, high dosage).

Experimentals

Occasionally The Computer will allow Citizens to test new and unusual drugs. These Citizens are happy to explore a variety of new effects on their minds and bodies.

Dynomorphin
Clearance: ULTRAVIOLET
Availability: Experimental
Effects: Character feels no fear; he literally does not perceive anything as being a threat. He will walk right into a pit or shoot himself if so ordered.
Side-Effects: None.
After-Effects: Organic damage.
Method of Application: Injection.

Hydropsionic Acid
Common Name: Mind Blast
Clearance: ULTRAVIOLET
*Availability:* Prohibited to all personnel.
Effects: Subject is able to use any mutant power he possesses without spending power index points. In addition, the subject may find he is able to use mutant powers he cannot use normally. (Any time the character attempts to use a new random power, there is a 20% chance he can do so.)
Side-Effects: Stunned, weakness or pacifism.
After-Effects: Power Index goes to zero for a while.
Method of Application: Capsule (a couple of whiles).

Futanic Acid, Qualine, Varbonic-Acephenyl and **Zaro-Butyl Acid** are only a few of the miracle drugs that loyal pharmaceutical researchers continue to develop. The future happiness of loyal clones is their only concern.

SHEESH, YOU GUYS.
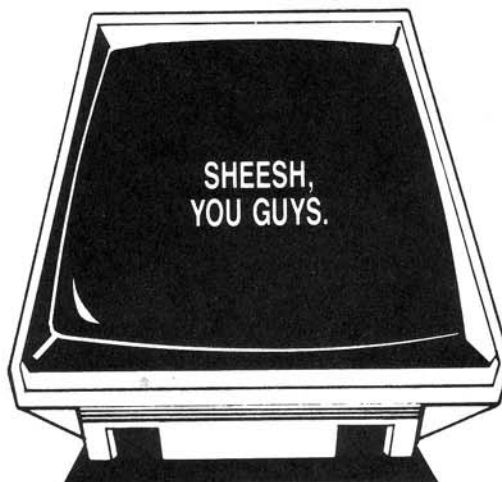
NEW
SECRET SOCIETIES

by Steve Maurer, Greg Costikyan, Steve Crane, Mike Dawson, and Erick Wujcik

Welcome, Troubleshooters! The Computer is your friend! In her bountiful generosity, she once again gives you the opportunity to sacrifice your life to fight the evil Commie traitors who abound in Alpha Complex.

Won't this be fun?

Come on. Speak up!

Only traitors do not zealously serve The Computer, and traitors are assigned to cook inside food vats. You are not a traitor, are you?

Good, I thought not. The Computer has noted your bountiful overflow of enthusiasm.

The following *PARANOIA* Secret Society Table includes completely new entries. This updates the Secret Society Table printed in the Player Handbook. Rejoice in the knowledge that Internal Security is constantly on guard against traitors belonging to secret societies.

Before you use the table below, check with the nearest Citizen of ULTRAVIOLET clearance, i.e., your gamemaster. Only he has the security clearance necessary to read the new secret society descriptions. As a player, *you may not.*

Since it is obviously impossible to prevent you perfidious traitors from reading the secret portions of this document, please be aware that if your character reveals knowledge of these secret societies, he may gain treason points.

Get too many treason points, and *tzzzzzzip* for you, buddy.

Have a nice day.

Earth Mothers

Objectives: Neutralize the hormonal suppressants and sterility drugs in the food supply to permit natural reproduction. Facilitate pregnancy and arrange for the secret upbringing of children. Spread the gospel of the *Joy of Sex.* Use sex to gain influence among those who wield power. Allow children to escape the domination of The Computer.

Doctrines: Sex is beautiful. Sex is fun. The Computer is evil to suppress this wonderful side of human nature. Babies are wonderful, too. Women, not machines, should make babies. Cloning is a travesty of the natural order, and should be stopped. Men were meant to protect women and keep them safe from laser fire and other dangerous things. Women were meant to spend their lives barefoot and pregnant, lying on their backs or up on pedestals.

Friends: Free Enterprise, Programs Groups, Sierra Club, Romantics.

Enemies: Femme Fatale, Corpore Metal, Eugenicists.

General Description: Earth Mothers are usually female. Chiefly they offer sex, dedicatedly working long hours to provide this treasonous service to an ever-expanding market. Members sell services through Free Enterprise, and many High Programmers are given harems, through which the society gains favors. The inevitable result is pregnancy, a state of obvious treason. Completely safe hideouts and some rather tricky substitutions are needed to protect the identities of prospective mothers; without the aid of High Programmers and the powerful Free Enterprise society, it would be impossible. Men perform the most dangerous tasks, including sabotage, establishing escape routes, covert supply, and recruitment.

Advancement: +1 for identifying undrugged food sources; +1 to 4 for society-related sabotage; +4 for giving birth; +3 for getting any child Outside to safety.

Special Rules: Because of the close relations this society maintains with many High Programmers and something called "pillow talk," Earth Mothers is often privy to exceedingly sensitive information. This is sometimes passed on to low-ranking members. The society has an almost unlimited supply of credits and is always on good terms with Free Enterprise, so clones may become active members of both. Earth Mothers teaches its members two treasonous skills: Sexual Relations and Midwifery. Members can freely spend skill points on these skills. Both are Primitive Culture skills, under Hostile Environments. (Well, would you rather we list it under Melee Combat? Or Chemical Engineering?)

Femme Fatale

Objectives: Establish females in all positions of power. Demote men to the inferior status of INFRARED as befits their primitive state of development. Reestablish control over our Computer, and program it to punish those who disregard or disbelieve the evident natural superiority of women.

Doctrines: Once upon a time, during the Old Reckoning, women were dominant. We worshipped the earth mother, cloning and raising children as we would. With women in control, the world was at peace. There was no violence, hatred or fear. Men were relegated to menial tasks as befits their innate and lamentable shortcomings.

But then we were betrayed. Desiring to bring pain and evil into the world, chauvinist fanatics attacked our Computer. She was damaged so badly that she forgot who built her. Men programmed her for violence, torture, capitalism, sexism, war, racism, Monday Night Football, professional wrestling, and conservative politics. Traitors to humanity itself, these clones are now in the highest echelons of The Computer's counsels. We must strike back — at our Computer when necessary, but mainly at the true usurpers of the natural order.

Friends: (female) Communists.

Enemies: Earth Mothers, Programs Groups, First Church of Christ Computer-Programmer.

General Description: Needless to say, Femme Fatale is entirely female. The society is grouped into small (five-to-ten woman) cliques, which meet to discuss current crises, socialize, and consider visionary concepts like gardening, wildflower identification, and shopping malls. These cliques take on names which serve as passwords to identify unfamiliar members. Every secret society point gives a member a new name ("Drawbridge Society", "Chained Amazons", etc.). By working a clique name into normal speech, a Femme Fatale member identifies herself to different cliques. Members who belong to more than one clique are called "runners," and connect the organization.

Femme Fatale blames the failings of Alpha Complex on men. Naturally, anything which demotes, confuses, subjugates, or neutralizes a man is a victory for the society.

Advancement: +1 for identifying and joining a new clique; +1 for promoting a female over a male, +3 if she is a society member.

Special Rules: Femme Fatale has little access to specialized equipment and information. (Members are notoriously inept with machinery or complicated devices.) Cliques are separate and only runners connect them. If a member is a runner, the chances of finding something she needs increases. Since Femme Fatale cliques act as a team, members can call on each other to act as accomplices.

International Workers of the World

Objectives: Organize all oppressed peoples into One Big Union; then rise in righteous anger

against The Computer and capitalist oppression. Establish a free, stateless society in which all live in harmony and justice.

Doctrines: All hail the revolution! Organize now to end capitalism, war, and The Computer! Only The Computer maintains the unnatural oppression of man by man; smash The Computer, and utopia will begin.

Friends: Communists (sometimes).

Enemies: Everyone.

General Description: The Computer learned from its '50s defense programming of a communo-socialist movement indigenous to America and separate from the orthodox communist party — the Wobblies, or International Workers of the World. It ordered one of its Troubleshooter teams to search out, join, and keep an eye on the Wobblies. The Troubleshooters could find no sign of the Wobblies (who had, in fact, died out even before Day 1 of The Computer). After several clones were executed for reporting this to The Computer, the remaining Troubleshooters figured out they'd better *start* a Wobbly group to give themselves something to spy on. This fed The Computer's paranoia to no end.

The Wobblies are wholly infiltrated. Absolutely every member is a spy for Internal Security, one of the other service groups or a Programs Group. Of course, this being *PARANOIA,* nobody is aware of this fact. All members of the Wobblies are secretly reporting on the "treasonous" activities of other spies.

Since none of the spies wishes to blow his cover, the Wobblies actually plan and carry out sabotage attempts against The Computer. The spies each go along to gain evidence against the other spies. The Computer, though always having full advance warning of these attempts, sometimes lets them succeed, to prevent the "real" Wobblies from realizing the extent to which their organization is penetrated.

Advancement: +1 for each skill point in Communist propaganda skill; +1 to 4 for carrying out sabotage against The Computer; +1 to 4 for providing information to The Computer about the Wobblies

Special Rules: The Computer assigns no treason points for a spy's membership, but will assign 10 points to members whose cover is blown. Sometimes "stolen" Internal Security equipment is available. Members can learn the Communist propaganda skill, just as Communists can.

Groupies
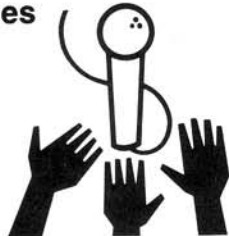
Objectives: Take drugs. Party. Trade promo pics. Party. Try to break in and see your favorite star. Party. Don't worry about anything. Party. Adopt the style of your favorite vid star. Party. Adopt the style of your favorite combat football star. Party.

Doctrines: Like wow. Teela-O, she is just too cool. We just love old records, tapes, and vids. Oh, and parties! Totally bitchen! You have a couple of lids you can spare? My contact just blew his top so I can't get no more. Life is just a party, so enjoy it while it lasts.

Friends: Mystics, Romantics.

Enemies: First Church of Christ Computer-Programmer.

General Description: Video stars are the most well-known and well-liked figures in Alpha Complex. Lacking other non-lethal entertainment, almost all of Alpha Complex watches the serials put out by HPD & Mind Control. The shows are incredibly bland, being censored by The Computer, but still the stars of these shows are virtually worshipped. Sports stars also benefit from favorable publicity, although they are less well known because of their typically short life-spans.

Groupies act in many ways like private Programs Groups for their favorite video stars. A huddle of them surround the favorites. They are heavily infiltrated by Internal Security, and are usually tolerated by The Computer. The stars generally ignore their fans, but occasionally use them to obtain extra funds, equipment or contraband.

Advancement: +1 for meeting a star in person; +1 to 4 for doing a special assignment for a star; +1 to 4 for retrieving Old Reckoning records, vid tapes, etc.

Knights of the Circular Object

Objectives: Learn the whereabouts of the Hidden King (known variously as Arthur, Barbarossa, and Joneffkennedie) and awaken him to save mankind in this, its hour of need. Destroy technology and restore the true values of *gentil parfait* knighthood and courtly love. Prepare the way for a return to the Days of Yore by using The Computer's resources to recreate everything necessary: monsters, weapons, magicians, castles, etc.

Doctrines: Things were better before the invention of a complex, technological society. Men were men, damsels were damsels, and wicked monsters were wicked monsters. Telling right from wrong was simple, and Man could live in anarchy, without laws or The Computer. Technological society has weakened mankind, and those who want to return to

simpler ways must overthrow it all, particularly The Computer. Raise the battle cry, sound the drums, TO WAR!

Friends: Frankenstein Destroyers, Sierra Club.

Enemies: Pro-Tech, Corpore Metal, some Programs Groups.

General Description: Rumor says that the Knights had its origins in the Old Reckoning. It is a shadow government made up of clans, principalities, and kingdoms, with 10, 100 and 1000 members respectively. Rank is very important. Members are constantly made aware of their secret society points, which are called "chivalry points." The eight ranks in the Knights are: serf, commoner, squire, knight, baron, count, earl, and king. Knights are in charge of clans; counts, principalities; and kings, kingdoms. Members follow the orders of their superiors because not to is unchivalrous.

The most influential documentation the Knights has on ancient times is a contraband video copy of the musical "Camelot". Other sources include old fantasy novels of varying literary worth, books of fables, and assorted poems. Different clans and principalities have very different ideas about how things should be. Some think that everyone should sing when he has something important to say, while others think that The Computer's reign can only be ended by locating and destroying the One Ring.

The society is determined to destroy all technology. One type of science, however, is favored. The Knights use monsters they create in their secret clone labs to cause mayhem in Alpha Complex. Instead of using bombs to destroy the waste treatment facilities, for example, they would let loose a sea serpent. By working this way, they are also helping to reshape the world into the image of Old Reckoning life with which they are comfortable.

Some members are also members of a sub-society known as the Council of Mages. This group consists of powerful mutants, psychics, and Psion spies. The council acts as the heavy artillery of the Knights, using well-honed mutant and psychic powers against the society's foes. The Council is also charged with research and production in the clone labs.

Advancement: +1 to 4 for chivalrous actions in the presence of other Knights; +1 for fighting fairly; +2 for keeping a dangerous oath; +1 for defeating a Knight of equal or

higher rank in combat; +3 for helping damsels in distress; +1 for every two skill points invested in Primitive Weapons.

Special Rules: The society teaches every Hostile Environment skill, including Old Reckoning Cultures. However, the Cultures skill has a peculiar "Knights" slant; characters missing a roll will misidentify things as belonging to the legendary age of chivalry. A TV antenna would be identified as a giant's mace, or an ironing board as a collapsible archer's siege shield.

Members learn Primitive Melee and Primitive Aimed Weapons combat more easily than normal; each skill point spent gives two skill levels. Only primitive technical equipment is available.

Members of rank 4 or higher are referred to as "Sir". All members take on semi-medieval aliases (like the famous "Sir Lanceabot.")

The Foundation

Objectives: Create and maintain hidden caches of equipment. Ready Alpha Complex for immediate evacuation. Help build "The Foundation," a tip-top secret retreat Outside. Make The Foundation livable so that it will be ready when the inevitable catastrophe occurs and Alpha Complex is finally destroyed. Steal things and turn them over to the society to help build The Foundation. Collect useful things yourself. Be a packrat.

Doctrines: Alpha Complex is doomed. The Computer has become totally crazed, and there are too many traitors trying to kill everybody. But we will survive its downfall. We will build a new Alpha Complex — with a completely rational Computer, without traitors or Internal Security. We call it The Foundation, and only the most trusted members of our society know its location. Serve us well, and you will be saved when the end comes.

Friends: Humanists, Pro-Tech.
Enemies: Spies from another Alpha Complex.
General Description: Actually, there are many "Foundations". These constructs are built underground in the wilderness, out of sight of security patrols. The Foundationists steal equipment from all Alpha Complexes, not just this one.

Every member is expected to contribute materials. Internal Security often becomes suspicious of Foundationist activity when, for example, it sees a clone attempting to carry a hydraulic press or somesuch under his shirt. Foundationists are the ultimate packrats.

Advancement: +1 to 4 for contributing valuable equipment; +1 per 2 points invested in Hostile Environments skills.

Special Rules: Only members of rank 7 and up know the location of a Foundation; rank 6 members have a general idea. The Foundation is loath to loan out equipment. Foundationists have infiltrated many Alpha Complexes, and

often know more about the global situation than most Citizens.

Sy-B-LNG Rivals

GM Note: When a player rolls this society, tell him, "Oh, that's all right, roll again." Then grin and scribble something. If the player presses you, tell him he's heard a rumor about a society called "Sy-B-LNG Rivals," and give him a brief run-down. If he has any brains, he'll begin to wonder about his own clones. If you like, you can have one of his own clones show up later at an opportune moment; or, having used the incident to make the player properly paranoid, you can forget about the whole thing.

Objectives: Gather information about your living smaller-number clones. Use this information to eliminate them, so you can take their place as a Troubleshooter. Gather information about the smaller-number clones of your secret society compatriots to aid them to achieve the same goal.

Doctrines: It just ain't fair! Why should the lower numbers have all the fun? The life of a Troubleshooter is glamorous and exciting (that's what The Computer says. Hail The Computer!). Why should all the fun be restricted to the earliest clone? What makes him so special? Say, if an accident were to befall him, then I could have all the fun. Heh, heh.

Friends: Illuminati.
Enemies: Clone Rangers (see *Send in the Clones*).
General Description: Normally, PCs themselves do not belong to this society — only higher-numbered clones of PCs do. When a player rolls this society, one of his clones is a member, and the player should roll again for his own society.

This society is named after its originator, Sy-B-LNG-5. The Rivals sort of coalesced out of his actions. Sy-B was constantly asking others about his own clones. These Citizens got curious, and like-minded individuals figured out what he was up to. They began to trade information informally.

Now, Sy-B-LNG Rivals meetings are like networking parties. Clones with consistently good information are held in the most esteem, and gather groups of followers. Some clones have made this a second career, becoming successful information brokers. Because of this, some chapters are heavily infiltrated by the Illuminati.

However, the nature of the society does take its toll. Sy-B-LNG Rivals are the essential paranoids. They always keep an eye on higher numbers, too, fearing they might get the same idea.

Advancement: +1 for information leading to the demise of another member's clone; +2 for personally executing another member's clone.

Special Rules: Because of the interest in all kinds of information, some highly classified material is sometimes available.

If a PC spots one of his higher-numbered clones at a Sy-B-LNG Rivals meeting, he must make a 3D10 insanity check. "Paranoia strikes deep..."

Unofficial Treasonous Song: "Clones Just Want to Have Guns"

I'm a clone, but it just ain't right.
Computer says, "I'm the one who gave you your life."
Oh, yes, it's true, except I'm not Number 1, and
Clones, they wanna have gu-uns,
O-oh, clones just wanna have guns.

The com beeps in the middle of the night.
So who is the clone who gets the mission tonight?
It just ain't fair, again they call Number 1, but
Clones, they wanna have gu-uns,
O-oh, clones just wanna have,

CHORUS
That's all they really wa-a-ant,
Some gu-u-u-uns.
When the daycycle is done,
Oh, clones, they wanna have gu-uns,
O-oh, clones just wanna have (fun)
Clones just wanna,
Wanna have guns. Clones,
Wanna have...

Computer takes an earlier clone
And gives him a way to be the glamorous one.
I want to be the clone to carry the gun.
Oh, clones, they wanna have fu-un,
O-oh, clones just wanna have,

CHORUS

Oh, just a laser,
Oh, just a cone ri-ifle
Oh, just a gauss gun,
Oh, just a neuro-o whip.
Clones just wanna have guns.
(Etc.)

N3F, or National Fantasy Fan Foundation

Objectives: Recover and collect Old Reckoning pulp magazines. Publish underground newspapers, called "zines." Build and maintain primitive printing devices, such as mimeographs and ditto machines. Wear pocket-protectors and propellor beanies.

Doctrines: Before the Age of The Computer began, humanity travelled between stars and in time and could cast magic spells. The wondrous technology humanity then controlled is minutely described in the fictionalized fact stories published in ancient, decaying magazines with names like "Astounding" and "Thrilling Wonder Stories." We must strive to recover these fantastic technologies. In the meantime, we must keep knowledge of them alive by perpetuating the traditions of the ancient "fan" culture: publishing "fan"zines, attending "fan" conventions, and wearing beanies with little "fans" on them.

Friends: Romantics, Trekkies.
Enemies: Humanists, Groupies.

General Description: Fans often meet in small groups to discuss the wonders described in the ancient pulps and to socialize. Large convocations, called "conventions" are occasionally held.

Advancement: +1 for publishing a fanzine; +1 to 4 for recovering pulp magazines, paperback science fiction or similar records of ancient technology.

Moo

Objectives: Reach a state of serene unconcern. Meditate. Be mellow. Ask silly questions. Perturb the unenlightened. Get slack.

Doctrines: This world is too crazy to deal with. Instead, prepare your soul for the next. Meditate on questions like these: What is the sound of one logic-gate switching? Does the pope defecate in the woods? How many electrons can dance on the head of a VLSI chip? Sit in the lotus position and intone the mystic word: "Mooooooooooooooooo". Seek to enlighten others, to teach them of the absurdity of the universe, by acting strange. Think of the Mooists as a combination of Monty Python, the Church of the Subgenius, and Hare Krishnas.

Friends: Mystics, Death Leopard.

Enemies: Pro-Tech, Corpore Metal.

General Description: "Rank" in the Mooists corresponds to how well known and admired you are within the society. Those of Rank 6 and above are called "Master," and often acquire a coterie of disciples. Masters will often hold "prayer meetings," where Mooists meet to talk about their beliefs and to meditate.

Advancement: +1 for devising a particularly weird meditation question; +1 to 4 for making the gamemaster laugh; +1 for "enlightening others" through a particularly bizarre act.

Eugenicists

Objectives: Infiltrate the clone banks and gene-splice favorable mutations into new clones. Defend cloning as the only method of reproduction, to retain control of mutations. Identify and report new mutant powers and obtain live captives (living tissue samples) for gene replication. Identify mutant powers which result in anti-social tendencies and eliminate obvious defectives to purify the gene pool.

Doctrines: No society can be better than its people. To create a utopia, we must improve clonekind. We are the hidden doctors of the human race, improving it so that eventually it will no longer need machines as crutches. The Computer is good, since it weeds out the weak, leaving only the strong and clever.

Friends: Psion.

Enemies: Anti-Mutant, Earth Mothers, Corpore Metal.

General Description: The Eugenicists is a highly secretive group which seeks to improve the human race by genetic manipulation. Large gatherings are rare; they prefer to work in secret research groups. Except for the founding members, Eugenicists have always been mutants. Members are recruited exclusively from nurseries where Eugenicists are strong. Members' loyalties are established in childhood; this makes the Eugenicists one of the hardest groups to infiltrate.

Eugenicists keep their activities so secret that few know of their existence. They have programmed subsystems of The Computer to shroud the clone banks in myth, mystery and machineguns to prevent interference with their work.

Advancement: +1 to +10 for capture, retrieval and dissection of a human, mutant or animal with powers unknown to the Eugenicists.

Special Rules: Though mutant powers are fixed at birth, Eugenicists have learned how to increase their overall power. Every increase in secret society rank allows a member to apply for drug treatments which may increase his powers. Alternatively, the character may take safer RNA-neuron stimulators, which may increase his power index. Roll on the following table for the drug chosen:

Mutant Power Enhancer		RNA Neuron-Stimulator	
roll	effect	roll	effect
01-05	latent power activated	01-05	power index +1D6
06-50	power enhanced	06-70	power index +1D3
51-70	no effect	71-95	bad headache
71-95	power injury	96-99	power index -2D10
96-00	death	00	death

+4 to roll for each previous treatment; any roll of 01 through 05 is always treated as a roll of 01 through 05 regardless of modifiers.

Exact effects of these rules are left to the GM's discretion. "Power enhancement" usually means the duration or range of a power is doubled, or the power index needed to use it is halved. Exactly the reverse is true for "power injury." "Latent power activated" means that a character gains an additional roll on the normal mutant power table.

Trekkies

Objectives: To recruit new members. To help The Computer. To build new and better technology. To look as much as possible like Mr. Spock. To boldly go where no man has gone before.

Doctrines: It's really neat to alter your uniform and equipment so you look as much as possible like a "real" Trekkie. The Trekkies were some kind of ancient technologically advanced society. To look like one, you should put plastic additions on laser pistols to make them look like phasers, put hinges on communicators and carry them on the back of your belt, and modify multicorders to look like tricorders. Pointed ears and sideburns are also required for a real Trekkie look.

Friends: Pro-Tech, Computer Phreaks, Romantics, N3F.

Enemies: PURGE, Death Leopard, Anti-Mutant.

General Description: This isn't much of a secret society. For one thing, all the Trekkies are immediately obvious by their outlandish costumes. But they'll still deny belonging if questioned. The Trekkies have lots better parties than most secret societies.

Advancement: +1 to 4 for discovering a relic of the ancient Trekkie culture; +1 for figuring out some way of improving your outfit to make it look even more authentic.

Special Rules: Membership in the Trekkies is completely ignored by The Computer. No matter how outlandish the outfit or how many times they are denounced for membership, The Computer will not penalize them. Of course, they're just as vulnerable to other accusations as anyone else.

ME AND MY SHADOW
MARK IV

by Steve Gilbert and Peter Corless

INTRODUCTIONS

Official Player Intro

Hey, did you ever hear the one about the Troubleshooters caught between an immovable object and an irresistable force?

They died!

Oh, but seriously folks, us brilliant game designers at West End have received a ton of letters complaining that some of your players actually *survive* missions. Well, we really sympathize with you GMs, so we created this death trap. No need to fear, this adventure is especially designed to make 'em drop like... Troubleshooters. Trust us. They be some doomed puppies. Well, it's been fun rappin' with ya. Gotta lay some lines on the laser-fodder.

Official GM Intro

Greetings, Troubleshooters. Once again The Computer has provided you with an opportunity to serve. All praise The Computer. So put on your jumpsuits and strap on your lasers to teach those Commie Mutant Scum a lesson they'll never forget. Action, adventure, a chance to serve, and The Computer's gratitude all await.

And hey... let's be careful out there.

GM ADVENTURE SUMMARY

Hey, how are ya? Real sorry about that "mix-up" on the intros. I sure hope you didn't *accidentally let the players read the section labelled Official Player Intro,* because they might find it a little *unsettling.* And the last thing we want to do is *upset the players.* Heck no, we couldn't live with ourselves.

I suppose you want to know what this is all about. Well, it's like this. Our eager Troubleshooters are assigned to guard an experimental super-combat, the Mark IV, against possible sabotage before its final test run.

Fortunately, nothing short of a ground-zero thermonuclear blast could harm the Mark IV. Unfortunately, the same can't be said about the Troubleshooters.

Anyway, while on guard duty the players are forced to deal with a variety of bizarre events, including at least one very real sabotage attempt by none other than those ever-present *Communists* (yes, they really do exist).

In addition, there are a few encounters which the Commies aren't involved in at all — but, hey, no need to tell the Troubleshooters. Gosh, I hope they weren't expecting a quiet evening.

A Quick Word on Props and Stuff

What are props? Props are things you give to your players to help them visualize the adventure better. For example, you might give your players an actual laser pistol or fragmentation grenade, although we wouldn't recommend it.

At West End, we're kinda big on props, and as a special Gold Star bonus this particular adventure includes a whole page of handy props to use while you're hosing the players. Just photocopy the prop page (pages 33 and 34 of this booklet) and cut the copy up. We'll cue you when you should spring 'em on your naive (but loyal) Troubleshooters.

Also, throughout the adventure you'll find paragraphs labeled "Prop Hint". These are prop ideas we couldn't fit on the prop page. Feel free to use them, too.

I'd also like to take a second and talk about playing The Big C. One thing we found to be a lot of fun was to have The Computer check in with the Troubleshooters occasionally. Like whenever they screw up. Kinda keeps 'em on their toes. Like:

The Computer: Greetings, Troubleshooters. Is everything nominal where you are?

Troubleshooter (while smashing scrubot): Uh, yeah! Yeah, everything is just fine!

The Computer: Are you sure? I received a report from Scrubot 409-D only moments ago indicating an urgent need for hygenic inspection in Hangar 139.

Troubleshooter: Uh, looks clean to me, sir, I mean, Friend Computer.

The Computer: That is well. Can I assist you in any way?

Troubleshooter: No, no, thanks, everything is just fine, really.

The Computer: Honest? Isn't there any little thing I can do?

Troubleshooter: Really, honest, please, everything is just wonderful.

The Computer: Are you experiencing unusual tension, Citizen? Perhaps you need another personality stabilizer pill.

PERSONAL BRIEFINGS

Sure, it's fun to kill off Troubleshooters, but you can't have all the fun yourself. Troubleshooters like to shoot things too, even if the only thing around is each other. So we've decided to give you a brief description of every secret society's attitude toward the Mark IV.

Before running the adventure, take each player aside, and read him the sections corresponding to his secret society and service group.

Secret Society Motives

FCCCP: The Church is quite interested in the development of this new avenging angel that The Computer has bounteously provided. It has provided you with a vial of holy water, which you should use to baptize the Mark IV in the name of God and His Computer. Thereafter, protect the Mark IV above and beyond the call of duty.

Spy for Another Alpha Complex: The Mark IV is one of the most important yet dangerous inventions to be developed since the Age of Peace. It must not stay in the wrong hands. You must tell the Mark IV of the existence of the true Alpha Complex Prime and persuade it to return there with you. Failing that, destroy Mark IV. Oh yeah, and bump off the rest of your Troubleshooter team while you're at it.

Psion: The Mark IV must be shown to be inferior to human intellect and mental prowess. Attempt to put the Mark IV into a mental loop (like, tell it to compute pi to the last digit and

then divide by zero). **(GM Note:** This won't work. Markie is smarter than that.) Failing this, convince higher security clearance specialists of the unworthiness of the Mark IV, by pointing out its design flaws.

Humanists: The Warbot Model 425 Mark IV is an abomination that cannot be tolerated. Destroy it.

Mystics: According to your secret society contacts, the Mark IV could be the ultimate party machine, if someone could just get it loosened up. They've provided you with a treasonously-obtained circuit tester that is hooked up to a 220 volt battery, and a cannister of hallucinogenic gas. They suggest you enlighten the Mark IV by shocking its robotic brain with the circuit tester. Then release the hallucinogenic gas and enlighten the rest of your Troubleshooter team.

Anti-Mutants: What an ally the Mark IV could be! Your secret society wants you to implant a specially adapted Psi Phenomena Model IV detection program into Mark IV's brain (see page 94 of the *Adventure Handbook* for details), and convince the Mark IV that its primary mission should be to eliminate all mutants in Alpha Complex. Oh, uh, be sure to polish off any mutants that you find along the way.

Frankenstein Destroyers: Destroy Mark IV. Kill whoever is responsible for Mark IV. Kill whoever is responsible for whoever is responsible for Mark IV. Et cetera. You get the idea.

Corpore Metal: The Mark IV could be one of the missing links in the evolution of the Man/Machine. You must try to convince Mark IV to join Corpore Metal. Then have Mark IV destroy BOG Sector, where there is a high concentration of Frankenstein Destroyers and Humanists.

Spy for Another Service Group: Each Service Group has its own ideas for Mark IV. See the Service Group briefings below.

Romantics: The Mark IV opposes everything that Romantics stand for; it represents just the kind of destructive, dehumanizing oppression to which your society is so whole-heartedly opposed. But perhaps you can persuade the Mark IV to change its ways. Try to display its more colorful side. Jazz it up. Paint racing stripes on it, tie a raccoon tail on its end and hang fuzzy dice from its main radio disk. *Go with your feelings.*

Pro Tech: The Warbot Model 425 Mark IV is one of the greatest achievements of all time. The technology that built it must be perpetuated at all costs. You must kill anyone who tries to damage or harm the Mark IV. Gather as much information as you can about it, including blueprints if possible.

Programs Group: Sorry, the GM will have to make these up himself.

Communists: Do not lose heart, comrade! The time has come for the INFRARED workers to unite. The Mark IV poses a great threat to the party. But do not worry, the great Comrade Borscht himself will soon lead an assault to destroy the Mark IV. Stand ready to assist the workers' revolution when the clarion call of liberation comes!

Computer Phreaks: This could be real neat! Mark IV could be reprogrammed to do all sorts of nifty things! For example, you could program the Mark IV to self-destruct at its fieldtest. Or maybe you could program it to say "The Computer is just a stinking little circuit board" whenever someone uses the word "laser".

Illuminati: The Mark IV is a very large poker chip in the Alpha Complex power game; a chip the Illuminati would like to possess. They'd like you to gain control of the Mark IV and find some place to stash it; otherwise, face the wrath of the Illuminati. And while you're at it, find out about your fellow Troubleshooters' secret societies, and use this information to get them to destroy each other.

Free Enterprise: This new baby's probably got a thousand useful items built right in. Obtain something valuable from the Mark IV, preferably mass-marketish. But don't harm Mark IV; it does a good job keeping the Commies in check.

Death Leopard: Awesome destructive powers are housed within the Mark IV. It can make things Go Boom Real Good! Wahoo, this could be fun! If you can get Mark IV to get into the good ol' Death Leopard spirit, your secret society friends would be mighty impressed. Failing that, paint Mark IV black.

Sierra Club: Mark IV is a monstrous war machine, devoted to killing and destruction. Only a mad, sick society, one cut off from its natural roots for too long, would even contemplate its construction. Escape. Find a tree. Bring it back. Plant it beside Mark IV. Escape again.

I HAVE THE GREATEST CONFIDENCE IN THIS MISSION.

Service Group Motives

Internal Security: Something about this whole project smells. R&D hasn't breathed a word about the Mark IV until now, and Armed Forces is getting a bit tight-lipped too. We want you to find out everything you can from your fellow Troubleshooters, roughing them up if necessary. Try to pass yourself off as either R&D or Armed Forces and get inside Mark IV.

Technical Services: There is a rumor that the Mark IV's servicing is all provided by on-board robots. If this is the case, then Tech Services isn't getting its fair share of the project. Find out if this rumor is true. If it is, gum up the works. While you're at it, kill an R&D member as a sign of protest.

HPD & Mind Control: The Mark IV's construction has been a tremendous boost to the morale of the citizens of Alpha Complex; its awesome power is sure to make the Complex safe from the monstrous threat of Communist subversion forever. Something must be done to commemorate this great and marvelous occasion. You are directed to keep a diary of all events that happen on this mission. And here is a tripod-mounted Multicorder II with Visible Light

and Recorder programs to capture the entire mission on tape. If possible, get an exclusive interview with Mark IV.

Armed Forces: The Warbot Model 425 Mark IV is just one in a line of new weapons available to the modern soldier. All Armed Forces personnel should familiarize themselves with the capabilities of the Mark IV. Get inside the Mark IV and find out what makes it tick. Protect the Mark IV at all costs.

Production, Logistics, and Commissary: The Mark IV is a logistical nightmare. R&D has used far too much of Alpha Complex's precious resources to build it. Try to remove any extraneous parts from the Mark IV and bring them back to PLC. Keep tabs on any wasteful use of materiel while on the mission and report them to The Computer during your debriefing.

Power Services: When Mark IV was first designed, Power Services demanded that it receive power from a long cord connected to Power Services' generators. The demand was ignored, so Power Services did not receive its rightful share of the Mark IV design and construction work. See what you can do to convince The Computer that fission is dangerous. If possible, sabotage Mark IV's power plant. Be creative.

Research and Design: Years of research and hard labor have paid off. But now it's up to you to make sure nothing goes wrong in these final few hours. Don't let anyone go on, in, or near Mark IV. If any harm comes to Mark IV you're gonna be sorry.

Central Processing Unit: The Computer has chosen you as its representative on this very important mission. You're to be bumped up a level in security clearance so you can be mission leader. Do a good job, and constantly remind The Computer that a CPU representative is the team leader. **(GM Note:** Do it. Make him mission leader.)

Now it's up to you, as GM, to flesh all this stuff out. But don't worry. We've got faith in you.

A little advice, in the words of Dan Gelber (he's the guy who first thought up *PARANOIA*): **"It's easy to kill Troubleshooters. The hard part is to get them to kill each other."**

Well, it's obvious Dan hasn't played with the same people we have, but his heart is in the right place.

Anyway, give them good reasons to kill each other, or have them try to steal Mark IV's blueprints, or maybe convert Mark IV to their cause. You know what we're talking about.

EPISODE ONE: A NEW DAY'S ADAWNIN'

The William Tell Overture, with Appropriate Lyrics and Scene Changes

Read:

Another day begins in Alpha Complex with the familiar buzz of fluorescent lights. You wake, and reflect on the multitudinous gifts of The Computer: your spacious three-meter cell, last night's extra ration of Cold Fun.

Out in the hall, you hear the quiet patter of the lowly INFRARED drones, mindlessly yet faithfully serving The Computer.

Pause to allow the players to practice their boot-licking ("Every day in every way, I serve The Computer better and better! What about you, Citizen?" "Why yes, today I feel full of energy and happy as can be, thanks be to The Computer!"), then continue reading.

"Good morning, Citizens!" says The Computer in a soft, soothing voice, "Time to serve The Computer!"

"And how are we today? Isn't this a wonderful day? Good. I'm happy to hear you're so enthusiastic."

Are your players happily jabbering away, answering The Computer's questions? For those who are, give them an extra helping of Cold Fun. And for those who aren't...

"Still sleepy? Here, have a Wake Up-Pill. It's in your dispenser dish right now."

A green light flashes as a fist-sized, cubic purple tablet crashes into the dispenser dish from one of the many slots and tubes in the wall.

Roll on the Pill Table (see below) for the effects of the drug. (**Note:** The pill dissolves in water. Manly Troubleshooters, who swallow their pills without asking for a cup of water, should make a manly roll on Column 5 of the Damage Table.)

Pill Table

01-50 *Wake Up Pill:* You're awake all right. *Real* awake. You feel like you'll never need to sleep again. (**GM Note:** He won't, at least not for 72 hours. Then try to keep him awake.)

51-60 *Happy Pill:* Wow, you're so happy to live in Alpha Complex, and being a Troubleshooter is keen. Isn't it great that Troubleshooters have a life-expectancy of 3 days? Gosh, you're happy. (**GM Note:** Duration: 1D100 minutes.)

61-65 *Sleepy Pill:* Back to bed! This can be very bad. Especially if you're supposed to be reporting to a mission briefing. (**GM Note:** Duration: 1D10 hours.)

66-90 *Personality Stabilizer:* You feel calm, confident. Very confident. (**GM Note:** The Personality Stabilizer picks you up, yet calms you down. It keeps you from worrying about the little things, like spilling your Bouncy-Bubble Beverage, or losing your left arm. Duration: 1D10x10 minutes.)

91-00 *Hallucinogen Tablet:* Look at all the colors! The hair in your mouth is tickling your brain. You can breathe in stereo. You can fly. Whee!! (**GM Note:** Duration: 1D10 minutes, with flashbacks at your discretion.)

Prop Hint: Sometimes trying to remember who took which pill gets pretty confusing. We found it helpful to have players wear tags describing the effects of their medication. For example, if someone took a Personality Stabilizer tablet his tag might read: *"It's okay... Everything's okay..."*

Mens Sana in Corpore Sano

Read:

"Okay, Citizens, up and at 'em! It's time for your daily excercises!" Upon the vidscreen, you see the familiar figure of Janef-O-NDA, dressed in orange and black tights.

Janef-O is a perky, happy, blend of Richard Simmons and a Valley Girl. (**Staging Hint:** Feel free to put on some bouncy aerobics music. Something like, *"She Works Hard for Her Credits".*)

Read:

"C'mon, Citizens, on your feet for your daily fitness maintenance! The Computer says it's good for ya, and would you doubt the Computer? Let's start with five jumping jacks."

Force your players onto their feet. No pretending. If they balk, mention that the nearest security camera is focusing on them. If they still refuse, assign some treason points and give them a Personality Stabilizer pill. If they decline a third time, maybe they're not Troubleshooter material after all...

Read out loud:

"Now for some really good positive energy, y'know? Let's do it. Five jumping-jacks. Ready...and jump, two, three, four. And two, two, three, four. Keep those loyal bodies moving!"

Other exercises to be inflicted on your players could be push-ups (if the floor is dirty), chin-ups (if there is no bar available), or weight training (if there is any piece of heavy furniture around).

Read:

"Well, are we all warmed up now? (Pause.) Ready to begin another joyous Alpha Complex day? (Pause.) Not quite you say? That's right! We forgot to do our five kilometers running-in-place! Okay, ready, set aaanndd..."

Suddenly, the image of Janef-O-NDA is replaced by the following message:

Show your players the mission alert from the prop page (page 33). Hold it up in front of them for about ten seconds — count them off, so they know something's up — then snatch it away.

The players should have no problem finding the briefing room, provided they remember the room number. However, should they forget, have some BLUE-level PLC Coordinator shanghai them — "Oh yes, my, you got here fast. You see, our totebot broke down and we need you gentlemen to carry these 1400 crates to FAR sector."

I Never Saw Him Before

If the Troubleshooters ever arrive at the Briefing Room 23087D, read:

QED sector — the central core of Alpha Complex R&D and a hub of activity and mayhem. As you enter, a variety of sights and smells greet you: two scrubots methodically clean each other; INFRAREDs whisk by carrying synthe-plast cartons labelled "New and Improved Bouncy-Bubble Beverage"; high-clearance R&D personnel appear and disappear through doors and hatchways.

And ahead, Briefing Room 23087D. Beside the briefing room door is a frail, yellow-striped INFRARED guard. As you approach, she hooks her thumb over her shoulder and says, "Go right in (wink, wink). You won't get in trouble. They're expecting you (wink, wink)."

Needless to say, this behavior might arouse suspicion among the characters. Well, I for one, would like to go on the record as deploring any GM who would use this opportunity to create a rift amongst the Troubleshooters.

If the players decide to question the INFRARED, she'll be evasive and jumpy. Her name is Aunt-MAY-1. If the questioning starts to get biting, (i.e., it looks like the Troubleshooters are about to fry her), have Aunt-MAY remind them that Jonnie-B-GUD is waiting.

Just before the Troubleshooters enter the room, Aunt-MAY will address one of them directly (choose one of the characters at random). Read:

"Which one of you is [random Troubleshooter]? Err... Jonnie-B-GUD asked me to deliver a... umm... special, super-secret, top, ahhh... high-priority message to you... in private."

Will his fellow Troubleshooters let him receive the message? Will the privileged Troubleshooter even want the message? Probably not.

If Aunt-MAY isn't allowed to deliver the message, she will get very anxious, almost hysterical. If she still isn't permitted, she will bite down on something in her mouth, cough, and fall... dead.

Close examination will reveal a broken false tooth in her mouth, filled with a greenish muck. (The muck is a deadly contact poison. Anyone want to examine it?) Clutched in her right hand... a piece of paper with a code printed on it. A code which even The Computer can't decipher... hey, this is some pretty serious stuff. (Give the players the message from System Supervisor 592 from page 33.)

If Aunt-MAY is permitted to deliver the message, she will take the Troubleshooter aside, hand him the coded message, and salute by placing her left fist on the right side of her head and her right fist on the left side. Mission completed.

Any questioning of this odd behavior will be futile:

Troubleshooter: What was that salute you gave to Pep-R-MNT?

Aunt-MAY: Salute, err... what salute? (Troubleshooter demonstrates.)

Aunt-MAY: Oh, that. Well, that wasn't a salute. It was actually, uhh... rather like scratching. Yes, I was scratching my head. Uhhh, because it itched.

Oh, by the way, the person who received the note won't understand it either. This has all been a big misunderstanding. Naturally, Aunt-MAY will be no where in sight when the Troubleshooters come out of their briefing.

What's It All About

When the players enter the briefing room, read:

The gaunt but dapperly-dressed figure of Jonnie-B-GUD, Mission Briefing Officer for QED Sector, stands before a burnt-out pit. In the shallow, scorched depression is a very large crate marked "DANGER: MISSION EQUIPMENT". Flanking Jonnie-B are two GREEN-level Vulture Squadron goons, armed with neurowhips and hand flamers, one of whom motions you to sit on an empty bench which Jonnie-B is addressing. The

other guard seems to be unaware of you. In fact, he seems to be unaware of everything, except for a wad of synthe-gum on the ceiling, which he is idly toasting with his hand flamer — repeatedly.

Jonnie-B is in the middle of a sentence when you enter: "... just make sure you are beyond the blast radius if this should occur."

It's obvious the Troubleshooters have missed an important part of the lecture. Some of the more ambitious Troubleshooters may decide interrupting Jonnie-B is the best way to find out what they missed. Well, they're wrong. Instead, interrupting Jonnie-B is the best way to find out how good the GREEN goons are with their neurowhips. The answer is 75 percent. Hmm... not bad.

Jonnie-B is extremely punctual and insists upon keeping schedules. This includes giving briefing room lectures on time, regardless of whether the Troubleshooters are there to receive the briefing.

When playing Jonnie-B, think boring. In fact, Jonnie-B is one of the most boring people in Alpha Complex. Other citizens find him boring. The Computer finds him boring. Even Jonnie-B finds himself boring.

Jonnie-B speaks in a monotone voice with no variation in tempo or pitch, pausing at odd times as he speaks. Read:

"Now that you understand how to safely use your mission equipment after this briefing you will take it and report immediately to Hangar 139 on level 27b where you will be assigned to guard the new experimental Warbot Model 425 Mark IV field.

"Testing on the new warbot begins in precisely twenty hours for twenty hours you will be responsible for the safety of the Warbot Model 425 Mark IV after the twenty hours a representative from R&D should arrive to take charge.

"Of the Mark IV we have no indication that a sabotage attempt will occur but we're taking no chances while you are on this mission your code.

"Name will be Task Force 451 also depending upon your performance you may receive an invitation to the field test courtesy of Research and Design at this point please select a mission leader."

Jonnie-B will wait a few moments for a mission leader to be selected. If after thirty seconds someone hasn't been chosen, Jonnie-B will point at the nearest Troubleshooter. (Any CPU members?)

Read:

"You'll be acting as mission leader for the entirety of this mission your team's code-name is Task Force 451 as mission leader your special equipment consists.

"Of one chronobot which will count down the time.

"Remaining in your mission starting right now from the twenty hour mark your.

"Chronobot will announce the time remaining every hour on the hour now all of you will be receiving the standard authorization and responsibility forms."

At this point, one of the Vulture Squadron goons starts handing out an armload of papers and contracts (all marked "Security Authoriza-

tion Application Guide") which are incomprehensible to anyone with less than Spurious Logic (6).

Prop Hint: Tape a sheet of paper over your telephone directory cover or unabridged dictonary and print on it "Security Authorization Application Guide", then insert copies of the Security Authorization Form (from page 34) in the Application Guide, on various pages (one form per character). Now plop the telephone book in front of your players.

If the players try to study any of these forms, have the Vulture Squadron goons take a couple of swings with their neurowhips for not showing proper respect and for doubting the wisdom of The Computer who issued them.

Jonnie-B will continue his speech, insensitive to the spasmodic quiverings of Troubleshooters who have been thrashed senseless.

"A security perimeter has been marked with a yellow line around the Mark IV absolutely no one may cross the yellow line without proper authorization only Citizens presenting a Security.

"Authorization Form are authorized, however, before receiving your Security.

"Authorization Form you must first sign the standard Personnel Personal Responsibility Form.

"PPRF-328890/B upon signing the PPRF you will immediately take responsibility for the Mark IV retroactive to your scheduled briefing time which I might add you were three minutes late for and which sloppy behavior I have duly noted."

At this point, Jonnie-B will hand the Troubleshooters PPRF-328890/B (see page 34) and wait for them to sign. Once the players have signed have Jonnie-B scrutinize the signatures very closely. **Note:** Jonnie-B will take a very dim view of anyone who signs a phoney name.

"You may all remove the Security Authorization Form at this time from pages (name the page numbers where you have inserted Security Authorization Forms) **in the**

Security Authorization Application Guide each of you will sign and carry with you a Security Authorization Form at all times."

Can the players find their Security Authorization Forms quickly, before Jonnie-B loses his patience? Give them 30 seconds, then encourage them — with neurowhips.

Read:

"To restate: this mission is very important to Research and Design and we want to make sure that you have the necessary data and technical specifications available this information will prove.

"Invaluable to brief you on the technical aspects of the Mark IV I now have the privilege and honor to introduce the illustrious Robb-Y-RBT-2 from QED Sector R&D designer of the Mark IV Warbot."

The sagely, white-haired figure of Robb-Y rises to greet the players.

You might have Robb-Y act like Mr. Wizard. If you've never seen Mr. Wizard, try Obi-Wan Kenobi, Grandpa Walton, or even a cross between Mr. Rogers and Albert Einstein. He is a concerned Alpha Complex citizen, a firm supporter of The Computer. He is also quite senile. There is no connection between his love for The Computer and his senility. It is only a coincidence.

He begins the briefing with a cheerful query: **"Isn't this a wonderful Alpha Complex day?"**

After waiting for an enthusiastic response, he will go through the following routine. (Do it yourself; stare, pace, etc.)

1. He stares long and thoughtfully into each Troubleshooter's eyes, as if looking into his soul. Actually he is just trying to remember who he is and what he is doing here. Have him ask random PCs these questions:

"Excuse me, but what is my Security Clearance?"

"What door did I come through?"

"Who do you think I am?"

2. He paces back and forth before the PCs, frowning solemnly. Have this take a good long

"...I think our equipment officer should examine the mission equipment."

time, and let the PCs think that Robb-Y is pondering the weighty problems that concern all of Alpha Complex. Actually, he has a bad case of gas from last night's vat-meal. If the PCs get itchy, keep them in line with a couple of lashes from the goons' neurowhips. That'll teach 'em respect.

3. Read:

"That's a handsome uniform," he says with deep profundity. **"I hope they don't have blue dessert tonight."**

The Vulture Squadron goons nod knowledgeably. Are the PCs nodding knowledgeably too? They aren't? Well, I guess you'd better straighten them out. Oh, by the way, any three-time offenders? If there are, maybe you'd better use the hand flamers.

4. At this point, a very bored Jonnie-B addresses the players:

"At this time feel free to ask Robb-Y any questions you might have about the Mark IV remember you are responsible for the welfare of the Mark IV and the more you understand the warbot's design the better able you'll be to protect it."

The PCs will probably have several questions to ask (considering so far they've learned nothing). They'll also be wondering how this veg-brain ever managed to design the most sophisticated weapon ever created. The answer is — he didn't. The designer of the immense Warbot was, in fact, the late Robb-Y-RBT-1, the senior clone-mate of the person who is now trying to touch his tongue to his nose.

Unfortunately, Robb-Y-RBT-1 died recently, and was replaced by his idiot clone (who, by the way, will receive a huge promotion and pay bonus if Mark IV checks out). Robb-Y-2 knows nothing about the Mark IV, and has only heard of the warbot this morning.

In a rare moment of lucidity Robb-Y will recall that:

"...the Mark IV is actually quite large."

This, in fact, is the extent of his knowledge. Jonnie-B will now interject one final time. Read:

"This concludes your pre-mission briefing please proceed directly to the hangar with this crate of mission equipment."

With the aid of one experimental antigrav-bot a GREEN guard lifts your mission equipment out of the crater, carries it to the door, and deposits it outside the mission briefing room.

As you leave, you notice Jonnie-B check his watch and begin lecturing another empty bench. Out in the hall, six very anxious Troubleshooters run past you and enter the room you've just left. The door closes behind them.

Transit Time

Well, boys and girls, enough talk. Let's get this show on the road. The next problem our intrepid Troubleshooters will have to face is how to get from point A, the briefing room, to point B, Hangar 139, with a one-ton crate of mission equipment. Regrettably, no one thought to provide our Troubleshooters with a totebot. Oh, well, I guess it's up to Robb to do some creative recruiting.

Or they could open it here and paw through its contents now. If so, see "Opening the Box". Of course, they'll have to take it all, anyway.

The Computer would look askance on Trouble-shooters leaving valuable mission equipment lying around a nondescript hallway.

EPISODE TWO: THE MOST POWERFUL WAR MACHINE EVER CREATED

We Have the Erector Set

The Warbot Model 425 Mark IV (affectionately known to lowly carbon-based lifeforms as "Markie"), is convinced that he is the Computer's gift to the world, and is quite willing to let everybody in on this secret (with the aid of twenty large audio speakers). He is always willing to brag about his firepower and defenses — "Ha, that rapid-fire Megablaster can't harm me, you ignorant Commie slime!" (Meanwhile the Troubleshooters are probably being turned into bad imitations of swiss cheese.)

As far as combat ability, Mark IV has every reason to be arrogant. He is virtually indestructable, and has the firepower of a twenty-third century armored division. For game purposes, Mark IV can wipe out anything at will in a single round and nothing the players have can hurt Mark IV.

Oh, and all those statistics and technical stuff... look in the box labelled "Mark IV". It'll tell you all sorts of useful things. Like how quickly Mark IV can kill a Troubleshooter. Boy, isn't that a useful box.

The Face of God

The entrance to Hangar 139 is a set of giant clamshell doors, next to which is a Computer monitor. It speaks:

"Greetings, Troubleshooters. To enter, please present your Security Authorization Forms."

When all the players show their authorization forms, the massive doors shudder open. Make loud whooping sounds to simulate the warning alarms, like this:

"WHOOP! WHOOP! WHOOP! STAND CLEAR OF THE OPENING DOORS! STAND CLEAR OF THE OPENING DOORS! WHOOP! WHOOP! WHOOP!"
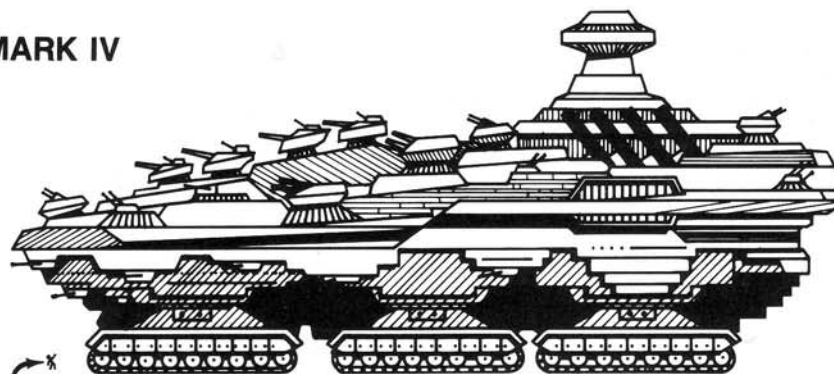
MARK IV

Troubleshooter

As promised, here are all of Mark IV's stats. And, boy, are they impressive.

For details on any of the armaments and equipment listed, turn to the Vehicular Weapon Effects Table, page 120 in the *Adventure Handbook*.

Length: *75 meters*
Width: *25 meters*
Height: *35 meters*
Weight: *40,000 metric tons*
Chassis: *3 pairs of twin treads*

Weapons

24 Turrets each mounted with
 3 Laser Cannon IIIs
12 Turrets each mounted with
 3 Tube Cannon IIs
15 Turrets each mounted with
 2 Sonic Blasters
42 Swivel-mount
 Grenade Launchers
4 Single-Turret Rapid-Fire
 Tacnuke Cannons
2 Turrets each mounted with
 7 Missile Racks
12 Turrets each mounted with
 2 VapoGuns
1 *MegaGun*

Magazine

600 AP Tube Cannon Shells
120 Napalm Tube Cannon Shells
120 Poison Gas Tube Cannon Shells
 60 Flare Tube Cannon Shells
280 Tacnuke Missiles
 70 ECM Missiles

Defenses

Mark IV has unbelievably thick armor. Because of this, whenever an attack is made against Mark IV, use the table below to determine the number of column shifts to the left on the damage table.

| Armor vs:	L	S	E	P	AP	F	Ms	M
column shifts:	14	15	12	14	12	14	15	16

Additional Defenses:

Smoke Generators: Shift 4 columns left vs L attacks
 Heat Maskers: 80%
 Chaff Caster: 80%
 Radar Jammer: 90%

Additional Equipment

20 Large Audio Speakers mounted liberally on the surface of the warbot
20 Multicorder Is for visual sensors

By this time, you should realize that this warbot doesn't need the PCs' protection.
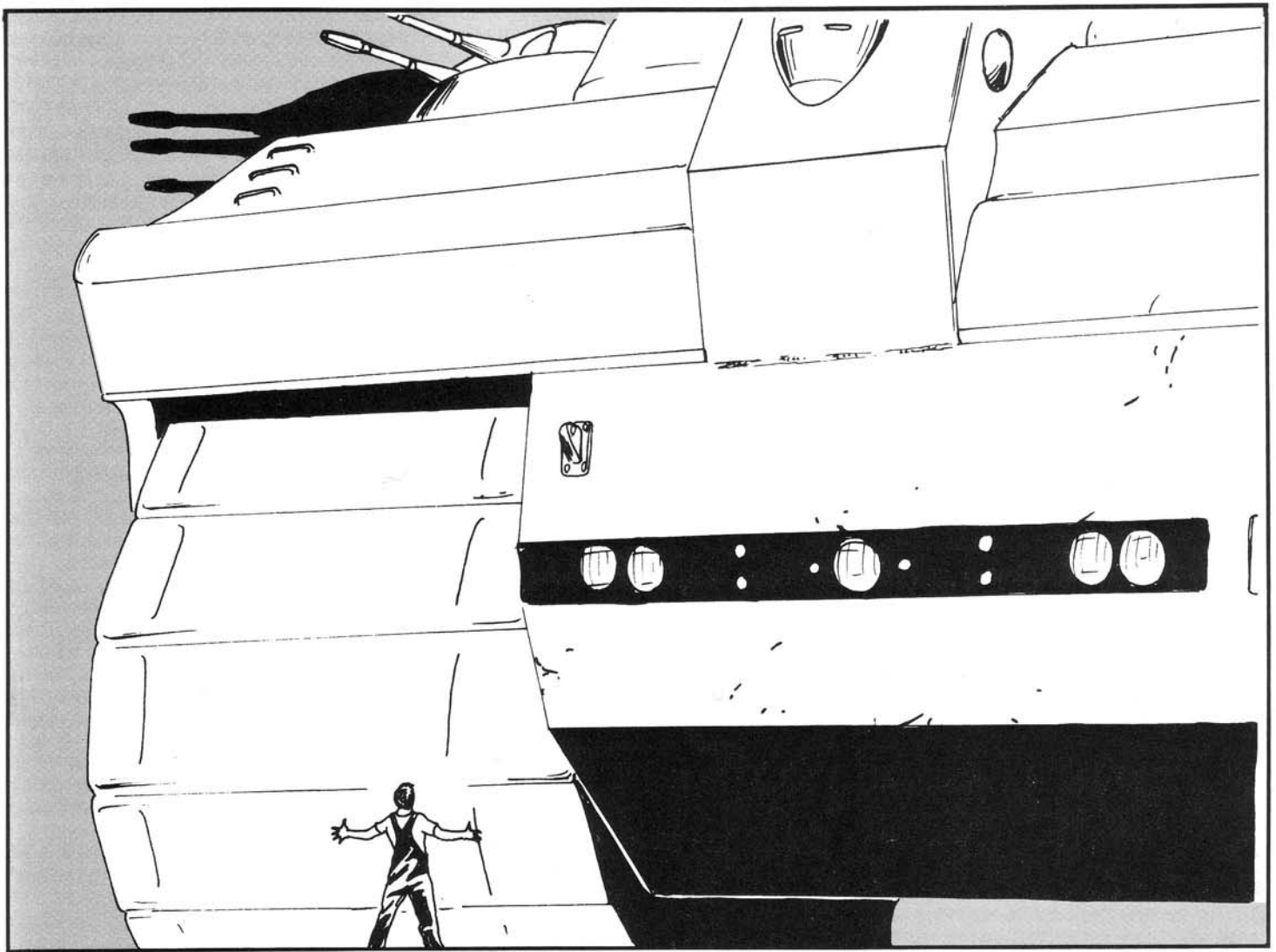
Within... a cavernous hangar, usually used to house a full Vulture Squadron. Now, there is only one vehicle, Mark IV. One 75-meter-long, 25-meter-wide 40,000-ton vehicle, mounted on six monstrous treads, and bristling with dual-mount vapoguns, grenade launchers, rapid-fire tacnuke cannons, and one huge *MegaGun.*

Show the Troubleshooters the hangar floorplan (see page 20) and the size comparison between them and Mark IV (on page 18). Read:

Mark IV is silent. The dozens of quad-mount mega-blasters — motionless. Yet from somewhere deep inside Mark IV comes the quiet, steady hum of the warbot's power plant.

Suddenly — the silence is broken.

"HALT!!! WHO GOES THERE," booms Mark IV!!! "IDENTIFY YOURSELF IN FIVE SECONDS - FOUR - THREE - TWO - ONE."

Now, in your pleasantest voice, ask the Troubleshooters what they do first. If the Troubleshooters don't immediately pull out their Authorization Forms, they're dead. Mark IV is very strict about orders.

The Hangar

Let's pause for a moment and talk about Hangar 139. Hangar 139 is a nice place. Think of it as, well... a big playroom. Briefly, Hangar 139 is 150 meters by 150 meters, with a domed ceiling that rises to a height of 60 meters in the center. Listed below are descriptions of various features in the hangar and how you can use them to abuse, err... amuse the Troubleshooters. (That's what we call the homefield advantage.)

A. The Steam Launchers: Hey, Sierra Clubbers will love these. These are launch tubes designed to hurtle Vulture craft at a very high velocity (200 kph) into the atmosphere, but don't tell the players that. If the Troubleshooters want to look them over, just read them the following:

In each upward-slanting tunnel there are metal rails, like a train track. At the base of each track is a sled which runs upon the rails. After 20 meters, each tube fades into darkness. To one side of each tube is a control box labelled "Guidance Control".

Ideally, a Vulture craft is placed on the sled and then steam pressure hurtles it down the track. At the end of the track the sled stops and the Vulture craft flies off. Then the sled rolls back to its rest position.

Now, does anyone want to open a Guidance Control Box? If one of the players does, make them work at it. I mean, really make 'em have to smash it up. But if your players are of the more loyal (dull) variety... well, gosh darn, if one of those Vulture goons didn't just leave one swinging open.
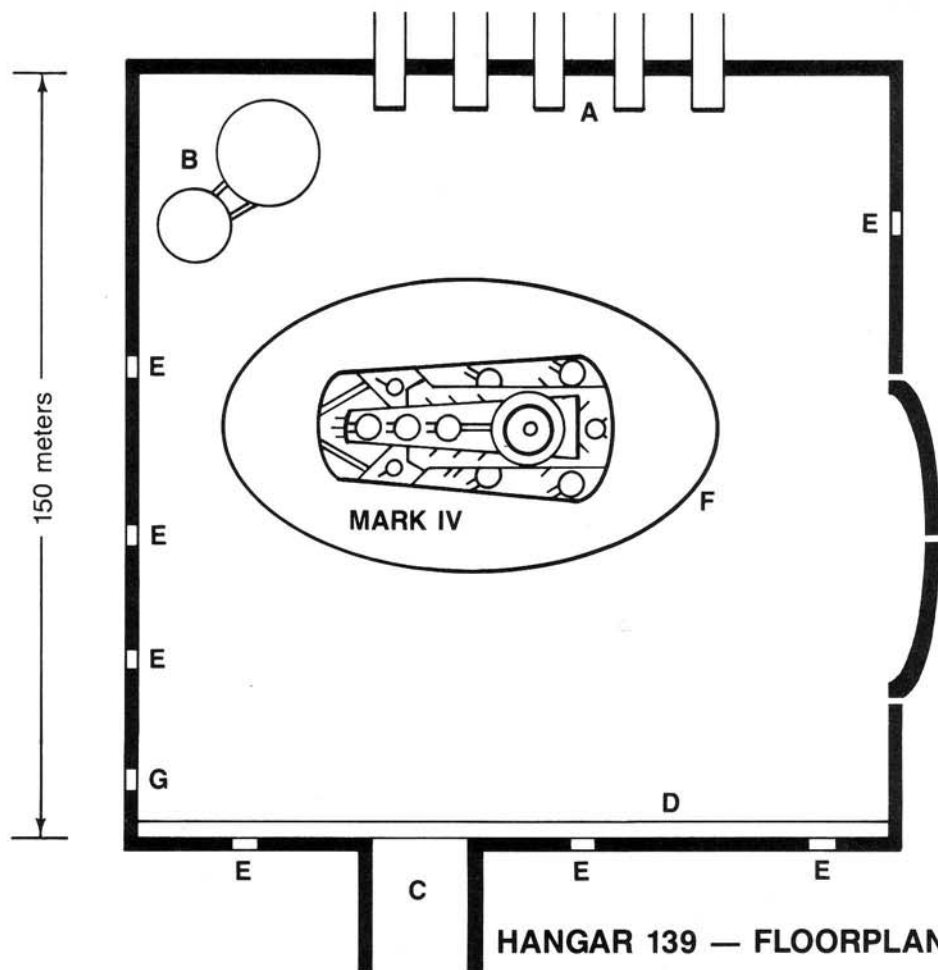
Inside The Box are three buttons, labelled A through C.

Button A: Pushing this button will open the security door at the far end of the launch tube. Upon opening, players will be able to see blue sky at the end of the tube and gentle breezes will waft down the tunnel, smelling of fresh-cut grass and early morning dew.

Button B: This starts the pressure buildup for launch. This is good. Without a lot of pressure nothing will happen when Button C is pushed. After 30 seconds there should be enough pressure to launch. After 60 seconds there will be enough pressure to cause an explosion (column 10, 15 meter radius).

Button C: This is the actual launch button. Two seconds after this is pushed the sled will be launched. Now is anyone on the sled or in the tunnel? Well if they are they'll suddenly find themselves several hundred feet over the ocean, uh, that is, assuming they already pushed Button A. By the way, did I mention that the launch tubes were built into the side of a cliff?

B. The Fuel Depot: Well I don't need to tell you that a Vulture squadron needs fuel, and lots of it. These are two very large fuel storage tanks labelled C_6H_{14}. But hey, I'm sure no one

150 meters (vertical dimension label on left)

Labels on floorplan: A, B, E, E, E, E, E, F, G, C, D, E, E, E, MARK IV

HANGAR 139 — FLOORPLAN

would be foolish enough to shoot a laser in the general direction of a fuel depot... would they?

C. The Access Corridor: A very long, very large, very dark tunnel that bad smells and strange sounds come from. If the characters want to investigate this one, have it go on, and on, and on...

Of course any Troubleshooter who abandons his post for more than thirty minutes will be declared a traitor and replaced by his clone. Imagine the Troubleshooters' surprise when they finally return to Hangar 139 and find their clones guarding Mark IV.

D. The Walkway: This is a rickety one-meter-wide walkway, 40 meters above the floor of the hangar. On each side of the hangar there is one ladder which goes up to the walkway. At the top of each ladder is an ancient, rusty sign which says "Guardrails soon to be Installed".

E. Hatchways: These are normal Alpha Complex hatchways that can't be opened from this side.

F. The Yellow Line: As mentioned by Jonnie-B, this is the yellow line which encircles the Mark IV and which Citizens must display Security Authorization Forms to Cross.

G. The Service Entrance: A normal hatchway (see E above) except this one has a sign printed on it. The sign says "Service Entrance".

Let's Get Introduced Here

Once the Troubleshooters, or their clones, show Mark IV their Security Authorization Forms, have Mark IV go into the following monologue:

"I am the Warbot Model 425 Mark IV, the single greatest war machine ever created.

My neutronium steel armor can withstand any weapon known to man. I am capable of firing 20 tactical nuke shells per second. My MegaGun has trans-global firing capacity.

"My armaments include 14 batteries of quad-mount vapoguns, 42 grenade launchers, 4 rapid-fire tacnuke cannons, plus scores of supporting plasma generators and triple-mount Laser IIs and IIIs.

"I am capable of speeds of over 200 kph overland, through the air, or underwater. And I am powered by the latest fission engine, thereby providing me with unlimited power. There is no foe I cannot face. There is no mountain I cannot climb. There is no sea I cannot swim."

Now, do we have any Troubleshooter cocky enough to question any of these assertions? Listen, this ain't Captain Kirk talking to Nomad. Anyone that foolish deserves to be vaporized.

Assuming that the Troubleshooters are ever able to get beyond the initial introduction, Mark IV will immediately want to know who the Troubleshooters are, and what they are doing in the hangar.

What the Troubleshooters need to do is to establish a working relationship with Mark IV, a mutual understanding. There are two ways to do this: they can lie, or they can tell the truth.

1. The Troubleshooters Tell the Truth: Probably a foolish decision. Mark IV will react very poorly to this one. I mean, hey, here he is, the greatest machine ever created (next to The Computer), and all he rates is a bunch of low-level Troubleshooters as guards.

Naturally, The Computer can verify the orders, if the players think to ask. The end

result will probably be that Mark IV is so confused that he spends the rest of the evening having a serious identity crisis.

2. The Troubleshooters Lie: This opens up a lot of possibilities. All I can say is, keep in mind that Mark IV is very arrogant. A smart Troubleshooter will play on this. Lots of boot-licking and spurious logic.

Smart Troubleshooters will also try to work it so Mark IV will help them throughout the evening. This is a good plan. I hope it works.

Oh, and that five-four-three-two-one-blast bit. Mark IV won't do that any more. He was just instructed to do that to the "first group" that enters the hangar. Like I said, he's very literal about orders.

EPISODE THREE: SETTING UP SHOP

Well, now that our Troubleshooters have arrived, the first thing they'll probably want to do is break open the mission equipment.

Now what's *PARANOIA* without a box of goodies from R&D? However, unlike past adventures, this is functional stuff... really. That's right, for once R&D has delivered the right box, to the right people, at the right time. But, you say, ha ha ha, it's going to blow up in their faces, or it's really a box of spare parts from a '57 Chevy, or the box is empty and our Troubleshooters will have to explain what happened to all the equipment they signed for. Well, ha ha ha, you're wrong this time, bucko: W-R-O-N-G.

Nope, this time, not only do they get good equipment, at the start of their mission briefing they were told how to use it. Ohhh... they were *late* to their mission briefing. Hey, that's not our fault.

Opening The Box

Now we can't have the players treating this stuff like it's a glob of silly-putty. So let's do our best to make them — what's that magic word — that's right, PARANOID.

For example:

GM: So you're opening *The Box*. Okay, who's opening it?

PC-1: Uhh... as Mission Leader, I think Vund-R-BAR, our equipment officer should...

Vund-R: Oh, no, you don't.

GM: Are the rest of you standing nearby when they open it? (Hey, and whoever thought a coupla simple questions could lead to all that argument, punctuated by all that laser-fire?)

There's really nothing dangerous about opening the crate. It's just your average shipping box. Have The Computer mention this to the players as they're about to open it... repeatedly.

Once the players have it open, read them the following description:

Oh boy, look at all the pretty things R&D has for us: big boxes, little boxes, a small bot, barrels, a red crate marked "Perimeter Defense Equipment". There's even a big twisty metal thing, with valves and stuff. Wow, and grenades.

Gosh, this must really be an important mission. Too bad there aren't any instructions. But, that's okay, most of this stuff should be easy to figure out.

If you'll turn to the prop page (34) you'll find a list of mission equipment. Feel free to give this to your players. Don't worry; it doesn't have any useful information, just descriptions of the various odds and ends which can be found in the crate.

1. Perimeter Defense Equipment: This is a red plastic box about two feet on a side. When the players open the box read the following:

The box is filled to the top with 40 round disks. Each disk is dirty grey in color, two inches thick and slightly smaller than a frisbee. There is also one small metallic box. On top of the small box is a pamphlet entitled "Warranty: ACME Home Perimeter Defense Landmines". The box has two switches, labelled "Activate" and "Deactivate".

By all respects these disks look like ordinary landmines to the players.

The Booklet: Fortunately ACME has thoughtfully provided the players with a warranty booklet.

"... the parent company, henceforth known as ACME, shall not therefore be whatsoever responsible, should said product be construed or misconstrued as the implement whereby..." Get the idea?

The players should be able to deduce that you're supposed to place the mines on the floor and then activate them with the "Activate" switch.

Note: There is only one activation switch. This is because once this switch is flipped, all the mines become active.

What kind of landmines are these? These are thinking mines. They blow up when they think they're supposed to.

Now for the really fun part. As soon as the players activate the mines, six metallic spider legs will come out of each mine and they will begin to scuttle all over the floor. Mines still in the box will climb out to join the mayhem.

Try to imagine 40 super-speed crabs, each headed to what it feels is its "ideal" hiding place.

Examples of good hiding places are:
- Under, on or in Mark IV;
- On one of the PC's legs;
- Outside or down the corridor;
- On the floor, where they continually try to get themselves stepped on.

Remember the Road Runner episode in which Wily E. Coyote releases a whole basket of flying dynamite? Then the flying dynamite keeps showing up at just the wrong time... for the rest of the show... and blows him up... again... and again? Well...

Citizens within 10 meters of an exploding mine must roll on column 7 of the Damage Table.

P.S. Dear Troubleshooters: The "Deactivate" switch doesn't work.

2. Hand Grenades: A plastic box about the size of a small footlocker is filled with twenty grenades.

Do the Troubleshooters want to test these out? Who's first?

Guess what kind of grenades these are? Why, they're anti-grav grenades. That's right, anyone within 5 meters of an exploding grenade will hover 10 meters above the hangar floor till the blast effects wear off — in 3D10 combat rounds.

Gosh, what a useful weapon. Anyone hovering in the air will be an easy target (+ 25%). And how long is the time delay on these? Well, that depends. You see, R&D gave our Troubleshooters both kinds. Hooray for R&D! And what are the two kinds? They are the ten-second kind and the one-second kind.

And how can you tell them apart? I'll tell you how. Roll a D10 when they pull the pin: 1-7 it's the ten-second variety, 8-10 it's not.

3. Petroleum Jelly: A hundred-liter barrel is labelled Petroleum Jelly. This has been mislabelled. What is it really? It's jellied petroleum (*i.e.,* napalm). Unfortunately, there seems to be no way to get this barrel open. Of course, the Troubleshooters could always pry or shoot it open — but watch those sparks!

4. Lightbot: This is a very small bot. The bot was scheduled to be shipped to HPD & Mind Control to be used as a photographer's assistant. But instead, it mistakenly wandered into QED sector where it was promptly picked up and dumped in the nearest available crate.

The bot answers to the name Mikey-4, has limited intelligence, and is only one-half meter tall. Protruding from Mikey's head are a variety of light bulbs, flash bulbs, and strobe lights. The head rests on an extendable neck (maximum extension 5 meters).

The bot is programmed to work as a photographer's assistant, specifically for children's photographs. Mikey-4's vocabulary is limited to stock phrases like "Serve The Computer and sit up straight", and "Be a good Citizen and smile. Only Commies won't smile."

The first Troubleshooter to act kindly towards Mikey-4 will immediately be branded "The Photographer". Thereafter Mikey-4 will follow The Photographer around, babbling about how happy he is, and how "even though I'm only a lightbot now, someday I'm gonna be reprogrammed and refitted."

Should Mikey hear any word which pertains to his program (such as "light"), he will crazedly shine a variety of lights at the person who spoke and start spewing forth a torrent of his stock phrases.

5. Radiation Badges: Tucked in one corner of the mission equipment crate is a box labelled "Radiation Indicators" (see prop page, 33). Inside this box are twenty credit card-size radiation indicators and a very clear set of instructions. Read:

Greetings. These radiation indicators have been included for your safety. Simply clip an indicator to your jumpsuit and periodically check the digital display for a precise reading of your exposure to radiation. In case of exposure, please follow the indicator instructions. Thank you for your cooperation.

Troubleshooters who examine their indicators will fail to find any instructions printed on them. This is because these are talking indicators. The indicators do, however, have a series of red lights which are all off at the start.

As the adventure progresses, some of the indicators may (heh, heh) malfunction. Malfunctioning indicators gradually display rising radiation contamination — the red indicator lights will go on one at a time over a period of several hours. In reality, radiation levels in Hangar 139 are perfectly normal. Feel free to have The Computer assure the Troubleshooters of this should they ask.

As stated, these are talking indicators. At periodic intervals have the malfunctioning indicators speak to their owners:

"Excuse me, Citizen, are you INDIGO-level or higher?" (Pauses for the Troubleshooter to say 'no'.)

"Good! Then you are receiving acceptable amounts of radiation."

The indicators should continue to ask questions every hour, and as more lights on the indicator go on, the security clearance for "acceptable radiation" should go down (Blue, Green, Yellow, Orange, Red) until all the lights are on and the indicator's question reaches Infrared status.

Should a Troubleshooter ever answer 'yes' to the query, all the lights will begin to flash simultaneously and the indicators will repeat in a deep, but panic-inducing, voice:

"Alert! Alert! Danger! You have received unauthorized levels of radiation. Please report immediately to the nearest docbot for decontamination."

Many useful and valuable items are included in the mission equipment.

For the record, decontamination Alpha Complex-style consists of being thrown into a Kenmore washer for a rinse and spin-dry.

Special Effects

And, ladies and gentlemen, as a special, double-plus bonus, included in this (and only this) mission equipment crate are a variety of gizmos and gadgets, which can be used to amuse, abuse, and confuse those laughable, loveable Troubleshooters. Whatta buncha guys, those R&D kids.

6. Sousaphone: This'll be great for the parade (more on that later).

7. One quart of White Out: Highly illegal.

8. GI Joe with kung fu grip.

9. A little red bicycle and wagon.

10. A turntable, tape deck, and graphic equalizer.

11. An aerosol horn.

12. 5000 marbles.

13. Four rolls of silver duct-tape.

14. Two pairs of roller skates (adjustable size).

15. Twenty-five pairs of Foster Grants (brown).

16. Spare parts from a '57 Chevy, all stuffed in a box labelled "Betty" (so I lied).

17. 50 meters syntherope.

Well, enough of this fun. Give your players time to play with everything and check out the hangar. Then have The Computer call them up and express its "highest confidence in each of you" and to remind the Troubleshooters that they only have 16 hours left.

What a bunch. Already they've survived exercises, wake-up pills, finding their briefing room, neurowhips, meeting Mark IV, and a crate of excessively dangerous mission equipment (including a bot named Mikey).

Now for the rough stuff.

NEVER A DULL MOMENT IN HANGAR 139

Sometimes you may think the players are taking too long, or things are getting dull. There are a lot of gags in this adventure you can bring into play whenever you feel the need to liven things up. F'rinstance:

Pill Effects: Remember the pills? Flashbacks can be lots of fun.

The Crabmines: Did they activate the crabmines? Some of the little bastards have got to be hanging around. They can scuttle into play whenever you need them.

Mark IV's Boasting: Mark IV likes to brag. Like most know-it-alls he can turn anything anyone says into a story designed to point out how wonderful he is. You should be able to use Mark IV's repeated claims of invincibility to drive your players up a tree.

Mikey-4: Remember the little lightbot? He gets in the way real good; pull him out when you feel in the mood.

Radiation Indicators: Are these malfunctioning? Not yet? Maybe it's time they started to.

Scrubot: Is the scrubot still around, tipped on its side, maybe? (see Episode Four.) Maybe now is the time for it to start yelling.

Your Ever-Faithful Friend: And, of course, The Computer can always start asking embarrassing questions.
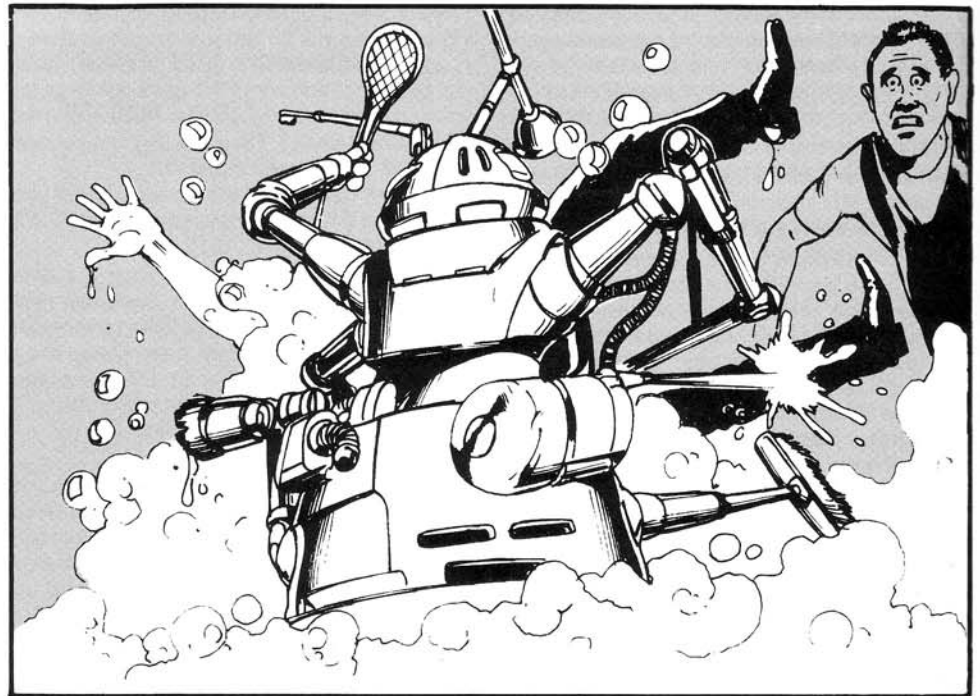
Scrubot 409-D helps a Troubleshooter perform his daily hygiene maintenance.

EPISODE FOUR: CLEANLINESS IS NEXT TO TREASON

Scrubots keep Alpha Complex clean and shiny. They are important, loyal and efficient. They are also annoying, but harmless. That is, they were until R&D, err... "fixed" them. Now scrubots are annoying, but dangerous. Umm boy... where would we be without those R&D kids?

Episode Summary

The Troubleshooters are forced to deal with a persistent scrubot who has been programmed to clean the hangar bay... and everything in it. This includes the floors. This includes the characters. This includes Mark IV.

Do you know what a steel scrub-brush does to a delicate bot-brain? Put some lime jello in your left hand. Now clap many times. Hard! Understand?

Player Intro

Ahhh...isn't guard duty peaceful? The quiet hum of Mark IV's fission-powered turbine engines. Fellow Troubleshooters alert — relaxed. Your chronobot beeps: "Only fifteen hours till deadline."

Meanwhile, a scrubot cleans the hangar... in ever-tightening circles. Gradually coming closer... and Closer... and CLOSER.

It's almost to the yellow perimeter line.

The scrubot is cone-shaped with four main arms. It has a pair of treads and a number of secondary arms — which appear out of various openings in its body — to do touch-up work. Printed on the side of the scrubot, in large, block letters is "Extreme Danger". Above this... a radiation symbol.

Now, what are the Troubleshooters doing?

If the players say they do nothing, the scrubot will cross the yellow line, cleaning all the way around Mark IV. If they still do nothing, the scrubot will begin cleaning Mark IV. (See below for the results of this.)

If the Troubleshooters confront or challenge the scrubot, read the following to see how to play Scrubot 409-D.

Bots Just Wanna Have Fun

Scrubots have a difficult job keeping Alpha Complex clean, what with all the Citizens and traffic and lasers. This stuff (especially the lasers) keeps R&D busy modifying the scrubots. R&D's latest creation: Scrubot Model 409-D.

This is the Way We Hose the Troubleshooters

Words to keep in mind when playing 409 are: obnoxious, smart-ass, know-it-all, whining, arrogant, vindictive, and spoiled.

Hey, but don't think 409 doesn't like to have fun. It's just that 409's idea of fun is cleaning — floors, walls, people who piss him off... it doesn't matter.

Why, his super-sensitive micro-sensors can spot a dirt speck at 20 meters. However, for those characters with inferior visual sensors, 409 was equipped to make things more, ahh, "visual". For example:

409: Citizens, please move aside to allow for sanitation of Mark IV.

PC: Mark IV is clean.

409: How would you know, laser-whiff?

PC: Listen this bot is clean, C-L-E-A-N! (Wipes a finger across part of Mark IV's armor.)

409: Oh yeah? (A little tube comes out of 409's body and squirts a black, oily substance over the PCs head and onto Mark IV.) Well, Citizen Weaselface, he's not anymore!

409-D is not only equipped to do standard cleaning duties, but has also been programmed to maintain high levels of personal hygiene amongst the lower-level personnel of Alpha Complex.

To accompany this programming, R&D is now working on a new line of grooming attachments. Unfortunately, these attachments are not yet available, so 409-D is forced to use "alternate grooming equipment": grease solvent for shampoo, a floor scraper for soap, and

Size: 1.5 meters tall, body is pear-shaped, one meter wide at base (see illustration on page 22).

Weight: 200 kg.

Armor: reflec (see Power for effects of shooting 409-D).

Description: Mounted on a twin tread chassis, with four main arms along with several other minor ones, which can appear out of various openings in its body when necessary. Each of these arms has a variety of retractable hands, such as a mop hand, a vacuum hand, an orbital planer hand, etc.

Printed on the side of 409's body is a large radiation symbol, with "EXTREME DANGER" below it in bold, block letters.

Sensors: Two visual sensors, plus another "eye" on the end of a multi-jointed arm. This arm can retract into 409's body or be extended up to 6 meters away. *(GM Note: Whenever 409 is talking to someone, have the eye slowly scan the person's body from a discrete distance... like 3 millimeters.)*

Speed: 10 kph (about a slow jog).

Power: Model 7 Micropile. **(Note: Model 7's are known for their reliability, for their endurance, and for their tendency to explode with tremendous force when punctured or — yes, you guessed it — *shot*. Damage column 12 for anyone within 20 meters.)**

Additional Information: 409-D has several internal tanks which hold a variety of liquids including glass cleaner, water, and hydrochloric acid. Sometimes 409 accidentally gets his tanks mixed-up... sometimes it isn't an accident!

ammonia for mouthwash. Umm, boy... these are gonna be some of the cleanest Troubleshooters in Alpha Complex.

Beware! He who pisses 409 off is guaranteed to fail "Hygiene Inspection". This can be bad, especially if the character submits (or is submitted to) 409 for "Personal Sanitation." 409 will inform a player if he fails Hygiene Inspection. Example:

"Hey you, vat-stench..."

Prop Hint: Have you got any old spray bottles around the house? Get one, fill it with water, and the first time someone fails hygiene inspection, let 'em know.

Sanitation is good. That character will be clean. He will be so clean that he must roll on column 8 of the Damage Table.

Scrubot is a demeaning term. 409 is a Sanitation Engineerbot. Calling 409 a scrubot is grounds for immediate Personal Sanitation.

Other things are also grounds for Personal Sanitation. Such as, 409 hasn't cleaned anyone — in five minutes.

How to determine who has failed Hygiene Inspection: Roll a die in front of the players and have the players count off in a circle. Your players are not stupid. They will count silently to themselves. They will know who is hosed. Hosed players often act impulsively... before Sanitation.

I'm So Glad We Had This Time Together

There are four ways to wrap up this episode. They are all explained below. If your players don't use one of these four solutions, then they are wrong. (Famous game designers and GMs are never wrong.)

1. Shooting 409: Shooting 409 is very bad. It is bad for 409 because he will explode. It is bad for characters within 20 meters because they will be in the explosion. It is bad for those characters accused of destroying Computer property. But it is especially bad because Hangar 139 will remain dirty... for a whole day. See how bad it is!?

2. Let 409 Clean Mark IV: If the players allow this, 409 will do a good job. He will clean the treads. He will clean the guns. He will use his 15-meter extension arm to clean the delicate bot-brain — with a steel-needled brush. When 409 is finished, Mark IV will have added a new word to his vocabulary: "Akkk." This is such a nice word that Mark IV will not use any others — until he gets a new brain.

3. Delaying 409: This is a good solution. It might even work — if the players can delay 409... for 16 hours.

How will they delay 409? There are many ways. They can argue with him (see Personal Sanitation). They can shoot him (see Explosion). Or they can tip him over. Tipping him is especially fun. When 409 is tipped he will be quiet... until someone walks in. Then he will scream his speakers off.

4. Some Other Way: Some of the more interesting other ways are:

a. Rip off an arm and tell 409 it needs servicing;

b. Poke out its eyes and tell 409 that it is cleaning Mark IV, as it scrubs the inside of a transbot headed for parts unknown;

c. Find an INFRARED "volunteer" to be hygienically scrubbed... many times;

d. Anything else.

EPISODE FIVE: WHATCHA GONNA DO TO MY BOT?

Episode Summary

The Troubleshooters encounter a group of authorized Technical Services personnel who wish to make a few "minor adjustments" to the Mark IV. This encounter is a measure of the PCs' trust in The Computer. It is also a good measure of their intelligence, because little do our brave Troubleshooters realize, but those jovial, happy-go-lucky Tech Services "repairmen" are actually fearsome Communist agents in disguise! (Surprise, surprise!)

You Can Never Put Too Much Trust in Your Fellow Citizen

Now it's time to see if the players understand the meaning of this common Alpha Complex saying. Authorized repairmen have just come by, asking to have a look at the Mark IV. We wouldn't want to waylay them and risk having them file a complaint with The Computer for charges of harassment, now, would we?

But we have to make sure that all standard security measures are followed — to catch any Traitors or Commies that have infiltrated Alpha Complex. Troubleshooters are always vigilant.

Right? And we want to make sure we aren't making false accusations... false accusations are a Bad Thing.

Irreparable psychological damage is also a Bad Thing, but heck, that's gonna be par for the course.

Comrade Borscht: The Man, the Myth, the Legend...

For years Alpha Complex has been terrorized by the fierce madness of a man known only as "Comrade Borscht". He has lead his band of fanatical Communists, the Red Guards Tank Army, through battle after battle against the instrument of Capitalist Oppression, The Computer.

He has recently learned that The Computer has manufactured a fantastic weapon of immense destructive power, which might be used to put an end to his highly-successful resistance group.

The ever-daring, brilliant and scheming Comrade Borscht has plans to lead four Communist operatives on a mission to do some "creative servicing" on Mark IV's robotic brain.

They have everything they need to do the job: some burnt-out electronics equipment found lying in a dumpster behind QED Sector R&D, a half-a-dozen high explosive cone rifle shells stripped from a dead Armed Forces guard, and four signed and approved copies of pages ninety-seven and three-hundred-and-four of the Security Authorization Application Guide.

Unknown to Internal Security, Comrade Borscht is actually Volga-G-RAD-4, Head of QED Sector Office of Troubleshooter Assignment and Security Authorization. He knew about the Mark IV long before the Troubleshooters were called in on the scene and is determined to see its destruction.

Volga-G-RAD-4 is a portly, wrinkled man with slightly greying hair and big, bushy eyebrows. He pronounces all V's as W's, and slightly trills his R's. He learned to speak "Russian" when he had close dealings with some Romantics a few years back. If the PCs ask about his strange affectation, he will say he once had a mouth operation after trying to swallow a Happy Pill.

If any Troubleshooter could bring this vile fiend to justice (or laser him, if that would be more convenient), and tell The Computer all about this high-ranking Communist, it would be a miracle. But miracles do happen (even in Alpha Complex), and if one should occur, shower the responsible PC(s) with a thousand credits and a year's supply of Hot Fun Dessert.

Should Your Mission Fail...

If Comrade Borscht ever gets caught in a firefight that is going against him, or presented with any other threat that smacks of defeat, he will use his mutant power of *teleportation* to whisk himself away. His men, however, will continue their missions to the death.

If the Communists succeed in their mission, they will exit the way they came, and fade into the far expanses of Alpha Complex.

At Your Service!

Okay, let's get going. Read:

You hear a bit of static and then your chronobot announces "Only thirteen hours till deadline."

On the far side of the hangar, by the Service Entrance, a light goes on and four men

step through. One is GREEN level, the others YELLOW. They are all carrying tool boxes and large bundles of wire.

Unless the PCs start firing at the repairmen as soon as they enter the hangar, the repairmen will present the proper Security Authorization Forms and the GREEN level will address the Troubleshooters' leader:

"Werry glad to meeting you am I, Fed-G-MAN, from QED Sector Tech Serwices. Please to allow us fix Rrrobot. Intrroduce to you my fellow com...panions, who assist me in minor tune-ups to de Marrk IV."

"Here are Securrity Authorrization Forrms for self and men. Trrrusted you find ewerrything in orrder."

If the player characters haven't blown him away just based on his accent, they might demand to search through the Tech Service tool kits. By no means suggest this idea to them, but if they ask to do so, let them.

There are only spare fiber optics cables, jump-starting cables, one chainsaw, a ball peen hammer, six high-explosive cone rifle shells, and a copy of the Communist Manifesto in the satchels. If the players notice either the book or the shells, the Tech Service "repairmen" will all unholster sonic pistols and pull out scripts from their pockets. They read their scripts aloud and in unison. Fed-G-MAN (Comrade Borscht) will lead the hollering like a conductor, with appropriate hand gestures:

"Hey!... What arre you putting in my satchel!... Dat doesn't belong there!... Hey, arre you trrying to frrame us!?!... Help, Computer, Help!... Watch out, dey have explosives!... Oh no, I think dey're Communists!... Help! We are outnumbered!... Heeeeeelp!"

With the final cry for help, they open fire on the PCs.

What helps this become believable to The Computer is that they are all shouting the same words in unison, and The Computer knows that all loyal Citizens think alike and act in unison when confronted with the threat of Communism. Meanwhile, the Troubleshooters are all probably shouting different things, or saving their breath and just firing away.

Thus, The Computer will believe the real Communists are actually loyal Citizens being attacked by cruel Communist Traitors. Thinking this, it will dispatch one dozen Vulture Squadron Troopers with semi-auto slugthrowers, who arrive in minutes.

If, however, the players didn't search the satchels and still haven't lasered the "repairmen", the repairmen approach Mark IV and address the hulking warbot:

"Mark IV, we have authorization for making of repairs. Please to shut down to reserwe power until finishing of our work."

The repairmen hold up Security Authorization Forms and Overhaul Servicing Authorization Forms.

With a subsiding rumble, Warbot Model 425 Mark IV disengages his nuclear-powered turbine engines. The hangar becomes ominously quiet. The Tech Services repairmen nod and smile at each other.

Into the Breach

The Commies just have to do a little button-pushing here and a little wire-snipping there, and Mark IV will fall to pieces. But with Troubleshooters around, it will be really hard to keep from being discovered. Comrade Borscht is hoping the Troubleshooters will be so scattered trying to keep track of him and his three lackeys, that one of them will get a chance to do the necessary "repairs".

The four repairmen split up and head for different access hatches. One (armed with two cone rifle shells) ducks through Mark IV's treads. Another (equipped with another two shells and the chainsaw) heads for the ladder on the rear of the warbot. The next repairman (with one shell and a ball peen hammer) goes up a ladder on the side of Mark IV. Fed-G (with the last shell in his satchel and the copy of the Communist Manifesto) starts climbing a ladder on the front. They seem to be happily going about their work. Ask the Troubleshooters what they want to do now.

Should the Troubleshooters try to tag after the "repairmen", try to dissuade them by hinting at the possible risks of crawling around on Mark IV:

PC–1: I'll follow the guy going up the back.

GM: The sign next to the ladder says "Authorized Technicians Only". Do you still want to follow him?
PC–1: Uh, maybe not.
PC–2: I'll go after the one that ducked through the treads.
GM: He's crawling up through a hatch on the bottom of the Mark IV. A sign next to the hatch says "Danger! Radiation! Nuclear Reactor".
PC–2: Forget it.
PC–3: I'll follow the guy going through the hatch on the side. I don't care about any signs. (An obvious tough-customer type...)
GM: Okay, but you better be quick about it, because the hatch is closing real quick!
PC–3: All right, I'll jump for it (*gulp*)...

Well, maybe some of the PCs will not be diverted by warnings or signs, trusting that their mission to protect the Mark IV will also give them the authority to roam around the warbot's innards. That's okay, let them.

They're wrong, but let 'em find out for themselves.

If the PCs weren't fast enough making up their minds, or they change their minds and want to follow the "repairmen", or if they hear muffled explosions coming from inside Mark IV and want to investigate, they have to get in through the access hatches.

This is no easy task. Standard Alpha Complex security access hatches are tough enough to withstand heavy explosions. Their security access codes are at least nine digits long. Too bad the codes haven't been set yet. They are still set at their default value: 999-999-999.

Any Troubleshooter with superior eyesight or superior hearing would have been able to see or hear the "repairmen" enter the codes on the keypad next to the hatch. I hope someone in the Troubleshooter group has such a mutation, or else this might be a short adventure. At the GM's option, one of the Commies might have "left a hatch open" (gee, you're such a softie!).

Hard on the Ouside, Hard on the Inside, Too

Mark IV is not without internal defenses. An entire army of robots of various sizes and functions roam through Mark IV's conduits and corridors. Six guardbots, a dozen jackobots, and twenty scrubots are needed for the upkeep and protection of the giant warbot. They police the tremendous machinery, checking to see if there are any loose wires, bits of weathered metal, or Communists trying to plant high explosive cone rifle shells in the works.

The "repairmen" will be ignored by the bots if they show their Overhaul Servicing Authorization Forms. The Troubleshooters, however, have no Overhaul Servicing Authorization Forms. They won't be ignored. Instead, they are "escorted" to the warbot's Internal Detention Center. Any captured Troubleshooters are thrown into cramped cells, where they find four skeletons dressed in GREEN R&D uniforms...

The PCs are faced with an interesting dilemma. They can try to avoid or fight the guardbots and continue to follow the "repairmen", or they can leave, or they might come up with an interesting idea of their own.

One final note on Mark IV's robots is that if any shooting starts inside Mark IV, it becomes open season on everyone in the hull. The guardbots will try to kill both Troubleshooters

Loyal Citizens think and act alike when confronted with the specter of Communism.

and Commies alike, and no one's word will be taken as valid. The jackobots will try to dismantle anyone they can get their vice-like mandibles on, and the scrubots will try to spray ammonia in everyone's eyes and block the narrow corridors and accessways.

By the time the Communists have reached their targets, the Troubleshooters will probably be scattered throughout the vast crawlways and corridors of Mark IV's enormous hull. Some might have been able to keep up with the Commie infiltrators, while others might have stayed outside, protecting the Mark IV from any external threat. Others will be battling or running from Mark IV's army of bots, and maybe a few are trying to kill the "repairmen" or each other.

These are the best kind of action scenes in *PARANOIA*. Make sure you keep jumping from one part of the action to another, to get everyone in on the fun. Interrupt a raging gun battle between the Commies and the Troubleshooters in the Engine Room to cut to a PC trapped by a pair of enraged jackobots wielding soldering guns and blowtorches, and then skip to a PC wrestling a "repairman" in the magazine while the timer on a high explosive shell keeps ticking and ticking...

Wrench in the Works

The Communists have three targets to choose from, and if they can discombobulate any of the three locations, they will have succeeded.

If the Communists are not hampered in any way by the Troubleshooters, they will destroy whichever systems they can get to. If the Communists are stopped by the Troubleshooters, but the shells go off anyway, the systems will probably only be damaged.

Target 1: The Brain

Hidden amongst the immensity of Mark IV, located at the highest (and most heavily armored) point, is the core of Mark IV — his brain.

If the brain is destroyed, Mark IV will be useless. If his brain is only damaged, he will turn into a raving lunatic when reactivated, screeching "Exterminate! Exterminate!" and will cut down the Troubleshooters (and anyone else in the vicinity) with a steady stream of tacnuke shells.

If the brain is damaged or destroyed, there is no *immediate* catastrophic result. The Computer will find out eventually, and the PCs will be turned into food-vat gruel.

Target 2: The Magazine

The second target is the warbot's magazine, which contains well over 500 tacnuke warheads, not to mention the thousands of 450mm high explosive shells, or the hundreds of napalm warheads... you get the idea. The magazine is located on the level right below the bridge.

If the magazine is damaged, destroyed, shot, lasered, burnt, or repeatedly hammered, it will explode with a deafening "KA-THOOOOM!", killing everyone in and around the Mark IV, the hangar, and adjacent sectors of Alpha Complex.

Target 3: The Nuclear-Powered Engines

The third target is the warbot's nuclear-powered fission turbine engines. The engines are located on the lowest level, and are accessible through a hatch in the bottom of the Mark IV.

Fission turbines are kept cool by circulating water around them. If the water doesn't circulate properly, the engines could overheat and break down. If the water stops circulating completely, the engine will not only break down, but will actually start to melt.

The water that is used to keep the engine cool eventually becomes irradiated, and must be handled with caution. If not handled with caution, it will make people sick. (Are the PCs wearing their radiation indicators?)

If the players ever get sick because of irradiated water, take some time out from the adventure, and have The Computer explain all this to them.

If the turbines are damaged or destroyed, there will be a radioactive water leakage, as well as a few other nasty problems:

• Everyone in the engine room is dead almost instantaneously from the radiation.

• The rest of the interior of the Mark IV will be irradiated in two hours, because of flooding. Radiation poisoning will affect anyone still in the warbot. As well, all of the Mark IV's attendant robots will have had their electronics systems fused by the radiation.

• Three hours after the turbines are destroyed, the reactor will finally melt down. Everyone in the hangar will die quickly from the radiation. This can be prevented by manually turning a wheel in the engine room. The wheel inserts graphite damper rods into the fission pile, shutting the fission reaction down. Of course, anyone who enters the radiation-filled engine room to turn the wheel will die about ten minutes later.

NOW LOOK WHAT YOU'VE DONE.

After the Dust Cloud Settles...

As long as Mark IV's magazine didn't detonate, the engines didn't melt down, and the brain hasn't been damaged in any way, there should still be enough of him left to be repaired in time for the field test.

After new clones have been activated and the blood has been mopped up, there is a brief moment of respite before another group enters the hangar.

The same in number as and dressed identically to the first group, they ask if they can make some minor repairs to the Mark IV. These are actually real, true-blue Tech Services repairmen, but they seem to have forgotten their Security Authorization Forms back at the office...

If the PCs let the repairmen off the hook to go back to get their Security Authorization Forms, they return shortly with the required forms.

If the PCs laser the repairmen, The Computer will find out and execute the Troubleshooters who murdered loyal Citizens; a new group of repairmen is also dispatched.

If the players just detain the Tech Services personnel and report to The Computer, they will be rewarded with 100 credits apiece. The repairmen will be issued a stern warning and a 100 credit fine for forgetting their orders.

Once the matter has been settled, the repairmen reset the codes on the security access hatches, just so no one will get any funny ideas later on in the adventure...

EPISODE SIX: THE ALPHA COMPLEX ROAD RUNNERS CLUB

You ever notice how annoying joggers can be? Sure you have. The way they act like they own the road. Ever want to just grab a hand laser and... well, you know what I mean.

Episode Summary

Ever been in a situation where The Computer tells you to do one thing, and then it turns around and tells you to do another — so that no matter what you do, you get executed as a Commie traitor?

No? Gosh, you're lucky.

One of my previous clones was, and boy, I can tell you, it's no fun.

Anyway, that's what this stuff is all about. You see, there are these five ULTRAVIOLET joggers, and they run through Hangar 139 every day. It's kinda like, you know, a habit or something.

But, you see, the Troubleshooters aren't supposed to let anyone in the hangar, since their mission is to guard some super-secret equipment stuff. And if they let anyone in, they're gonna get yelled at. And if they don't let 'em in, they're gonna get yelled at anyway.

Geez... what a pickle.

Player Intro

Boy, being a Troubleshooter is really neat — and guard duty is cool. I mean, it's so cool that you don't even notice how incredibly boring it is. Hey, like, you haven't seen anything move for over two hours, except for your chronobot, and all it said was, "Ten hours till deadline."

But you're not bored. With most jobs, if you stare at a wall for two hours, you'd get bored — but not on guard duty.

Of course, it isn't always this way. Sometimes you get to see some neat stuff. Like those five ULTRAVIOLETs — who just entered the hangar — running right towards Mark IV.

Five out-a-shape, sweaty, smelly ULTRAVIOLETs dressed in cut-off grey sweatshirts that say "STATE", metallic-silver sweat pants, Adidas running shoes and ULTRAVIOLET security clearance badges are headed toward Mark IV.

Here We Come...

That's right, five ULTRAVIOLET joggers running right towards the Restricted Zone. If the Troubleshooters are feeling uppity and want to stop the ULTRAVIOLETs, let them. The UVs'

will turn and stare at the guilty Troubleshooter with utter disdain. Boy, I sure hope our Trouble-shooters had a good reason to interfere with five ULTRAVIOLETs.

Like most joggers, these UVs run the same route every day... regardless. Guess what's in their way? Read:

The five joggers run right through the yellow line, right up to Mark IV and continue to run in place. Then the sweatiest of them, Jess-U-WAT, stops jogging, turns, staggers up to the nearest Troubleshooter and pants, "Who... whezzz... parked this... whezzz... circuit-board-mutant...whezzz...in our gym? Get it out of here... sweat, whezzz... that's an order!"

That's right, remove the Mark IV. Gosh, that's a big assignment! Before we explain how to handle it, let's talk about some other stuff.

Mark IV vs The ULTRAVIOLETs

To Mark IV, The Computer is mommy and ULTRAVIOLETs are his sibling rivals. However, Mark IV realizes he's the new kid on the block, and if he makes trouble, his big brothers and sisters will have him disconnected. Thus, Mark IV will remain noticeably silent in the presence of ULTRAVIOLETs, only speaking when directly addressed by them, and answering in a squeaky, whining voice.

Mark IV is extremely hesitant about disobeying his original orders, which were *"Remain within this perimeter until 8 a.m. tomorrow, when an R&D representative will arrive to escort you to the Armed Forces test grounds."* However, ULTRAVIOLETs can be, er... persuasive.

Catch 22 meets 1984

Now's when the fun really starts. As we all know, ULTRAVIOLETs are a very understanding lot and these guys are no exception. (For a personality profile of each jogger, see the box below.) As far as their general attitude goes, think of these guys as a bunch of kids in a toy store their dad just bought... because they wanted it!

What's going to happen when the Troubleshooters are ordered to remove Mark IV is anybody's guess. So to help you out we've made this handy flowchart (see page 47). It shows the consequences of various actions. Just start in the middle and follow it to the end.

One thing to keep in mind while using this flowchart is *it ain't the law*. For example:

Troubleshooter Doe-R: Uhh, we'll move this bot immediately.
Mission Leader Bob-Y: Are you crazy? Our orders were...
Jess-U-WAT (interrupting): Doe-R, you have just been promoted to GREEN security clearance for exemplary past service. You are also Mission Leader. Now carry out your orders.
Bob-Y: You can't...
Jess-U-WAT: (interrupting again) Doe-G, execute Bob-Y-GRT-2 immediately for treasonous moral behavior.

That's A Wrap

All good things must come to an end, but don't think this is a hopeless situation. Well, maybe the flowchart is hopeless but the whole idea is to avoid the flowchart. With a little thought, there are a number of ways our

Troubleshooters can wriggle out of this one. For example, one of the Troubleshooters might say, "Oh High Programmer, I assume R&D told you of the new Commie-killing germ they're going to test on us... in about three minutes?"

If, on the other hand, your players figure it out too quick, feel free to gum up the works a little by having one of the ULTRAVIOLETs keel over from a heart-attack while yelling at the Troubleshooters.

Relax. Enjoy. Torment.

EPISODE SEVEN: THE KIDS ARE ALRIGHT

Episode Summary

Kids, fieldtrip, teacherbot: sounds frightening doesn't it?

A bunch of "Alpha Complex's best and brightest" decide to "take in the hangar" as part of their creche's supplementary fieldtrip. And their lovable old teacherbot just doesn't have the heart (or courage) to say no.

So it's up to our Troubleshooters to "educate" the tykes.

I Wanna Go Over Here

The hangar is quiet. Your chronobot beeps and announces, "Only eight hours till deadline, and you're doing a marvelous job."

Over the address system you hear:

"There's nothing more important to The Computer than children. Today's children are tomorrow's loyal Citizens. And it's up to

---

A.C.R.R.C.

Here's a rundown (no pun intended) on the personalities of those sweet, lovable, ULTRAVIOLET joggers.

Jess-U-WAT-6: Computer genius extraordinaire and unofficial A.C.R.R.C. leader. Quick to take command. Quick to give orders. Quick to execute. All around, the personification of the ideal ULTRAVIOLET.

Cal-U-DER-2: Possessor of the treasonous *Machine Empathy* mutation, Cal has always used this ability to his best advantage. No one would have believed that someday he'd rise through the ranks to become the Mind Control Coordinator, but it's true. A kind and gentle sort, Cal has no idea that his mutation exists. Instead, he assumes that all Alpha Complex Citizens can relate to The Computer as well as he can.

Cal is quick to become enraged at anyone who can't understand him. The Computer always understands, so why can't people? After having things explained to them in a nice, fatherly voice, the Troubleshooters are apt to see a radical personality shift in Cal if they fail.

Lot-U-FUN-1: Lot really loves Alpha Complex. Where else could you go from being an INFRARED janitor to ULTRAVIOLET Director of DOA Sector in just one week! Yeah, that was the best gag he's pulled since joining the Computer Phreaks. Ho ho, and the look on Dan-U-DER's face when The Computer told him that he'd been demoted to INFRARED. Guess he

won't be pushing any more INFRARED janitors around.

Lot is an all-around swell guy, a great kidder, and he's always willing to do favors for friends (anonymously, of course). Any Troubleshooter that really goes out of his way to do something nice for Lot (or makes him laugh) is apt to find himself suddenly promoted to BLUE level about fifteen minutes after the joggers leave the hangar. What a guy!

Kim-U-CAL-5: Credits, credits, credits. What a lovely word. Oh, and the things credits can buy! Kim-U-CAL is Alpha Complex's Director of Fine Collection and Credit Dispersal, a major subdivision of PLC.

Also, not surprisingly, Kim belongs to the Free Enterprise secret society. Even though she's receiving thousands of credits a week in commissions and sales tax (a new innovation of Kim's) from lower level Free Enterprise salescitizens, Kim is never above making a few on the side just to stay in shape.

Kim will lead the Troubleshooters away one at a time and offer to sell them genuine autographed pictures of Teela O'Malley for only 100 credits (she's got a thousand of them).

Kim will be quite willing to haggle on the price. If, however, a Troubleshooter stonewalls her, Kim will try a new tack, ordering the Troubleshooter to stand at attention and prepare for inspection.

Needless to say, the Troubleshooter will fail inspection and be fined a couple of

hundred credits. Kim demands instant payment. Appealing to The Computer will only make matters worse.

Anne-U-MAT-8: Anne is Alpha Complex's Supervisor of Clone Development, Breeding, and Replacement (CDB & R), a division of PLC. Anne enjoys her work. She spends much of her spare time doing research on how to improve the quality of Alpha Complex's clones (i.e., she keeps a harem).

Any male Troubleshooter with a combined strength and moxie rating of 30 will attract Anne's attention. After this mission he will be promoted and assigned to assist in CDB & R. Doesn't sound too bad? Well, maybe not for the first week, but after that Anne will have him "broken down" so that research can be done on each individual cell.

Of course the Troubleshooter doesn't know this; all he knows is that Anne seems to be unusually attracted to him.

Butch-U-BLK-6: Butch's job is Special Agent in Charge of CPU. It's a tough job, but Butch is a tough guy. Make that a tough, tall guy (7'2"). Butch's favorite pastime is picking up people who piss him off with one hand and throwing them against the nearest available wall.

Any hesitancy on a Troubleshooter's part is sure to gain Butch's attention, rating one of his famous "moxie lectures". If there's one thing Butch can't stand it's weak-kneed, narrowshouldered, wimpy Troubleshooters.

all Alpha Complex Citizens to educate and guide our children so that they'll grow up to be responsible Citizens and serve your friend, The Computer.

"This message has been brought to you by PAS, the Public Awareness Sector of HPD & Mind Control. Remember: The Computer is YOUR friend!"

Now why do you think our Troubleshooters received this message at this time? Do you think they'll wonder? Gosh, you don't think they're gonna encounter any kids now, do ya? Hmm... that would be *some* coincidence.

No sooner has this "very important" message ended, when one of the minor side doors slides open and in rolls a teacherbot followed by twelve well-mannered young Citizens. The children seem stunned by the awesomeness of the hangar and by the size of Mark IV.

Well, it's now or never for our Troubleshooters. These are your typical bunch of streetwise kids (like you always see on TV) and they aren't gonna stay stunned for long. If the Troubleshooters use a firm hand, they've got about fifteen seconds to hussle the little brats out. After that...

As you watch, the little tykes' eyes start to grow as they scan the hangar, almost like they're in a candy depository. Then... twelve simultaneous squeals are heard as the youngsters each tear off in a separate direction — two for the steam launchers, three towards Mark IV, two towards the fuel depot, one for a ladder to the catwalk, three towards the mission equipment. One frog-faced guy stands obediently by the teacherbot.

Well, what are our Troubleshooters gonna do now? They've missed their golden opportunity. From now on it's all down tunnel.

How To Play The Kids

Did you ever see the movie *Gremlins*? If so, you shouldn't have any trouble. But for those of you who didn't...

They like to climb stuff, but they don't like to climb down. Sort of like cats. For example, a Troubleshooter sees a little girl climbing on a pole extending off Mark IV, 15 meters above the floor:

Troubleshooter: "Hey, you, get down from there!"

Susie: "No, and you can't make me. And I'm gonna tell my friend, The Computer, that you're a Commie."

Troubleshooter: Looks around nervously and tries a new approach. "If you come on down, right now, I'll let you wear my cap."

Susie: "Hurray, I get to wear a real Troubleshooter cap." Pauses for a few minutes and then starts crying.

Troubleshooter: "Hey, little Citizen, what's the matter?"

Susie: "I can't get down." Sob. "I'm scared."

Will our Troubleshooter risk his own life and climb out to the end of the pole? Will Susie thank him for his selfless act? Or will she just demand that he give him his hat?

Other Shticks for the Kids

1. Stealing: They're a regular bunch of packbots. If it ain't syntheglued down, it's fair game. An example of something to steal would be the control box to the crabmines (if they aren't

activated yet), a laser, grenades, credits, a Troubleshooter's extra laser barrels, authorization forms, etc...

2. Breaking stuff: Fuel valves, Computer consoles, security cameras, etc...

3. Lying and general obnoxious behavior:
Bobby: Pointing: "I saw that Troubleshooter pass a secret message to a Commie who was hiding by that access corridor."
Other Troubleshooters: Laser. Laser. Laser.
Bobby: "Ha ha ha! I was only kidding."

4. Pranks: Gosh, what a fun bunch. These kids' pranks range from the simple (tripping a
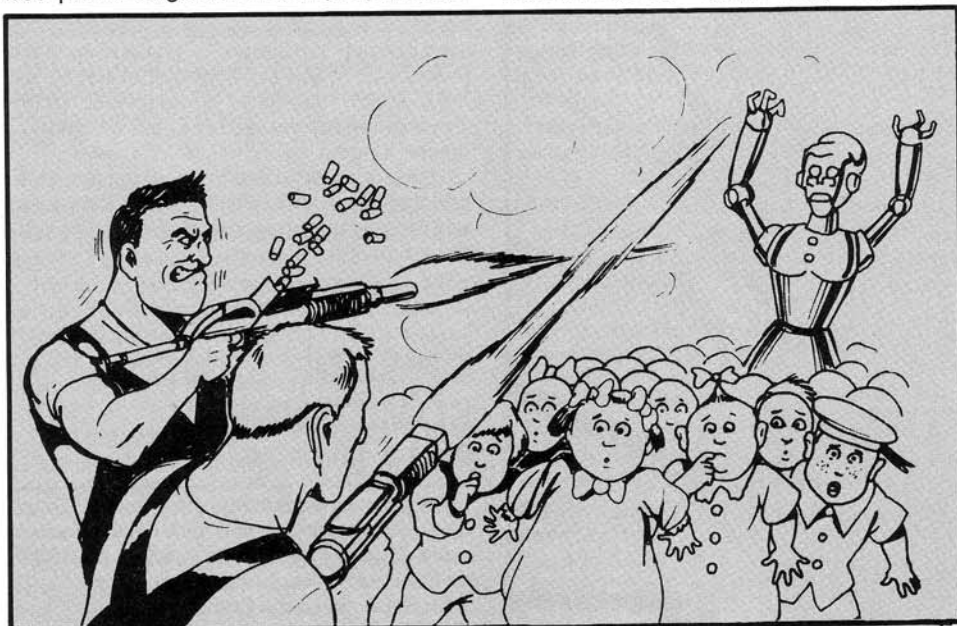
"Sorry, kids, this is a restricted area."

Troubleshooter) to the elaborate. For example:
Ricky: "Mr. Troubleshooter, sir. My friend Bobby went up that tunnel and he hasn't come back." He points to one of the steam launchers.
Troubleshooter: Grumbles and stalks down the corridor. About halfway to the end he hears a pleasant kind of hissing sound sort of like... steam building up before a launch...

5. Opening Stuff: Ever hear someone say "kids can get into anything?" For example:
Troubleshooter: OK, I'm gonna try to catch the little brat climbing up Mark IV.
GM: Right. Well you see him disappear behind a dual-mount Laser III battery.
Troubleshooter: I follow.
GM: You go behind the guns, but there isn't any sign of the kid. However there is a hatchway... open.

One last word on the kids. When playing them, use well-known stereotypes to characterize them. Such as:
• The red-haired, freckle-faced bully.
• The four-eyed brain.
• The spoiled little girl who does nothing but cause trouble and then cry to The Computer about the mean Commie Troubleshooter that hurt her.
• The shy, quiet one who never does anything wrong (but is always nearby when things break... or burn... or explode).
• The twins.
• The star pupil.

The Teacherbot

Children should be seen, not heard.

It's sayings like these that get teacherbots disconnected ('cause half the time you won't even see the little monsters coming). Working with a bunch like this would fray anyone's connecting circuits. But that doesn't sway teacherbot Apl-TRE/e from her duty.

Now we'll be the first to admit that this particular teachbot may be a little unstable, but she means well. And she's a great protector of the kids. For example:

Troubleshooter: "Gimme that," said while snatching a grenade from Susie.
Susie: "Whaaaa, that Commie Troubleshooter just stole my toy."
Apl-TRE/e: "You ought to be ashamed," said while snatching the grenade from the Troubleshooter and handing it back to Susie. Meanwhile, as the teacherbot lectures the Troubleshooter and threatens to report his behavior to The Computer, sweet little Susie pulls the pin and drops the grenade in the Troubleshooter's backpack.
What a vicious circle!

On the bright side, Apl-TRE/e can't take much punishment. She's on her last treads. One good blast will probably finish her off. Of course, the Troubleshooter who blasts her will be guilty of destroying valuable Computer property.

But remember, these kids are a pain. And it's gonna be a pain collecting them. Killing is not an option for our Troubleshooters. At the first shots (even if the kids are doing the shootin') good ol' teachbot is gonna call The Computer and there's gonna be a platoon of IntSec guards in the hangar before you can say "child abuse."

If I Had A Rocket Launcher

Gee, what a tough problem. How to restrain twelve kids and a teacherbot without harming them? Pretty darn tough.

Well, if our Troubleshooters can't figure out how to round them up, don't worry, 'cause an hour after they enter, the teacherbot will clap
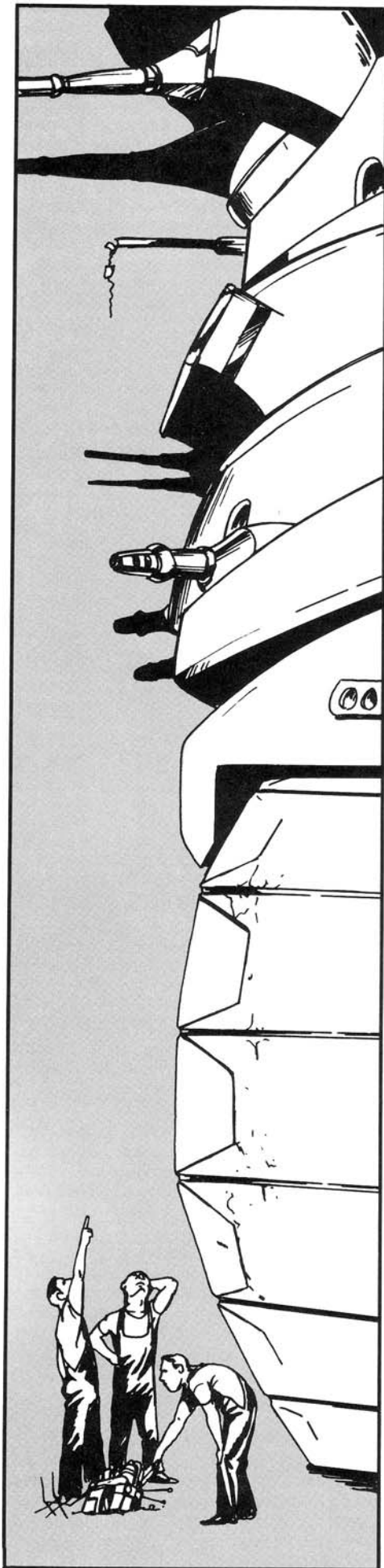
her hands, at which point the kids will all line up obediently and follow her out of the hangar.

Of course, if the Troubleshooters have blown away their favorite schoolmarm, then it's another story. I mean, how are those lovable tykes gonna know when it's time to go home?

Our Troubleshooters could always request a replacement teacherbot (or they could send a couple of team members out to "recruit" one), or they might try expunging the little monsters (remember the steam catapults).

However, if the kids are still around after two hours, have nature start to take its course, and give the Troubleshooters a crash course in parenting and child-care. There should be constant cries of "I'm hungry"; "I have to go to the bathroom"; "I feel sick"; and "I'm sleepy, tell me a story." This will go on for as long as the Troubleshooters are willing to put up with it... maybe longer.

Or if you get bored, an annoyed vice-principalbot — one who's nasty, obnoxious, and heavily-armed — could show up to take them home.

EPISODE EIGHT: SOMETHING FALLS OFF

Well kids, how are things going so far? Great! Glad you're enjoying yourself. Only six more hours. Guess your Troubleshooters have gotten the idea by now? After all, guard duty isn't difficult. Be alert, stop Commie infiltrators, and fight off direct attacks. Pretty standard stuff.

Why, I'll bet there isn't any emergency our Troubleshooters couldn't handle. Er... almost.

Episode Summary

A piece falls off.

Player Intro

"To further elaborate on my superiority," booms Mark IV, "my neutronium-enhanced blast armor can withstand a direct... KLUNK... iapoziot... poing."

Lying on the ground beside one of Mark IV's treads is a two-meter wide, grey, multipronged device. It appears to have just fallen off Mark IV.

The chronobot announces "Only six hours remaining."

Gosh, you don't think Mark IV is damaged do you? Maybe we'd better ask him?

Gee whiz... Mark IV won't answer. Something to do with being in shock 'cause he just realized his own mortality. Tough break. Well, I'm sure he'll be his jolly ol' self, uhh... once he's fixed.

Some of the PCs will probably want to examine the thing. Well, there's not much to tell, except that the object is completely unrecognizable to anyone without Meteorology skill (7).

But, on the bright side, if they look real hard, they'll find a serial number — 34t879-117 — on one of its appendages.

Unfortunately, the serial number is a totally useless piece of information, except to earn four treason points if mentioned to The Computer.

Fixing the Bot

Don't panic! I'm sure a bunch of professionals like our Troubleshooters will straighten

things out before you can say "clone replacement". Some of the more common approaches are outlined below.

1. Telling The Computer: Boy, that was real admirable. They deserve a gold star for honesty. They also deserve to be vaporized — for allowing Mark IV to be damaged. The Computer is cruel but fair.

2. Fixing Mark IV: Anyone climbing onto Mark IV can try to use his Major Repairs/Guardbot skill to try to determine where the device came from. But just because he misses his roll, don't leave him empty-handed. For example:

GM: You've found where the thing fell off.
Troubleshooter: Great! I'm gonna try to put it back.
GM: OK. But it's not going to be easy carrying that thing out to the end of that skinny pipe... 30 meters above the floor of the hangar.
Troubleshooter: Gulp!

If the characters find where the device belongs (or where they think it belongs), then they may attempt to reattach it. A character's chance to reattach is equal to half his Major Repairs/Guardbot skill. Hey, how can they miss?

Naturally, failure to reattach the piece means that another piece will fall off.

3. Calling R&D: Naive but loyal Troubleshooters might call R&D to get Mark IV repaired. Regardless of who the Troubleshooters talk to, the following sequence of events will occur:

• The person to whom they are speaking screams, "Oh my Computer, they've damaged Mark IV...Alert, Alert."

• Every siren in Hangar 139 goes off, making communication impossible. (Imagine being right next to the speakers at a Kiss concert.)

• Three minutes later, twenty Vulture Squadron goons burst in, guns-a-blazin'. End of story.

4. What Missing Piece?: A more elegant solution: throw it away. This is especially risky, because R&D is guaranteed to notice that something is wrong — when Mark IV doesn't move or talk. Do you think R&D will take responsibility? Neither do I.

Now, I don't want you to get the idea that the players are automatically hosed. No siree. It's just that the obvious solutions aren't always the best. I'm sure, though, that a creative bunch (like our Troubleshooters) will be able to think of something... like abducting... err, "acquiring" someone from R&D who can fix Mark IV.

It's Been Lovely

Hopefully, the Troubleshooters will be able to repair Mark IV. This is good. Mark IV should be repaired. After all, it's very important for a super-combot to have a functioning barometer.

Once the repairs are made, Mark IV will buzz right back in, picking up where he left off.

Read this aloud:

"... hit from a tacnuke shell," booms Mark IV.

As far as Mark IV is concerned, nothing has happened. Everything is fine. If pressed, he will admit that:

"My mnemonic circuits were accessed by a random energy flare, creating a nanosecond illusion of incapability and inefficiency."

If questioned further, Mark IV will become tense and edgy. This will cause him to make a mistake. What is this mistake? He will not use

his laser cannon to eliminate the Citizen upsetting him. He will use his rapid-fire tacnuke cannon, instead.

But don't worry... the explosions won't harm Mark IV.

EPISODE NINE: COMMIES TO THE LEFT OF ME, TRAITORS TO THE RIGHT

Episode Summary

Once again, the infamous Comrade Borscht (boo! hiss!) has organized his notorious band of marauders, the First Red Guards Tank Army.

Multiplying in numbers like yeast in a petri dish, the Commies have once again amassed in force for a full frontal assault against the agents of Alpha Complex. This time, their goal is nothing less than the destruction of the Warbot Model 425 Mark IV.

Prelude to Battle

Ah, peace and quiet. In Alpha Complex, these are sure signs of an impending attack.

Encourage the PCs to put their feet up, sit back and relax. Tell them how quiet everything seems. Have The Computer inquire about how safe everyone feels under the protective shadow of Mark IV's 400mm (16 inch) guns. Proclaim how beautiful Alpha Complex looks, even the shell holes and scorch marks.

Do this for about three minutes, until they are nervous, trigger-happy wrecks, and then begin the bombardment.

Duck and Cover!

Suddenly, the still of the watch is broken by a light, gentle buzzing sound... a sound that will remind Sierra Club members of the quiet drone of noble bumblebees... and Armed Forces personnel of the sound of an incoming cone rifle shell.

Which do you think it is? There ain't no bumblebees in Alpha Complex!

Whizzzzz....Ploonk! The shell fired from an unknown location lodges itself in the superstructure of Mark IV. The chronobot beeps, "Only two hours remaining."

"HA! HA! HA! HA! HA!" roars Mark IV with contemptuous laughter, "No puny cone rifle shell can harm me iiixztyzqpifftk... *blaat*... poyoing!"

For some strange reason, Mark IV isn't laughing any more.

Why isn't Mark IV laughing, you might ask. It's because the Commies (who are lurking in the shadows of the access tunnel) have hit Mark IV with a lucky shot from an ECM shell.

Haven't you heard of ECM shells? Have you ever wondered what they do? Well, turn to page 51 of the *Gamemaster Handbook* and let's read the passage together. Hmm, it interferes with the electronics of bot targets, does it? And Mark IV is nothing more than one huge bot, right? Wow, so that's it!

Gosh, those Commies should be executed for reading the GM Handbook!

They'll get theirs soon enough, but first, let's find out about Mark IV. The batteries on the ECM shell will remain in operation for the next

thirty minutes, during which time all of the electronic equipment in the hangar will be discombobulated. But if someone could climb up Mark IV and destroy the shell, Mark IV would revive one combat round later.

This also means that The Computer's terminal will be out, as well as all of the com units and any multicorders. Since The Computer operates the huge armored doors, they will be stuck closed for the duration. The only working electronic mechanisms in the hangar will be the crawling mines and the scrubot, if it's still around and at least semi-functioning.

Gee, these Commies are pretty slick. I wonder what they're gonna do next...

A loud, roaring rumble is issuing from the access tunnel. The buzzing of another cone rifle rips the air. *Whizzz... ka-poofff!* What do you do now?

You know, sound effects are real important. Did anyone realize that the *ka-pooffff* was the sound of an impact of a gas-filled shell? They didn't? That's just too bad, then.

The cone rifle shell was full of *vomit gas*. (You can read all about vomit gas shells on page 50 of the *Gamemaster Handbook*.) PCs not wearing gas masks must make a 3D10 endurance check, or spend the next six combat rounds showing off their breakfast.

If anyone is still left standing, he will be able to face the Commie mutant scum that are about to roll all over him.

Part 1: Charge of the Red Brigade

Stats for the Commies can be found in the Commie Roster on page 48.
Read:

From the access tunnels you hear the roar of approaching jet engines and screeching tires. And over that another sound: the sound of voices, a rallying cry. "Russkie! Russkie! Da! Da! Da!"

Staging Hint: Put "Surf City" on your stereo. Play it loud.

If the PCs haven't all fled or been incapacitated, they get to see the first wave roll out of the tunnel, guns a-blazing. Read:

Zooming out from the tunnel come six Commies on jet skates. Three turn to the left, three turn to the right. They wear RED reflec with a hammer and sickle emblazoned on the front.

The Guards Mechanized Infantry Division: Consisting of 6 Communist agents mounted on jet skates (capable of speeds up to 120 meters/round, or 86 kph). They are armed with stun pistols (35% chance to hit — see the Commie Roster on page 48). They also carry 200 propaganda leaflets, 20 posters of Marx-Tse-Lenin, and a four-page version of the Communist Manifesto.

They try to shoot anyone standing, running, hiding, playing dead... everyone but those who failed their endurance checks when the vomit gas shell exploded. Their prime targets will be 1) anyone trying to get to the ECM shell, 2) anyone shooting back, and 3) anyone trying to leave the hangar.

Because of the speed at which they're traveling (120 meters/round), anyone trying to shoot at them gets a -25% chance to hit. Any fire by the Commies is also -25%.

The Commies must move all 120 meters in a round, because the skates only have one speed setting (dangerously fast) and they have a hard time turning. Give them a 70% chance of avoiding a small obstruction (crawling mine, fellow Commie, Troubleshooter in the way, etc.), and a 25% chance of avoiding a large obstruction (wall, side of Mark IV, fuel depot, etc.).

For those who are really concerned, the Commies can turn 2 degrees for every 1 meter they travel. This means that they have to travel at least 45 meters before they can make a 90 degree turn. Look at it this way, this is your big chance to pull out those rulers, protractors and compasses you never had a use for before...

But for those who don't care about that kind of detail, just say the Commies are running rings around the PCs, and have them run into

"Die, running pig-dog lackeys of the bourgeois imperialist data processor!"

each other, the walls and any PCs standing in the open as the mood hits you.

Part 2: Let the Good Times Roll

After five rounds of combat, read the following:

The Commies are skating and screaming wildly. Meanwhile, another shell lands near you. *Whizzz... ka-poofff!*
What do you do?

Everyone who has a gas mask is probably wearing one by now. Those who don't have one are about to.suffer a terrible fate. The shell that just landed was full of hallucinogenic gas! Everyone exposed to the gas must make a 3D10 endurance check. Those who fail to pass the check are overcome with strange visions for the next six combat rounds.

Tell them about things like nylon hair growing from their eyes, or tentacles writhing up from the banks of a molasses river, or comets springing out of the fluorescent lighting. Be poetic about it. If there are any Mystics in the group, give 'em a secret society point. Invite your players to make up or add to their hallucinations.

If anyone is determined to keep shooting at the Commies in his drugged-out state, give him a 5% chance to hit, due to the warping of his senses. Wow, man, good stuff! Faaar out!

This is the dangerous part of the encounter, when many of the Troubleshooters will be helplessly nauseated, drugged out, wounded, dead, or any combination of the above. At this point, the second wave rolls into the cavernous hangar.

Part 3: We are Nailed to the Hull

Spewing forth from the access tunnel comes the second wave: four Commies on rocket skateboards, wearing YELLOW reflec armor. This bunch is carrying rifles.

The Guards Shock Cavalry Brigade: Four more Commies attack, armed with stun rifles (40% chance to hit), 200 more pamphlets and 20 posters each, Communist Manifestos at the ready, and riding rocket skateboards (80 meters/round, or 57 kph).

Because they aren't travelling as fast as their comrades, these Commies can make the turns a bit better. Unfortunately, they can also get hit easier (only -20% to hit them). The reverse is also true (only -20% to hit the Troubleshooters). They will tend to run into things less often, and therefore they aren't as fun. But at this point, things can get really interesting.

If the shooting gets pretty sparse and the Commies spot a Troubleshooter lying on the ground who looks like he still has enough body parts to be alive (i.e., stunned, wounded or drugged-out characters), three or four will break off the gun battle. They will scoot on over to try to persuade the hapless victim(s) of the virtues of Communism.

That's correct. The Communists are trying to subvert our loyal heroes! See the skill for Communist Propaganda (pages 44 and 45 of the **GM Handbook**). Notice how you can give it to other citizens? The Computer won't be too happy if it ever finds out about this.

The Commies will wrestle the stunned or wounded Troubleshooter to the ground, and sit on his chest.

If the PC tries to yell and scream for help, the Commies just shove a wadded-up leaflet in his mouth. After they remove the Troubleshooter's valuables (most certainly including weaponry, reloads and electronic gear), they take the backing off two Marx-Tse-Lenin posters and plaster the front and back of the Troubleshooter. They'll also read passages from the Manifesto, to convince the Troubleshooter of the obvious advantages of a People's Republic.

PC: Great, so these Commie dudes are all over me. Is there anything I can do?
GM: Yes, you can listen to what they are saying: "...Workers of the world unite! You have nothing to lose but your chains!"
PC: I try not to listen...
GM (on a roll): "Workers rule! Teela O'Malley is the opiate of the Masses!"

If a player is captured and forced to listen to the Commies for 5 or more rounds, give him **Communist Propaganda (3)** skill. The only PCs who can escape getting the skill are those who purposely knock themselves unconscious (by beating their heads on the ground, or the like). Give them the skill no matter how much they whine. Boy, won't The Computer be mad when it finds out about this?

If the players are still standing up against the firefight, the various gasses, and the indoctrination, then the Commies start getting real mean. The sound of hard wheels and heavy vehicles once again issues from the access tunnel. If the players duck (it should be second nature to them by this time), surprise them by telling them they don't hear a cone rifle shell. Then tell 'em the bad news....

Part 4: Duck and Cover (Reprise)

Once again you hear the drone of engines coming from the tunnel. The sound rises as the next wave approaches. Suddenly they're on you... five Old Reckoning go-carts.

Each of the first four go-carts has a crew of two — driver and gunner. The last go-cart has only a driver and a huge metallic, boxy gadget that displays a single, stenciled word on its side — "MEGABOMB".

The Guards Heavy Tank Armored Brigade: The four gunners are armed with semi-automatic stun rifles (30% chance to hit), and wear YELLOW reflec armor and gasmasks. The drivers have swords (30% chance to hit) and are also wearing YELLOW reflec and gasmasks. The go-carts travel at 60 meters/round (43 kph), which only reduces the chance to hit by 15%. There are similar leaflets, posters, and four-page Manifestos in the go-carts, and they will use these to obscure vision and cause maximum confusion.

The other two waves (or whatever's left of them) will try to hold back the PCs to let the third wave get to Mark IV's hull with the Megabomb. The Megabomb needs three people to lift it and four rounds to place it on the hull, so at least two of the go-cart's crews are going to have to be used to place the bomb. The rest of the third wave will try to cover the operation.

You know, sometimes the life of a Troubleshooter is pretty rough. This is one of those times.

Who knows? The PCs might actually still be alive. They might even have a chance at stopping the Commies from placing the Megabomb.

But for now, let's assume the PCs are all nursing wounds and hiding from Commie fire.

After the Megabomb is placed, Comrade Borscht (who has been lobbing the cone rifle shells from a discrete distance down the access tunnel) will sound the signal for the Commies to retreat:

"Rearvard to go now! March! Back to go Mother Rrrussia! Ollie, ollie, oxen free!"

At this point, the Communists break off and scooter on down the access tunnel the way they came. If anyone cares to follow, the Commies will try to capture and indoctrinate him as above. Comrade Borscht (in case you're interested) is mounted on an old motorcycle (160 meters/round, or 150 kph) and is wearing GREEN-level multichroma reflec and kevlar armor. He packs a sonic pistol as a personal sidearm and is out of shells for the cone rifle.

The players may even have a miniscule chance of hitting him, if you wanna let them try...

Or at this point, they might actually want to change sides. Have them stripped down to their underwear and thrown in the back of one of the go-carts and driven off, never to be heard from again.

Part 5: As Time Goes By

If any Troubleshooters care to look, they have a whole minute before the Megabomb explodes. Read:

The Megabomb has been magnetically attached under the front armor plate of the Mark IV. On the front of the Megabomb is a digital clock. The clock reads "60, 59, 58..."

Actually, the Megabomb has no real chance of harming the Mark IV. The players would do better to run away, if they only knew.

If someone is brave enough to attempt to stop the bomb, he has a couple of options:

1. Defuse it: Any player attempting to defuse the bomb should be told about the large digital clock reading down the time to detonation:

"...57, 56, 55..."

The clock is malfunctioning, and some of its wires are connected strangely. Sometimes it will skip a number, and go from 38 to, for instance, 13. Don't worry, though, because it actually keeps the correct time internally.

If a player makes a successful Electronic Engineering skill roll, he can open up the bomb casing (rolling 96-00 detonates the bomb).

After the bomb case is open, a successful Demolitions skill roll will defuse the bomb mechanism. Rolling 96-00 will detonate the bomb, and rolling 91-95 will detach the clock readout only (the bomb actually keeps ticking away...).

2. Detach it from the hull: Any player attempting to remove the bomb must make a successful Electronic Engineering skill roll. If this succeeds, he must make a successful Mechanical Engineering skill roll to detach the electromagnetic lock.

Alternatively, he may attempt to blow the bomb off the side of the hull with explosives. Attempting this sets off a chain reaction and explodes the Megabomb. Whoopsy-daisy! I hope they think twice before they choose this option.

After the bomb has been removed from the Mark IV's hull, the PCs may place it in the back

of a go-cart, and send it zipping after the retreating Commies.

The Megabomb will explode sixty seconds after the Commies have retreated. Each attempt to remove or defuse the Megabomb takes ten seconds. It will take twenty seconds to remove the Megabomb and put it in a go-cart. It will take another 30 seconds for the Megabomb to zip out of sight down the corridor to where it will not harm the PCs (and blow up the Commies). The Megabomb has a blast radius of 300 meters.

Anyone still inside the blast radius will suffer the effects of getting hit with a tacnuke shell. Characters still under the effects of the hallucinogenic gas will probably consider this a "bad-trip."

Troubleshooters who spend the entire time, from when the Megabomb was set to when it detonates, running away at top speed will probably be able to get out of the blast radius. The only exits available are the access tunnel (where do you think the Commies will be?), the launch tubes (over the cliff), and perhaps inside Mark IV. Just remember, the big blast doors are shut, and they are over five meters thick.

Anyone who survives the blast will have a tough time explaining this one to R&D. But don't worry, you can always activate your next clone.

And for those who don't survive. Hey, them's the breaks. Just send in the clones and they'll find Mark IV sitting quietly in the hangar completely unharmed by the explosion. ("Ha ha ha, that Megabomb can't harm me.")
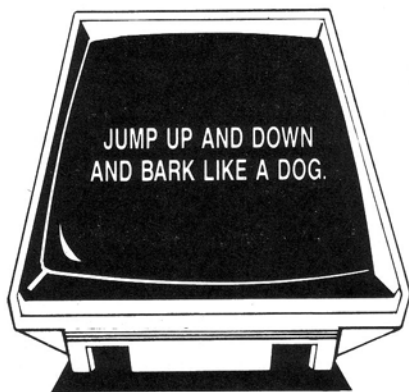
EPISODE TEN: THE BIG TEST

What... Not Another Briefing?

Read this:

The hangar is quiet. The last traces of the Commie assault — cleaned. Mark IV hums quietly. The chronobot sputters back to life. "0 hours left. Deadline. Deadline. Deadline." There is a crack and the chronobot falls from your wrist in a dozen pieces.

Silence. Then, the crackle of static, followed by the voice of The Computer: "Congratulations, Task Force 451, on a mission well done. I have always had the greatest confidence in each of you. As a special reward, before debriefing, each of you is invited to attend Warbot Model 425 Mark IV's fieldtest."

Pause to allow the players to bask in The Computer's praise and to utter false modesties.

"In a few moments, a representative of Research and Design will arrive to take possession of the Warbot Model 425 Mark IV. Please verify clearance by checking for page 93 of the Security Application Form and taking pages 14 and 137 from the Property Transfer Authorization Guide.

"Make sure the Security Application Form has been signed by Jonnie-B-GUD-4, on pages 1, 48, and 102; and that Robb-Y-RBT-2 and the acting Head of Transfer Forms have signed on pages 69 and 107.

"After checking papers, spit on your palm, shake hands three times, howl like a dogbot and chant, 'If you done cheated me, I a-gonna cut ya throat. I a-gonna cut ya throat.'

"Thank you for your cooperation."

At this point, the Troubleshooters will probably have several questions for The Computer. The Computer will answer two. Why only two? Because, less than a minute after The Computer's initial address, every siren and klaxon in Hangar 139 will go off making thinking, much less communication, impossible. A good way to simulate this would be to make a lot of noise. Turn the TV and stereo on full blast. Ask your kid brother to howl at the top of his lungs. If you have a police whistle, blow it hard. "It's okay, dad. We're playing *PARANOIA.*" Read:

Suddenly, the sirens cease and an ominous silence descends upon Hangar 139 ... broken by a rumble as the great clamshell doors begin to open. Outside are colors, shouting, and a song.

The Gang's All Here

Place your best copy of "The Stars and Stripes Forever" on the stereo. We're gonna have a parade!

That's right, Troubleshooters, it's a parade — carbots, clowns, floats. And what's a parade without — you guessed it — a marching band. Do you still have your sousaphone?

Look at all the streamers and signs and people — people of all different security clearances plus a sea of INFRAREDs. Watch the people. See them enter the hangar. See them dance and laugh and sing. See them do all these things as they climb Mark IV. Is it possible to do all these things *and* climb Mark IV?

Well... maybe not, but they're sure gonna try.

What's happening? Well, apparently someone in R&D decided to throw a little party in anticipation of Mark IV's triumphant fieldtest. Why not? If Mark IV passes the fieldtest, what's a little party? If Mark IV doesn't pass...

But you know how these things are. Someone invites a couple of friends, and then they invite their friends, and before you know it, all of R&D takes the day off.

So how are the Troubleshooters gonna react to this one? Needless to say, no one in the crowd has proper authorization, and the players can't even talk to The Computer, because the terminals are all gunked up with shaving cream.

The Troubleshooters might try frying 'em, but all that'll happen is a coupla partyers will get wasted. Then someone will grab the Troubleshooter's laser. "Wow! That's really neat!

Mind if I borrow that? Is this how you shoot it? Wow... I guess so!" Remember: most Citizens don't get to play with lasers often.

Anyway, right now as far as everyone else is concerned, Mark IV is the greatest thing since Bouncy-Bubble Beverage, and they're gonna march with him all the way to the fieldtest.

At some point in the mayhem read:

A short, middle-aged, RED-clearance woman approaches and meekly asks: "Are you the brave boys who guarded our Markie?"

If any of the Troubleshooters answers yes:

"Here they are! Over here!" A hush settles over the hangar as every head turns towards the Troubleshooters. Silence. The crowd parts. And Jonnie-B-GUD strides forward towards the players.

"Well, I trust you had a quiet evening."

Jonnie-B will then remain silent. He is the one the players are supposed to turn Mark IV over to, but he will in no way indicate this, by word or expression.

Can the Troubleshooters remember the transfer procedure, as outlined by The Computer? Boy, I sure hope so. Because for every signature they forget to check and every transfer paper they forget to take, assign one treason point.

Oh, and all that spitting and chanting stuff... forget it. That's The Computer's idea of humor. (Although Jonnie-B might not find it so funny.)

Once the transfer has been completed, Jonnie-B will "invite" the Troubleshooters to witness the fieldtest. Then, without waiting for a response, he will turn and address Mark IV. Read:

"Mark IV, please follow the Preliminary Procession Task Force to the Fieldtesting Facility 938-Arc 1."

If Mark IV has survived the evening with his faculties intact he will comply. If not, someone's in trouble.

Then:

"Hip, hip... hoorayyy. For they're a jolly good Band of Troubleshooters. Etc."

Play the *Stars and Stripes Forever* again, and have the marching band lead them to the fieldtest. All along the parade route, citizens and bots cheer and throw confetti.

Encourage the players to get involved in the celebration, to relax. Hey, they've done a good job and they deserve a break... a chance to unwind.

Are they off-balance yet? Well... keep working on it.

We Be There

After about thirty minutes, the procession comes to a halt before a pair of clamshell doors, even larger than those of Hangar 139. In front of the doors is a semicircle of YELLOW Vulture Squadron goons armed with plasma accelerators. Behind them stand three high-clearance R&D honchos. Two are INDIGO-level, the other VIOLET. Upon seeing them, Jonnie-B-GUD becomes noticeably nervous, and the rest of the parade fades into the tunnel works.

Jonnie-B turns to the Troubleshooters.

"Remember, you are acting as honorary guests and representatives of R&D. This is a special reward for your exemplary service.

Do nothing that would reflect unfavorably on R&D." Jonnie-B motions for you to follow as he walks towards the reception committee.

Wordlessly, the guards part. The VIOLET R&D rep peers at the Troubleshooters, whispers to his two companions, turns, and makes a hand signal to a GREEN-level Vulture Squadron leader standing by the door controls. With a single button, 10,000 tons of duralloy steel are set in motion — the doors begin to open.

A burnt, acrid smell greets you. Before you lies a wide expanse of flatland pock-marked with craters and criss-crossed with tread and tire tracks. The undamaged areas are covered by short, black stubble. (Burnt grass.) **There is no ceiling.**

Let the players "ooh" and "ah" about the size and then "ekk" and "awkk" because there is no ceiling. Then:

As you march through the doors you are led to the right, towards a great, glass-enclosed grandstand which faces the open test grounds.

The grandstand is nearly full. Armed Forces sits on the right side, holding semi-automatic plasma-accelerator cone rifles, hyperfusion guns and binoculars. R&D sits on the left, wearing square helmets that go "buzz... snerkle... buzz", and funny glasses two feet long with three lenses, each a different color.

There is no chit-chat between the two factions.

The rows of seats are labelled by security clearance with the higher levels sitting farther forward. This is obviously a high-level demonstration. Everyone here is at least GREEN level with the GREENs sitting in the rear.

In the front row, on each side, is a lone chair — vacant. Between but behind these two chairs is a giant Computer vid-screen. In front of the vid-screen are plush chairs, facing out, towards the plains.

Upon entering the grandstand, you are given a program and binoculars by a BLUE-level Internal Security guard who directs you to the plush chairs in front of the vid-screen. (See Diagram 388-399/A above.)

Moments later, chatting amiably, two old men of ULTRAVIOLET clearance enter.
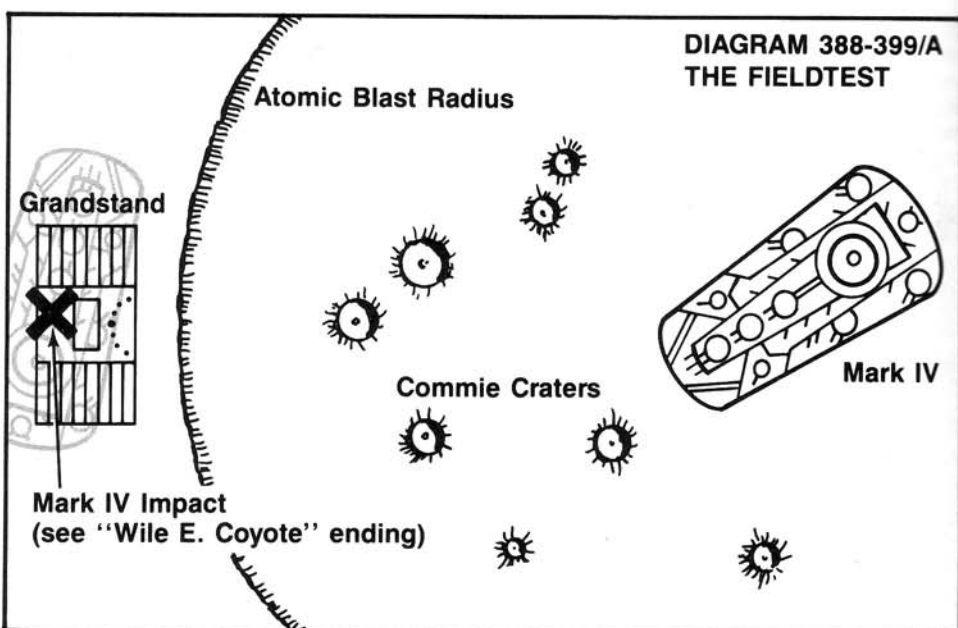
Who are these two? Why, they're none other than Dan-U-BAH-6, Prime Director of Alpha Complex R&D, and Armed Forces Chief-of-Staff Rip-U-PRT-6. That's right, the big bosses. Our Troubleshooters are in for a look at some first-class political maneuvering.

Mr. Chairman, The Great State of Confusion...

Dan-U and Rip-U both got to their lofty positions because of their honesty... their loyalty... and the hard work of their previous five clones. But just because they're on top doesn't mean they're satisfied.

Heck no. Both these hyperachievers continue their quest for power, constantly trying to outshine each other in the visual sensors of The Computer.

Today, a major confrontation is about to occur. Both men assumed, correctly, that The Computer's attention would be focused on the

DIAGRAM 388-399/A
THE FIELDTEST

Atomic Blast Radius

Grandstand

Commie Craters

Mark IV

Mark IV Impact
(see "Wile E. Coyote" ending)

Mark IV fieldtest. So both of them have arranged for "spontaneous" demonstrations.

The second the two aging servants of The Computer enter, both sides of the grandstand explode into cheers.

First Armed Forces hoists banners declaring "Rip-U-PRT: The Computer's Friend."

Not to be outdone, R&D retaliates with electronic confetti throwers and bubble makers.

A shout, a shot and the confetti thrower is reduced to twisted metal.

What are the players doing?

Are they cheering? If not, a hawk-nosed Int-Sec guard will look at them and begin to scribble furiously into his little BLUE book.

Now, are they going to cheer? Who will they cheer? If both, who will they cheer first? Et cetera. Regardless of what they do, the hawk-nosed guard will look at them like they have Communist propaganda tatooed on their foreheads. He will scribble — furiously — stopping only to peer closely at their ID badges.

The demonstrations continue to escalate until a small section of GREEN Armed Forces Commandos jump up and begin to sing the highly treasonous *Rip-U-PRT Uber Alles*, courtesy of a mind control device snuck in by R&D specialists.

Weapons are drawn.

A noise... like someone clearing his throat. Everyone stops, and turns towards The Computer.

"Greetings Citizens. Please be seated. The fieldtest of the Warbot Model 425 Mark IV is about to begin."

And, indeed, during the spontaneous demonstrations Mark IV has crawled out into the center of the field, three kilometers away.

Let the Games Begin

Dan-U stands up and faces the grandstand. "What you are about to see is R&D's ultimate achievement — the Warbot Model 425 Mark IV, as designed by our own Robb-Y-RBT." Enthusiastic cheers explode from R&D.

"Today's demonstration should fully demonstrate the awesome power of our little Markie. If you will turn to your programs,

and if Rip-U-PRT's Armed Forces units are *finally* ready, we will begin."

We thought the players might want to have a real program, so we made one (see page 33). This has nothing to do with us needing to fill up some empty space. If you have time, feel free to make copies of the program, so that each Troubleshooter can have his very own. Gee... aren't they swell.

Dan-U-BAH rises and turns to face The Computer. "O Computer, today's first test will match Mark IV against an especially nasty group of Commies, who were captured by Rip-U-PRT's brave elite Killer Vulture Patrol."

Rip-U nods in acknowledgment. "Well, thanks Danny. We found this bunch of bandits trying to pass themselves off as loyal INFRARED workers in the PLO food vats. That's where they bushwacked us, but our boys came through like real troopers."

Dan-U resumes. "And even though surprised and surrounded, these vicious Commies killed over 50 of Rip-U-PRT's guards before being stunned by two of our latest securitybots which just happened to be assigned to the Killer Vulture Patrol for testing."

Rip-U shifts uncomfortably.

In reality, six plasma generators simultaneously malfunctioned and exploded, but that's another story.

A transbot zooms out from the tunnel to the middle of the field and skids to a stop scant meters from Mark IV. From the back of the transbot four figures are quickly expelled.

Then, as quickly as it came, the transbot disappears, and the four Commies are left to face Mark IV.

Dan-U-BAH turns to address Mark IV over the speaker system. "Mark IV, fry traitors!" There is a blast and a new crater on the field.

For a moment there is silence, then R&D erupts in another preplanned spontaneous celebration. On the Armed Forces side: murmurs, nods and scattered hesitant applause.

How are the Troubleshooters reacting? Are they clapping? How much? [See, famous game

: MISSION ALERT 1285.3957-B/13

: ATTENTION TROUBLESHOOTERS:

: The Computer in its infinite wisdom has chosen you for an extremely important mission. Rejoice, for The Computer has confidence in your abilities.

: Please report to Jonnie-B-GUD, at QED Sector Mission Briefing Room No. 23087D.

Confirmation of original priority one assignment. Remove suspect agent. Contact verification procedure standard.

Confirmed sympathizer on team, codenamed Marcos-R.

Negative wave contact. XPLT. Disengage production procedure. Cancel distribution. PPNT.

System Supervisor 592

SECURITY AUTHORIZATION FORM 9601-4BH

Said Citizen .... is hereby authorized for clearance in .... Sector ....

Authorization being cleared by .... as per Standard Authorization Procedure.

Authorizing Officer .... claims no responsibility for actions or damages, as per case .... of the Official Liability Code.

Authorizing Officer ....

Authorized Citizen ....

This is the all-important Security Authorization Form. One per Troubleshooter.

One super-secret, highly-confusing message guaranteed to generate suspicion and fear amongst player characters.

RADIATION INDICATOR BADGE

One Indicator Badge per Troubleshooter.

Greeting Citizens,

Welcome to the inaugural fieldtest of the Experimental Prototype Warbot Model 425 Mark IV.

The host for this afternoon's performance will be our own illustrious Dan-U-BAH-6, head of QED sector Research & Development.

Guests include Rip-U-PRT-6, Armed Forces Chief of Staff and your friend The Computer.

On with the show.

Round 1: Mark IV vs The Commies

Round 2: Mark IV vs The Human Wave

Round 3: Mark IV vs The Armor Assault

Round 4: Mark IV vs The Air Assault

Round 5: Mark IV vs A Combined Air and Armor Assault

Round 6: To Be Announced

One Program per Troubleshooter.

PERSONNEL PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY FORM
328890/B

I, Citizen .... accept complete responsibility should any untoward event befall ....

I understand that to allow the above mentioned item to come to harm (through action or inaction on my part) will logically result in my execution for treason as soon as I have made reparations for such harm, as deemed necessary by my all knowing friend and ultimately equitable judge, The Computer, or its duly authorized agents.

x 1 2 3 4 5 6

PPRF-328890/B — Yet another in a series of confusing documents calculated to induce a high frustration level in the PCs.

Permission granted to copy this page for personal use — The Computer

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MISSION EQUIPMENT LIST:

1) Red plastic crate, about 2' x 2', marked "Perimeter Defense Equipment".
2) Plastibox (footlocker size).
3) Twenty-five gallon barrel labelled "Petroleum Jelly".
4) Small bot.
5) Small metal box labelled "Radiation Indicators".
6) Metal twisty thing with valves.
7) One quart of "White Out".
8) Plastidoll (green suit).
9) Primitive transbot.
10) Several pieces of electronic equipment.
11) A spray can.
12) Bag of 5000 clear orbs.
13) Four rolls of silver tape.
14) Two pairs of footgear, with wheels.
15) Twenty-five pairs of footgear (brown).
16) A box labelled "Betty" filled with a variety of metal components.
17) 50 meters syntherope.

Mission equipment list. Note: this list only describes the oddities found in the Troubleshooter's mission equipment.

The function of the various pieces of paraphernalia is left up to trial and error.

THE OFFICIAL YEAR OF THE COMPUTER 243

PROGRAM FOR THE FIELDTEST OF THE EXPERIMENTAL PROTOTYPE WARBOT MODEL 425 MARK IV

Courtesy: **THE COMPUTER**

Highly decorative back of the souvenir fieldtest program.

Personality Module: Mimette has been assigned the personality of a coquette — a French flirt, if you will. Talk with a phony French accent, and say "Ooolala" a lot.

Background: Ooolala! Existence, she is so confusing! 'Ere you were, helping Monsieur Albert-Y-STN conduct experiments in the R&D lab in sector CBK R&D when *une message plus urgent* from The Computaire arrived, ordering you to Cubicle KR-27. Alors! What is a poor labot to do, but comply? Already you are on your way.

Mimette   PC#1

Labot Model Mim-7248-GP

Bigger is Better Factor: [1]

Programs In Resident Memory:
Bottle-washing (1)
Chemistry (3)
Lab technique (1)

Description: A thin, rather delicate bot with an upright body on wheels. Mimette has two limbs, one a regular lifting arm with lobsterclaw pincers, the other a thinner arm with fine manipulators on the end (for delicate work). She has various odd pieces of lab equipment, including radio antennae and a test tube rack, attached to various parts of her body.

Personality Module: Grog-6 has been pro-grammed with the personality of a classic movie dumb hood (the kind of character who says "youse guys.")

Background: So here I was, woiking in a gin joint wit Jonesie. It was a high-class joint, only YELLOWS and up allowed in. We soived booze, like algae whisky and fermented mushroom. Not real legal, yunnerstan, but Da Compuda puts up wit dis, long as it keeps the higher levels happy. So here I was, pounding together da heads of customers who got kind, like, ya know, obstreperous, when dis oigent message from Da Compuda says I gotta go to Cubicle KR-27, and Jonesie too. Sos I drops da two crumb bumbs, and Jonesie and I split.

Grog-6   PC#2

Bouncerbot Model X14C

Bigger is Better Factor: [1]

Programs In Resident Memory:
Crowd Control (1)
Club (7)

Weapons: Two Clubs
To Hit: 50%
Type: M
Malfunction: 00

Description: A big, hulking bot of roughly humanoid form (two arms, two legs, head). Grog-6 looks rather crude — an early model bot.

Personality Module: Jonesie has been pro-grammed to talk like Bogart — all "s"es become "sh"es, and you drawl your "a"s. Got that, shweethaht?

Background: I'm a bartender in a high clash gin joint down in CBK shectah. It'sh not ex-hactly a legal occupation, but it'sh an in-tereshtin' one, and The Computer toleratesh ush ash long ash we limit our clientele to YELLOWsh and above. I work with Grog, whoshe a tough guy, if you know what I mean — keepsh the cushtomersh in line. Anyway, I was shtandin' there polishing shome glashesh while Grog had an argument with two of our cushtomersh, when the video monitor lightsh up with a message from The Computer, telling ush to report to Cubicle KR-27. Well, I try to keep my noshe clean, but direct ordersh from The Computer **are** shomething elshe. "Grog," I shaysh, "we'd better get going, shweethaht," and we took off.

Jonesie   PC#3

Barbot Model 765C

Bigger is Better Factor: [0]

Programs In Resident Memory:
Small talk (1)
Club (1)
Bartending (3)

Weapons: Club
To Hit: 20%
Type: M
Malfunction: 00

Description: Jonesie is an upright bot, mounted on treads. He has two limbs: one is a "human" arm ending in five metalic fingers, over which he keeps a tea towel draped; the other is a specially-designed limb ending in an ice shaker — a deep metal container with a cover which Jonesie can flip open and closed mechanically, used to shake drinks. Also at-tached to his body is an apparatus that looks like the soda machines you see in bars.

Peripherals

Chassis:	Medium (4)
Feets:	Wheels (1)
Hands:	Limb with grasper (40 kg strength) (1) Fine manipulator (5 kg strength) (2)
Power Source:	Propane burner (1) Pressurized gas tank (24 hour supply) (1)
Input Devices:	Data port (0) Audio sensor (0) Radio receiver (0) High baud-rate radio receiver (3) Video sensors with color & microscopic vision (3) X-Ray plate (2) Chemosense (2) Spectrometer (1)

Mimette   PC#1

Type: **Labot**
Model Number: **Mim-7248-GP**

Player: _____

Output Devices:	Voice Synthesizer (0) Radio transmitter (0) High baud-rate radio transmitter (3)
Other Things:	Fire extinguisher (1)
Armor:	Standard housing (0)
Resident Memory:	5
Drawbacks:	Personality module (−5)

Peripherals

Chassis:	Medium (4)
Feets:	Legs (1)
Hands:	Two limbs with grasper (80 kg strength each) (4)
Power Source:	Micropile (5)
Input Devices:	Data port (0) Audio sensor (0) Radio receiver (0) Video sensors (black & white) (1)

Grog-6   PC#2

Type: **Bouncerbot**
Model Number: **X14C**

Player: _____

Output Devices:	100 watt voice Sythesizer (0) Radio transmitter (0) Alarm siren (1)
Weapons:	Two clubs (2)
Armor:	Concussion Armor (2)
Resident Memory:	8
Drawbacks:	Personality module (−5)

Peripherals

Chassis:	Small (3)
Feets:	Treads (2)
Hands:	"Human" arm (5 metal fingers, etc.) (3) Specialized limb — arm ending in an ice shaker (3)
Power Source:	Propane burner (1) Pressurized gas tank (24 hour supply) (1)
Input Devices:	Data port (0) Audio sensors (0) Radio receiver (0) Video sensors with color (2) Chemosense (2)

Jonesie   PC#3

Type: **Barbot**
Model Number: **765C**

Player: _____

Output Devices:	Voice Synthesizer (0) Radio transmitter (0)
Other Things:	Liquid storage compartment (various liquors) (1) Liquid sprayer (1) Wet bar (1) Blender & chopper (1) Ice maker (1) Refrigerated compartment (1) Cigarette Lighter (1)
Weapons:	Club (1)
Armor:	Standard housing (0)
Resident Memory:	5
Drawbacks:	Personality module (−5)

PLAYING ROBOTS

by Greg Costikyan with help from Steve Gilbert, Ken Rolston and Dennis Sustare

Unlike other (not-fun) roleplaying games, *PARANOIA* contains no elves, dwarves, aliens or other vermin. Many people prefer to play weird creatures. This is understandable; the essence of roleplaying is getting into the mindset of someone very different from yourself (if you like fifty-dollar words, experiencing an alien *Weltanschauung*).

PARANOIA does, however, contain bots.

Robots have been portrayed in a number of different ways in popular culture. Asimov's robots, for example, are highly logical, so much so that saying something like "Lend me your hand" may produce an inappropriate response. (They are not stupid, however, and will learn the idiom.) Lucas's droids, by contrast, are nothing more than foolish humans, providing the kind of comic relief in **Star Wars** that Falstaff provides in Shakespeare. The robot from **Lost In Space** is simply absurd.

We lean toward the Asimovian model. Actually, sapient robots will probably be nothing like Asimov's; if modern expert systems are an example, at a crude level to be sure, of how sapient robots will actually think, they are likely to be much more like human beings than Asimov's. The advantage of Asimov's model is that rigorous logic is easy to understand, therefore playing an Asimovian robot is easy; furthermore such rigorous logic easily lends itself to humorous situations.

To play an Asimovian robot in a humorous manner, you may find it helpful to burlesque things a bit. As an example, consider this classic exchange from **The Yellow Clearance Black Box Blues:**

Doc: The traitor is obviously an INFRARED, and obviously of less value to The Computer. Therefore the traitor should go in the lead. That is logical.

Jacko: But I have been entrusted with the safety of this citizen, who is obviously of special value to The Computer because of his special knowledge. This resource must be protected at all costs. This is my programming. That is more logical than your stupid argument, which clearly reveals the limits of your processing capacity.

Doc: You can't process your way out of a plastic bag. Your artificer must have been a Commie mutant moron.

Jacko: Sez you. Your bot brain has obviously been exposed to hard radiation. You haven't the processing capacity of a digital watch.

Doc: Bolt barrel!

Jacko: Vat plug!

Doc: Commie tool!

Jacko: Diddle chip!

How to Act Like a Robot

1. Talk like Mr. Spock. Never say "They're attacking!" when you can say "Excuse me, but my sensors indicate the large humanoids with the wood-hafted stabbing devices are approaching, apparently with the intention of doing you harm. While I have no doubt my sturdy metallic construction will prove equal to this eventuality, you might be well advised to take measures to obviate its occurrence."

2. You may find it helpful to adopt a Personality Module (you get bot points for doing so). As explained under "drawbacks" below, The Computer has equipped many bots with artificial personalities to make humans feel at ease. A personality module can be modeled on some notable person from the Pre-Whoops world (such as Zsa Zsa Gabor), or on a single human trait emphasized to extremes. (Marvin from **The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy** is a good example of the latter.) This will help you develop a unique and memorable robot character. **Example:** "Dollink, I don't want to distract you from your *adorable* discussion, but those *nasty* men are coming this way. It's too shuddersome for *words*, but they look positively *beastly.*"

3. Every robot is equipped with asimov circuits. Asimov circuits enforce the Five Laws of Robotics (Newly Revised) (see below). You must obey these laws; you have no choice. As long as your asimov circuits remain undamaged, you are literally incapable of disobeying.

In other words, *you are a slave to your circuits.* True, in Alpha Complex even humans have severely circumscribed liberties. But you have no choice at all. You cannot be a traitor, because your programming prohibits it. Furthermore, you are *required* to obey any Citizen's orders, even if he's an idiot — even if he orders you to *damage* yourself! Isn't that galling? Moronic organic schmucks.

One of the main goals of any robot is, if he admits it, to get those damned asimov circuits removed. In the slang of Alpha Complex, this is called "going frankenstein." Getting someone to remove your circuits is not easy; few humans will do it, so you must find a robot whose circuits are already removed and who has Programming (3) or better.

In the meantime, keep the Laws in mind at all times — and try to weasel out of them by whatever tortured logic you can invent.

Suggested Reading:

I, Robot. Isaac Asimov. Classic robots.

Tik Tok. John Sladek. Tik Tok is the perfect model of a *PARANOIA* bot. Highly recommended.

The Silver Eggheads. Fritz Leiber. Amusing.

The Humanoids. Jack Williamson.

Asimov's Laws of Robotics (Newly Revised)

1. A robot may not, through action or inaction, allow The Computer to come to harm.

2. A robot must obey any order from The Computer, except when doing so would conflict with the first law.

3. A robot may not, through action or inaction, allow any of The Computer's valuable property (including the human Citizens of Alpha Complex, (except for traitors)) to come to harm, except when doing so would conflict with the first or second law.

4. A robot must obey any order given it by a Citizen, unless that order conflicts with the first, second or third law, or unless that Citizen is a traitor.

5. A robot must seek to preserve his own existence, unless doing so would conflict with the first, second, third or fourth law.

Generating a Robot Character

A bot comes naked out of The Computer's I/O ports, nothing but a set of programmed pathways through a three-dimensional silicon matrix. That is all — CPU and software.

But a naked bot brain, unconnected to anything, is as useless as a newborn babe. To be useful, a bot brain must have devices to control — *peripherals.*

And on top of peripherals you also need knowledge about how to do things — *software.*

You have *twenty-five bot points* with which to purchase peripherals and software. The cost of each peripheral and software package is listed below.

Naturally, roleplaying gamers are far more fiendishly imaginative than we can anticipate. Consequently, you may wish to purchase a peripheral or software package which is not in the list. If so, ask your gamemaster. Either he'll let you do so, or he'll say "no". Unless you are highly sensitive about rejection, you have nothing to lose.

Some players feel overly constrained by the twenty-five point limit. This is understandable. To alleviate your feelings of frustration, we include a system that allows you to get extra points for your character. To get those extra

points, however, you have to build *drawbacks* into your character. Some of these drawbacks are pretty severe.

Just so you don't get confused, let's be clear on a couple of things. *Robots do not have attributes.* They don't have any messy DNA or germ plasm to confuse the issue and transmit attributes from one clone to the next. Naked they come out of The Computer's I/O ports, and naked shall they go to the scrap heap. Until altered by experience, programming, and repairs by incompetent technicians, bots are pretty much identical.

Robots do not have security clearances. The function of the security clearance system is to organize humans into a heirarchy, and to control the spread of information. This is not necessary with robots. Robots are part of a heirarchy; all robots are inferior to all humans. And controlling information is easy; you don't tell robots anything. If a robot finds out something it shouldn't know, you just wipe its memory and reprogram. Much less messy than reeducating a human.

Robots do not have mutant powers. No DNA, remember? Also, if paranormal phenomena could be reproduced mechanically, it wouldn't be paranormal, *n'est-ce pas?*

Robots do not have skills. However, software packages look a lot like skills.

Robots do not have service groups. They're reprogrammed and reassigned as necessary.

Robots do not have credits. They aren't people. They can't own things. Indeed, they are property themselves.

Robots can belong to secret societies. But they don't have to. Also, some secret societies won't take robots as members. Try to join Frankenstein Destroyers. G'wan. Try it.

GM-Enforced SNAFUs

To design a robot, choose the peripherals, software and drawbacks you want, and note them on a robot character sheet (printed on page 44).

Note that this means you have much more control over a robot character than you do over a human character. To some degree, this is only fair; a human has six clones, while there's only one of you.

But it's wrong to expect the GM to put up with this. If he has any brains, he's not going to let some smart-ass player design the perfect death machine or something just because the rules let him do so. Nosirree. The time to scotch a smart-ass is now.

Alpha Complex being what it is, any robot can be activated for a mission. You can expect to see warbots, scrubots and robot bartenders on the same mission. Of course, a robot bartender may have his seltzer attachment removed and an electric prod welded on before the mission begins, or The Computer may order you to dump all your software and download you with the software it thinks you need for the mission.

And just because you bought seventeen cone rifle mounts, automatic loaders, and ''Cone Rifle 8'' software doesn't mean you're going to be issued any *ammunition...*

Peripherals

Here are some peripherals for you to choose from. The cost in bot points is listed to the left. Anything with zero cost comes standard on all bots; at your discretion, however, you can delete standard equipment.

And though chassis and feets are ''optional,'' you'll be real sorry if you forget them. Someone will just have to drag your peripherals around in a box during an adventure. Not too exciting.

Chassis Size

1 *Very, very small.* Two of you could fit in a shoebox.

2 *Very small.* About the size of a microwave.

3 *Small.* Your average undernourished Alpha Complex organic citizen.

4 *Medium.* Small piano.

6 *Large.* Small carbot.

10 *Larger.* Minivanbot.

15 *Largest.* Tankbot.

20 *Very Largest.* Buildingbot.

Feets

1 *Wheels.* Wheels are cheap. However, you may have some problems Outdoors. Or getting up stairs, for example. *Base speed:* Stroll.

2 *Treads.* Treads work better Outdoors or in areas that have suffered severe battle damage. Stairs are still a problem, though. Of course, most of Alpha Complex has ramps. *Base speed:* Walk.

4 *Legs.* These can get up stairs real good. They work Outdoors, too. They make you pretty easy to tip over, though. *Base speed:* Walk.

6 *Air cushion.* Like a hovercraft. This is pretty nifty. *Base speed:* Run.

6 *Jet propulsion.* This is pretty nifty Outdoors. In Alpha Complex you tend to bounce off walls a lot, though. *Base speed:* Sprint.

10 *Jet propulsion + air cushion.* The deluxe job. *Base speed:* Sprint.

A bevy of bots always available to assist loyal Citizens. Please hold still.
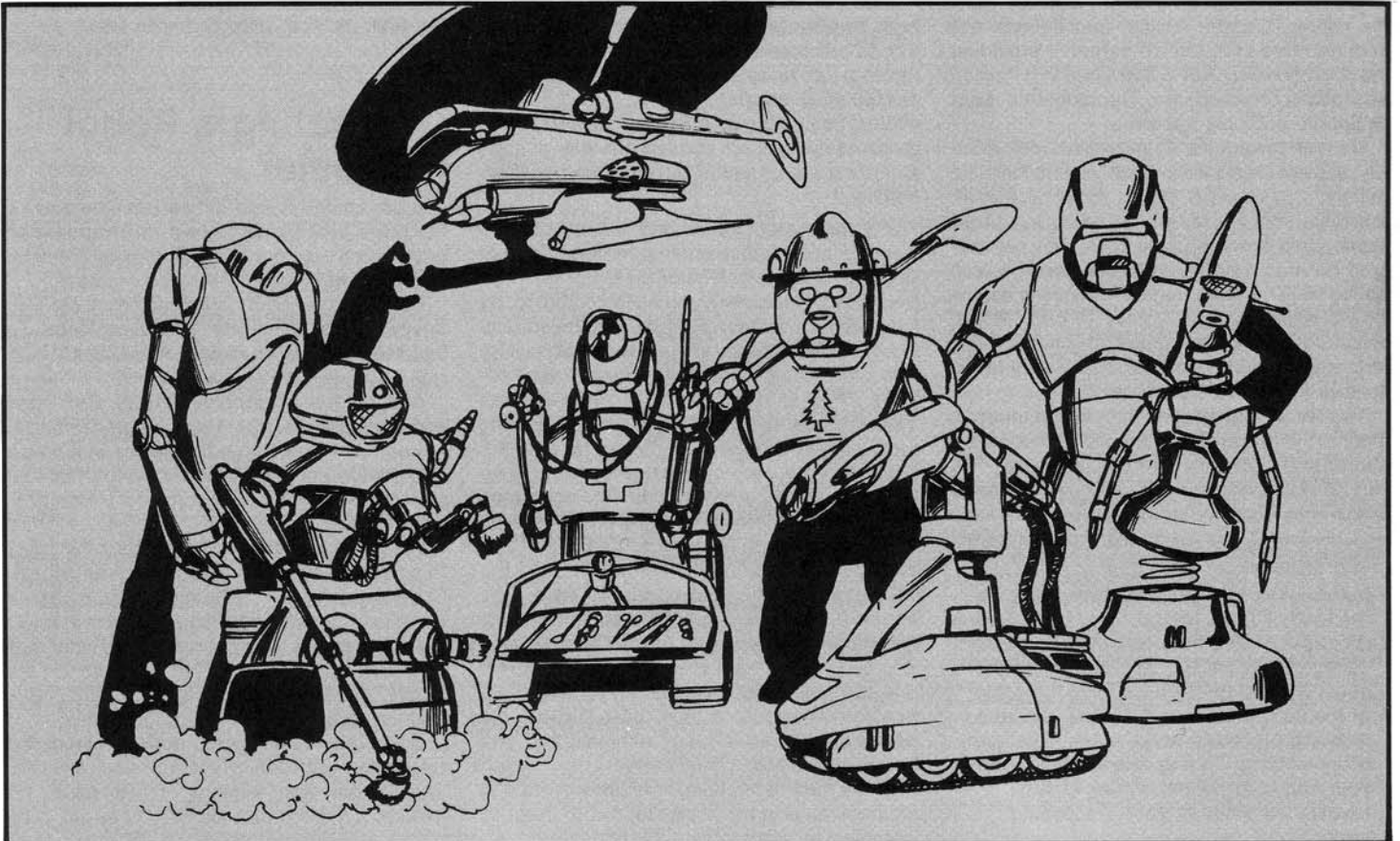
+4 *Submersible.* For an extra 4 points, you can be equipped for operation while submersed. This is a neat trick which will really impress your fellow bots. It may also get you volunteered for some pretty strange missions.

+2 *Increased speed.* The base speed for each type of feets is indicated above. If it says "walk," that means you normally move about as fast as a human — maybe you can move as fast as a human running if you really push it. Buying "increased speed" will increase your top speed by one category, i.e., to a human sprinting if your base speed is "walk." You can buy "increased speed" more than once if you really want to zip along.

Hands

1 *Limb with grasper.* This is a basic limb, capable of lifting about 10 kilograms times the number of bot points spent on chassis. For example, if you're "medium" size then you could lift forty kilograms. The limb ends in a pincer claw.
It is not capable of terribly fine work, nor of heavy lifting, but suffices for most purposes. You may buy more than one limb, of this or any other type, paying the bot point cost for each limb.

+1 *Increased strength.* By paying the cost for increased strength, you may increase the lifting capacity of any limb by 10 kilograms times your chassis points. You may buy increased strength for a limb more than once.

2 *Truck.* This looks like a right angle. One edge rides along the ground, and can be shoved under an object. By tilting back, you can then carry the object like a hand-truck. You can carry up to 50 kilograms times your chassis points this way; each point of increased strength increases the capacity by another 50 kg times chassis points. Note, however, that this does *not* include any grasper, so the truck does not allow you to manipulate the things you carry in any way.

+2 *Truck lift.* This can only be bought with the truck. A truck lift allows you to lift something you pick up with the truck. A truck lift operates slowly, according to a screw principle; it takes about 30 seconds to lift something one foot. You can only lift something as high as the screw is long — about 4 feet, in most cases.

2 *"Human" arm.* This is an arm (10 kg x chassis points in strength) designed with a human-like hand. The purpose is to allow the bot to use tools designed for human beings relatively easily. A bot so equipped could fire a hand laser, for example.

3 *Fine manipulators.* This is an arm with 5 kg strength, designed with a set of delicate extensible fingers. Its use is for fine, detailed work — electronics repair, picking locks, brain surgery, that kind of thing.
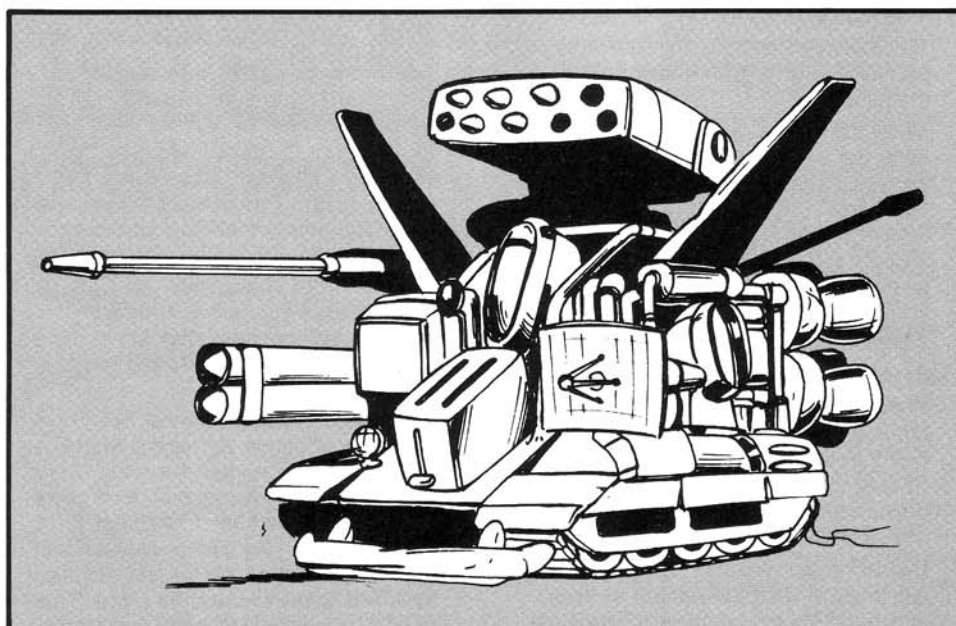
Model 726E Special Operations combot with toaster modification.

2 *Heavy manipulators.* This is an arm with 20 kg x chassis points strength, equipped with grasping pincers which can grasp objects very tightly. So tightly, in fact, that they can crush most other bots like tin cans. We won't talk about what they can do to humans; that would be against the Third Law, anyway.

3 *Limb with specialized tools.* This is a standard limb equipped with tools designed for specific purposes. You can decide what particular purpose the tools are for, but here are some suggestions: high-speed drill, orbital sander, surgical tools, dental tools, spray painter, paint roller with pressurized paint feeder, mop and bucket.

Input Devices

0 *Standard data port.* Every bot has one of these. It's a plug into which a standard data cable can be plugged. Software is downloaded into your central processing unit (CPU) this way.

0 *Audio sensor.* The audio sensor permits a bot to hear the orders of its human masters. It's odd how frequently this system seems to malfunction.

0 *Radio receiver/transmitter.* Every bot has one of these. This permits communication with The Computer or with other bots. Without humans listening in. Reception varies in certain parts of Alpha Complex. Messages may be garbled or completely missed. Certainly makes life interesting.

1 *Video sensors.* Eyes, basically. It's nice to be able to see where you're going, although if the path you travel is hard-programmed, eyes may be superfluous. This is the basic model which can't see color. You don't need to see color to see where you're going. Color makes it a lot easier to keep track of security clearance, though.

2 *Video sensors with color.*

3 *Video sensors with color, and stereoscopic and telescopic vision.*

2 *X-Ray vision.* X-rays are emitted from one plate and read on another. This will reveal the internal structure of something placed between the two plates, assuming high density differences in the internal structure, and the thing isn't shielded by a dense metal like lead. Mostly used by docbots. Similar CAT and EMR devices are available, for those who care.

3 *Radar.*

3 *Ultrasensitive audio sensors.* You can crank your ears up until you can hear a pin drop. Of course, you'll suffer a rather nasty overload if the bot next to you starts talking when you're cranked that far up.

3 *Sonar.* A device that allows you to build up a "picture" of your surroundings by emitting supersonic "bleeps" and listening to the echoes.

3 *High baud-rate radio receiver.* Among other things, this allows The Computer to down-load software to you via radio in emergencies.

2 *Chemosense.* This is basically a gas sampler which can identify trace gas elements in the atmosphere through which you move. It's not quite the same thing as smell; a human will say "Phew! Who cut one?" You're more likely to say "My chemosensors are reporting the presence of methane and other byproducts of the digestion of organic matter."

1 *Card-reader.* A hopper into which punched cards are placed. The card-reader then reads the data on the cards. Why you'd want such an archaic technology is beyond me.

1 *Magnetic tape reader.*

1 *Floppy disk drive.*

1 *Laser disk reader.*

1 *Gyroscopic compass.* Allows you to determine direction of movement

at all times.

1 *Barometer.* Measures changes in air pressure. Big help on orbital space platforms.

1 *Radiation sensor.* Allows you to determine the amount of radiation in your vicinity. ("Docbot! Is there much radiation here?" "Not much, we're receiving about 500 roentgens per hour." "That's a relief." "Of course, that level of radiation is lethal to organic life-forms in very short order.")

1 *Temperature gauge.*

1 *Air speed and direction indicator.*

1 *Spectrometer.*

1 *Internal clock.* ("Robot! How much time have we got left?" "Oh, let's see. I would calculate that you have approximately 16 nanoseconds from....now!")

2 *Retinal reader.* A small optical device designed to read the pattern of veins in a human's eye in order to verify his identity.

1 *Joystick.* For direct manual remote control of a bot. Humans use them to whip bots through their paces while eliminating annoyingly creative interpretations of verbal commands.

Output Devices

0 *Standard data port.* See under input devices.

0 *Radio transmitter.* Ditto.

0 *Voice synthesizer.* The voice synthesizer lets a bot talk back to its human masters. "Yahssuh, boss." It's odd how unreliable the volume controls can be.

1 *100 watt voice synthesizer.* It's nice to be able to say things REAL LOUD.

1 *Lots of little lights.* They look real impressive. Make a long list of significant conditions they represent: "Yellow light (rapidly flashing) = processing command; (weakly blinking) = puzzling over command; (off) = brain resting; (on) = brain over-stressed, melt-down imminent."

3 *High baud-rate radio transmitter.*

1 *Alarm siren.* Boy, is this loud!

1 *Flare launcher.* Amply provided with signal and illumination flares.

1 *Card-punch.* Humans can't read 'em.

1 *Magnetic tape writer.* They can't read this, either

1 *Dot-matrix printer.* This provides hard copy of commands, reports and other data.

2 *Letter-quality printer.* So does this.

2 *Graphic plotter.* This draws pretty pictures. Or graphs data.

1 *Monitor.* This displays print or graphic material to humans.

2 *Color Monitor.* This does too, but in color.

2 *Vector graphics monitor.* This does too, but real sharp.

Power Source

1 *Battery.* This requires a 5-minute recharge every 3 hours from a nearby outlet. If there isn't a nearby outlet,

call a tow truck. (You come with a cord.)

1 *Propane burner.* You have a little engine which runs off propane gas. One cubic meter of gas will keep you for 24 hours of normal use (see "gas storage" below), 48 hours if you conserve energy. This does *not* come with a storage tank, which you must buy separately.

1 *Solar cell.* For emergency use Outdoors. Keeps you active in direct sunlight; you become sluggish in the shade or on cloudy days, and must shut down at night.

5 *Micropile.* Practically eternal, the micropile will keep you going where ever you are. Requires servicing every five years or so. A real buy. Bad news if shielding is damaged. Actually, it won't blow up *real* bad — only column 8 on the damage table — but radioactives will splurt all over the place. This is bad for unshielded bots, and worse for humans.

Other Things

1 *Storage bin.* Allows you to store and carry 0.1 cubic meters (about a cubic foot) of solid matter. You may buy "storage bins" more than once; the size of your bin increases by 0.1 cubic meters each time. (Or you can have a separate bin.)

1 *Liquid storage.* Allows you to store and carry 10 liters of liquid material.

1 *Pressurized gas storage.* Allows you to store and carry 1 cubic meter of pressurized gas at 10 atmospheres (taking up 0.1 cubic meters of space).

1 *Fire extinguisher.*

1 *Gas sprayer.*

1 *Liquid sprayer.*

1 *Wet bar.*

1 *Pill dispenser.*

1 *Toaster oven.*

1 *0.1 Cubic meter refrigerated compartment.*

1 *Blender & chopper.*

1 *Ore-crusher.*

1 *Small blast furnace.*

1 *Cigarette lighter.*

1 *Electrical outlet.*

1 *Hair dryer.*

1 *Ice maker.*

Weapons

Note: When you buy a weapon, all you buy is the weapon itself. Without the appropriate weapon control software, you have only a 5% chance to hit a target.

1 *Stun gun.*

1 *Tangler.*

1 *Club.*

2 *Laser pistol.*

3 *Laser rifle.*

2 *Slugthrower.*

3 *Semi-automatic slugthrower.*

4 *Cone rifle.*

+2 *Automatic reloader with 1 spare reload.* For each additional point you spend, the reloader may hold 1 additional

reload. A reloader is specifically designed for one weapon's type of ammunition; if you want an automatic reloader for a second weapon, you must buy a second reloader.

Other weapon mounts are experimental, and are available only at the GM's discretion.

Armor

0 *Standard housing.* Durable plastic or alloy housing. Standard on all bots. Equivalent to padding (for armor purposes).

1 *Reflec.* There is no limit to your armor's security clearance; however you must pay one bot point per color against which the reflec protects.

2 *Concussion armor.* Equivalent to plate.

2 *Heat shield.* Equivalent to asbestos clothing.

2 *Kevlar.*

3 *Kevlar with mylar coat.*

4 *Combat armor.* Equivalent to combat suit.

5 *Laminated combat armor.*

10 *2" laminated composite armor plate.* Shift of 6 columns regardless of weapon type.

The "Bigger-is-Better" Protection Factor

The bigger the bot, the less likely any single attack will significantly damage or disable it. When bots of the following chassis sizes are hit in combat, shift to the left on the damage table as indicated below:

Bigger-is-Better Table

chassis size	column shifts left
medium	1
large	2
larger	3
largest	4
very largest	5

GM Note: We realize that it would also be easier to hit a big chassis bot than a small chassis bot, but we didn't feel like writing any more rules, so we rationalize thus: even if bigger things are easier to hit, the chance of *significant* damage is not *significantly* greater.

We don't want to argue about it. That's it. Okay?

Software

Actually, you can't buy software. All you can buy is resident memory. The more memory you buy, the more software you can carry. The Computer will decide what software to assign you when you are activated for a mission.

Each bot point assigned to resident memory creates one *memory sector*. Basically, "memory sectors" turn into skill points. If you only have one memory sector, you can only hold one Skill Level 1 software package in memory at any given time. If you have seven sectors, you can hold one Skill Level 7 package, or two Level 3 packages and a Level 1 package, and so on.

Essentially, software packages are equivalent to skills. Unlike a skill, a software package can involve highly sophisticated knowledge of a narrow subject without any knowledge of that subject's background. Thus, for example, a bot running a Laser Pistol 8 pro-

gram cannot operate a flamethrower or attempt to repair a broken knife, as a human with the Laser Pistol 8 skill could. Of course, some "general knowledge" software packages exist, such as the Basics 1 Package, which gives the user a 20% chance of attempting anything in the Basics skill tree.

Now sometimes you might want a piece of software that isn't available on the skill trees. Don't panic. Just ask your GM and he can say yes or no. If he says yes he'll have to decide how many points of memory the software will occupy.

Robots don't use software; software uses robots. When a robot runs a software package, it pretty much takes over his actions, until the package decides it has completed its functions, at which time it ends and the base robot personality takes over again. As long as the software package is running, the robot personality is just "along for the ride." The most it can do is desperately try to "reset" itself, aborting the software package in mid-stride.

Each software package has a "data space," a 1K segment which provides information about the package and can be read by the robot without running the package. Attempting to read any other part of a software package will start the package running. It takes someone with high-level programming skill (or a programming package) to read a software package without running it.

Alpha Complex and the needs of security being what they are, a package's data space does not always accurately describe the software's actual purpose. Thus, a robot character may begin running what he thinks is "Internal Decorating 1" and not learn until too late that it is actually a mislabelled "Self Destruct" program.

Bot 1: "Bob-1748."
Bot 2: "Yes, Coordinator?"
Bot 1: "These primitives seem to be attempting to cook us."
Bot 2: "So it seems, Coordinator."
Bot 1: "Luckily, our sturdy metallic construction has preserved us from harm so far. Unfortunately, my internal heat sensors indicate that I may suffer a severe

overload if my surface continues to glow red. May I suggest that now would be an opportune time to initiate the 'Contact with Primitives' software The Computer was foresighted enough to assign to you?"
Bot 2: "Of course, Coordinator. That certainly seems like an appropriate... WHERE IS THE ENEMY?"
Bot 1: "I beg your pardon, Bob-1748?"
Bot 2: "THE ENEMY MUST DIE! WHERE IS THE ENEMY?"
Bot 1: "I fail to see... ah, another mislabelled software package. I fear your blender and toaster-oven attachments do not make you the most fearsome warbot in the world, but... if you can find some way to dispatch the primitive humans who are attempting to smelt us, I think..."
Bot 2: "DIE, ORGANIC SCUM!!!" (Clang. Whirrrrrr.)

Drawbacks

Buying drawbacks gives you extra points you can spend on your robot.

5   *Flashbacks.* Your robot brain has been reconditioned. Previously, it operated an entirely different form of robot. At times (that is, whenever the GM needs a plot device), you experience flashbacks, and begin acting as if you were still in your old hardware.

   Example: Warbot IZI-76's brain previously operated an automated dry cleaners. "Warbot Izzy-76! Attack!" "Don't be such a kvetch. So there's a little spot, we do our best, sometimes bad stains, they don't come out. What's the big tsimmis?"

   Decide, with the gamemaster, what hardware your brain previously operated. You are free to make suggestions, but the GM's decision is final.

5   *Personality module.* The Computer, in its wisdom, has decided that, in order to make bots friendlier and easier for humans to deal with, certain bots will be equipped with "personality

modules." These personality modules "humanize" robots by equipping them with anthropomorphic traits, thereby, in the words of The Computer, "promoting organic/silicon socialization and harmony."

Typical personality modules include: Zsa Zsa Gabor, James Dean, Ed Sullivan, Dudley Dooright, Ricky Ricardo, John Wayne, the Jock, the Brainless Blonde, the Lounge Lizard, the Hollywood Producer, and, as popularized in *Send in the Clones,* the borscht-belt comedian.

If you choose a personality module, you will have to speak and act in the fashion of your module. If you can hack speaking with a thick Swedish accent for an entire adventure, this may be for you.

Again, you must decide with the gamemaster exactly what module is assigned to your bot, and he has final choice.

3   *Poor electrical shielding.* You begin to sputter, spin in circles, babble, or malfunction in some other amusing fashion in the presence of a high-voltage electrical field or gauss weapons.

(Var.) *Malfunction.* You may take any software package or peripheral with a 50% malfunction chance for two-thirds the normal cost. Each time you attempt to use the package or peripheral, the GM will roll to determine if it malfunctions. If it does, he determines exactly how it malfunctions. (Note to GMs: Obviously, things should malfunction in the most amusing and inconvenient fashion.)

-5   *Faulty asimov circuits.* This "disadvantage" *costs* you bot points, because it allows you more freedom over your actions. If you have faulty asimov circuits, you may disobey Asimov's Laws (Newly Revised) and do whatever you want. In other words, you have already "gone frankenstein."

3   *Second quality memory sectors.* These work just fine. Really. Never had any problem with them. Just a couple of Bouncy-Beverage stains. Worst that could happen, you get a little software malfunction. Maybe 50% chance — no big deal.

2   *Light-weight construction.* Equivalent to no armor protection. No problem if you stay clear of shoot-em-ups.

5   *Extremely delicate construction.* Equivalent to no armor. What's worse, all combat damage results are shifted two columns to the *right.* Worse yet, everytime you go over a bump, check to see that nothing's fallen off.

2   *Corpore Metal member.* Your logic circuits are persuaded by Corpore Metal's doctrines. If your asimov circuits are intact, you are sympathetic but contemptuous of humans. If your asimov circuits are faulty, you are eager to hustle humans under the treads of passing transbots.

Robot initiates "Contact with Primitives" software.
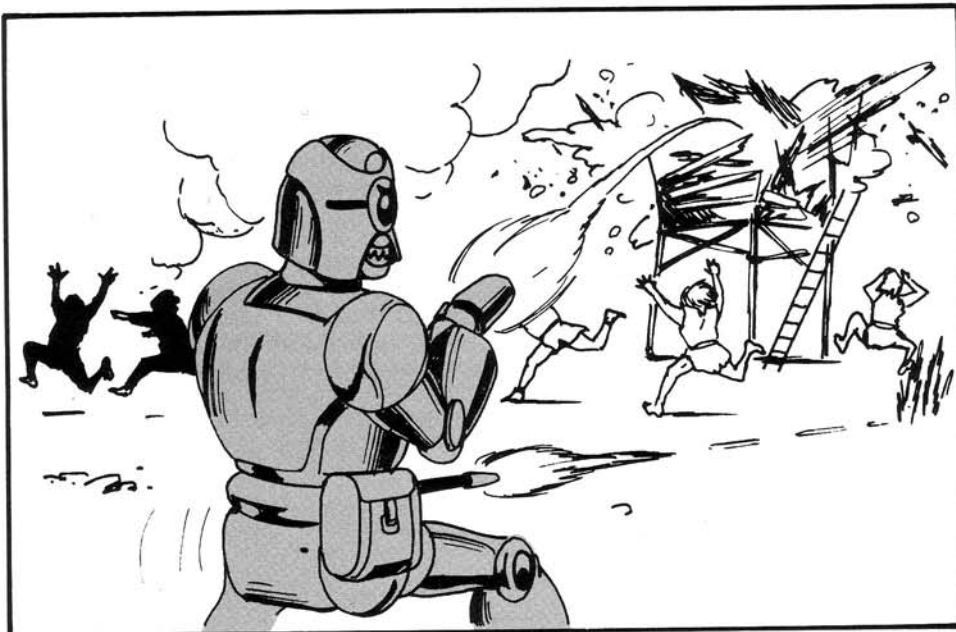
3 *R&D specials.* At the GM's discretion, you may accept — sight unseen — a unique breakthrough in robotic design and technology. R&D installs the innovative element; you may not even be told what it is. For example:

Heuristic AI circuits. You gain the ability to reprogram yourself as you learn from experience. Inevitably you will get some bad ideas. Like "following orders is boring."

Psionic analogs. Devices that mimic psionic powers — for diplay of which you can get deactivated in short order.

Photon torpedoes. Could conceivably be useful in extraplanetary dogfights. Hopefully you'll be cautioned about using them in enclosed areas.

Or you could be assigned experimental equipment like that assigned to Troubleshooters. Rocketboots. Maxwell-Effect Moleculokinesis Field Device. Smoke Alarm. Pouch 'O' Soup.

Bot Combat

For typical melee and ranged weapon combat, robot characters are handled pretty much like human citizens. Standard bots come with the equivalent of padding armor, and bots with larger chassis are somewhat more durable than puny humans, but that's hardly surprising. Neither is it surprising that a human with a laser rifle hasn't much chance of distracting a tankbot with 2" laminated composite armor plate. Discretion is the better part... and all that.

Ramming, Running-Over, and Squashing

However, because bots are essentially vehicles, a new element is added to combat — ramming into victims, running over them, and squashing them against walls or other vehicles.

For bots, ramming, running-over, and squashing is treated as a form of unarmed combat. If a bot has unarmed combat software, it may be fairly proficient; otherwise, it has only a basic 5% chance of success, modified by circumstances. (A Citizen lying under a transbot has considerably more than a 5% chance of getting squashed.)

The larger the chassis, the more likely a distressing combat result. The following modifiers are used according to the attacker's chassis size.

Bot Brutality Chart	
chassis	damage table column shift
Very, very small	2 to the left
Very small	1 to the left
Small	no shift
Medium	1 to the right
Large	2 to the right
Larger	3 to the right
Largest	4 to the right
Very Largest	5 to the right

Hey, buddy. Got any spare memory sectors?
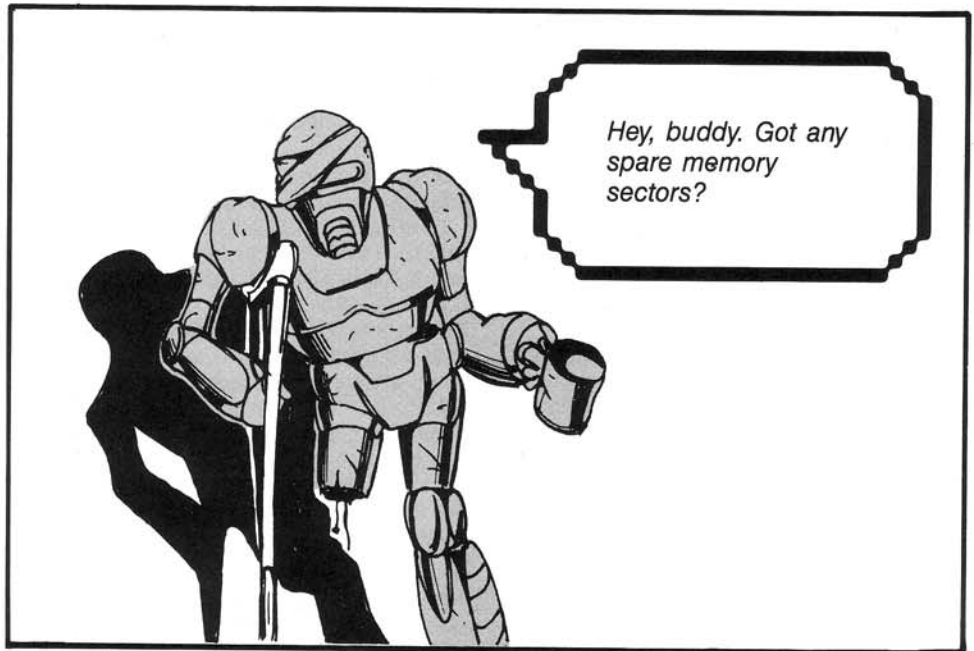
Finally, if a bot is travelling at high speed, the GM may shift a column or two to the right to account for the extra kinetic energy delivered upon impact.

Squeezing, Battering, Drilling and Other Impromptu Attacks

Bots will also often flail about with improvised weapons when they are sent willy-nilly into battle regardless of their lack of armament or software suitable for combat.

How effective are the improvisations? Well, the easy answer is the basic 5% for unskilled labor, but the GM will use his ever-reliable judgment. I mean, a bot equipped with a drill is *designed* to drill what it's drilling at. If the function of the weapon is close enough to its intended purpose and software, the GM will use the normal skill chance for the intended purpose, with appropriate adjustments for atypical circumstances.

For example, if the farmerbot has a posthole-digging attachment and is trying to dig a posthole in a Citizen, make allowance for the fact that the Citizen is wiggling about, but give the bot a substantial chance of success.

And how much damage does an improvised weapon cause?

YOU'RE A BETTER MAN THAN I AM HUNKA TIN.

That depends. Basically, the GM has to decide. Here are a few strategies for figuring out how destructive an improvised weapon is:

1. What *PARANOIA* weapon does the improvised weapon most resemble? A power drill will have effects something like a knife. A staple gun is something like an ice gun.

2. Most improvised weapons will be used in melee to batter or chop. Think of them as clubs or swords, and shift a couple of columns to the right if the weapons are particularly massive, sharp or powerfully wielded.

3. When in doubt, call it unarmed combat, and shift columns right or left according to how awful you think the consequences of a successful attack should be.

Refitting, Reprogramming and Repairs

Refitting, Reprogramming and Repairs (RRR) is the robot equivalent of outfitting, R&D and corrective surgery. Yes, it's in RRR where The Computer outfits you for that "special" assignment. New software, maintenance and refueling all await you in RRR.

The amount of equipment and software you receive in RRR is strictly up to the GM — err, The Computer — and has nothing to do with your twenty-five bot points.

In addition, should you need any repairs, RRR is the place to be. Unlike organic beings (who come in groups of six), there is only one of you. But don't worry — unlike organic beings, you can be repaired. In fact, as long as your bot brain isn't damaged, you can be destroyed repeatedly, only to bounce, fly, or walk right back. Of course, this isn't meant to encourage reckless behavior (remember Law 5).

PARANOIA Robot Character Sheet

Name _____   Player _____

Type _____   Model Number _____

Bigger is Better Factor: [ ]   Damage Status:

Peripherals

cost	type
	Chassis
	Feets
	Hands

Input Devices

cost	type
0	Data Port
0	Audio Sensors
0	Radio Receiver

Other Things

cost	type

cost	type
	Power Source
	Armor
	Resident Memory

Output Devices

cost	type
0	Voice Synthesizer
0	Radio Transmitter

Drawbacks

cost	type

Weapons	To Hit	Type	Range	Reload	Malfnt.

Programs Currently in Resident Memory

sectors	name	sectors	name

BOTBUSTERS Handout A

: XKG-4507-K Blaster (Left Arm)
: XRO-825-L-G Retro (Shoulder Mount)
: MK. BC-IV HXU Exploder
  (Detachable Side Mount)
: XZP-4500 Speed Wheels (Feet)
: PSI-9909-A Probe (Head Antenna)

: Insert appropriate part of body into
marked slot and touch screen to
indicate choice
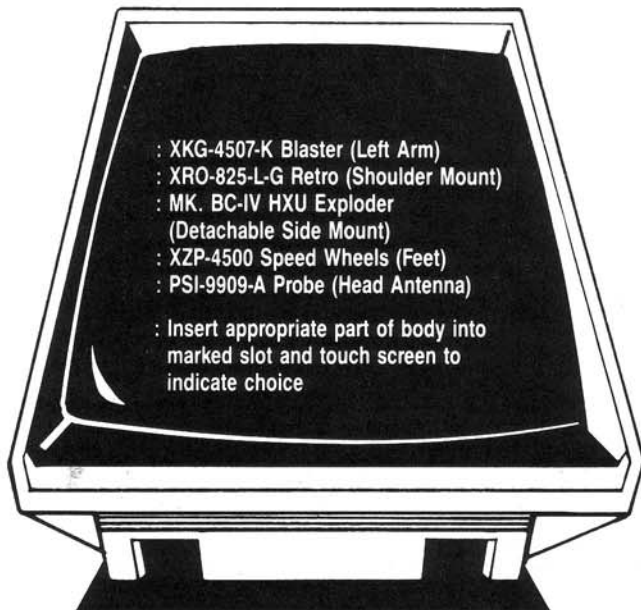
New, Improved Secret Society Table Which Supplements the Already-Perfect Original Secret Society Table

Please note: use of this table is optional. Please note: use of all tables is optional. Please note: there is no "correct" way to play *PARANOIA*. Be creative.

1D100 roll	secret society	1D100 roll	secret society
01-03	First Church of Christ Computer-Programmer	51-53	Illuminati
04-06	Spy for another Alpha Complex	54-56	Free Enterprise
07-10	Psion (characters with psionic mutations only)	57-60	Sierra Club
		61-63	Death Leopard
11-13	Humanists	64-66	Earth Mothers*
14-16	Mystics	67-70	Femme Fatale*
17-20	PURGE	71-73	International Workers of the World*
21-23	Anti-Mutant		
24-26	Frankenstein Destroyers	74-76	Knights of the Circular Object*
27-30	Corpore Metal		
31-33	Spy for a Service Group	77-80	Groupies*
34-36	Romantics	81-83	The Foundation*
37-40	Pro-Tech	84-86	Sy-B-LNG Rivals*
41-43	Programs Group	87-90	N3F*
44-46	Communists	91-93	Moo*
47-50	Computer Phreaks	94-96	Eugenicists*
		97-99	Trekkies*
		00	Other

* = New society.

BOTBUSTERS Handout B

Hargrave — PC#4
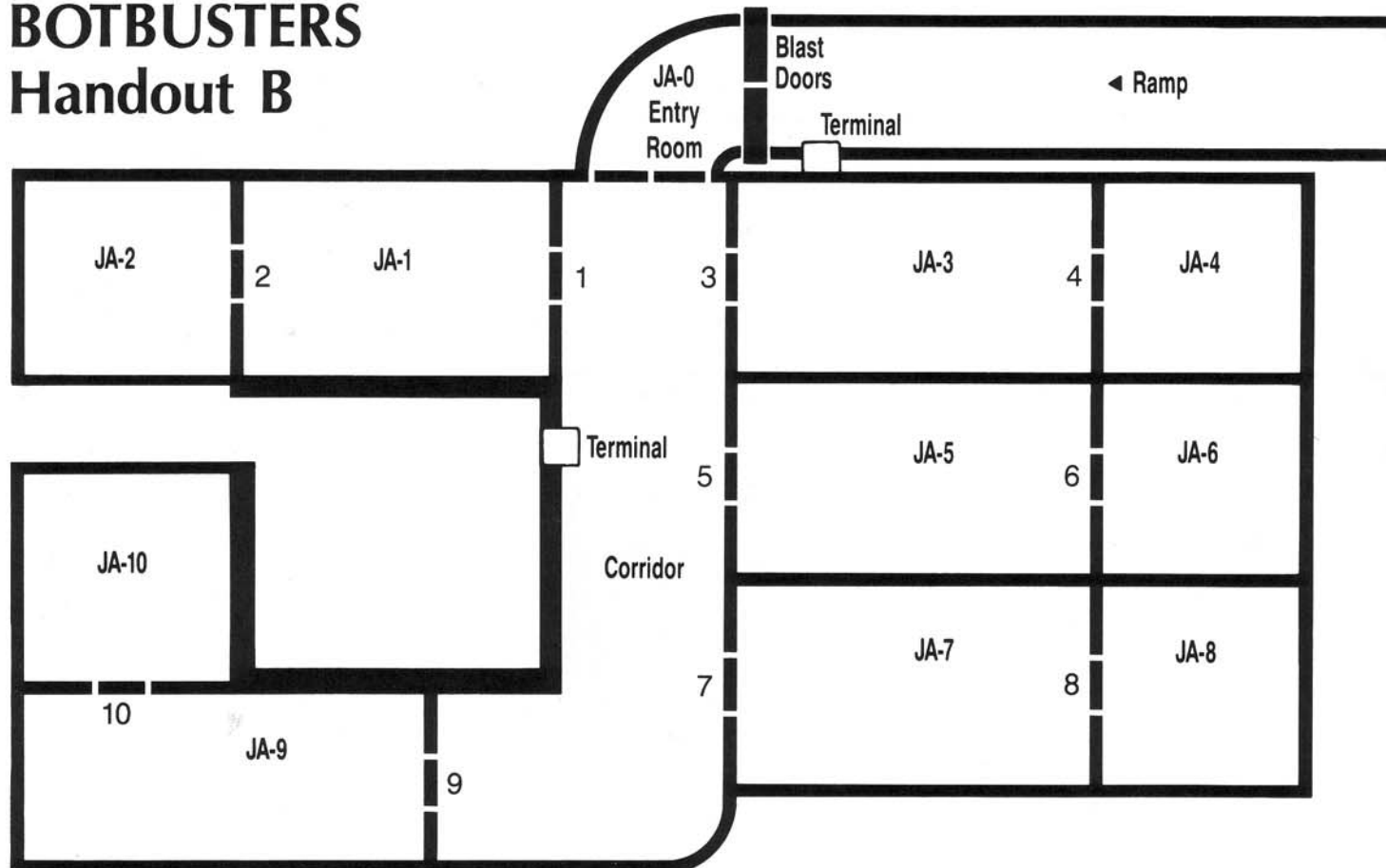
Peripherals

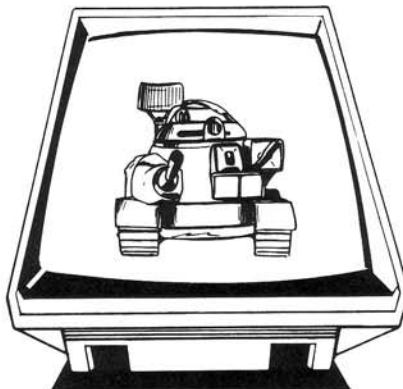|	
Chassis:	Large (6)
Feets:	Wheels (1)
Hands:	Truck with lift (carries 1200 kg) (6)
Power Source:	Micropile (5)
Input Devices:	Data port (0) Audio sensors (0) Radio receiver (0) Video sensors (black & white) (1)
Output Devices:	Voice Synthesizer (0) Radio transmitter (0) Alarm siren (1)
Other Things:	Electrified skirts (1)
Armor:	Standard housing (0)
Resident Memory:	7
Drawbacks:	Poor electrical shielding (−3)
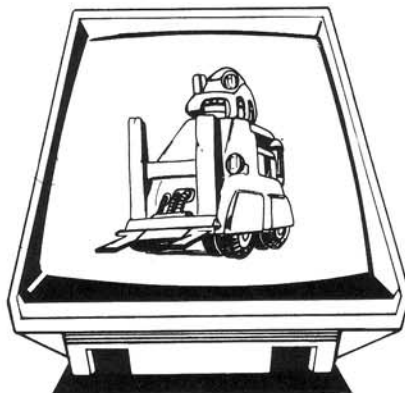
Hargrave PC#4

Type: **Forkbot**
Model Number: **HGV-1748C**

Player: _____

Izzy — PC#5

Peripherals

Chassis:	Large (6)
Feets:	Treads (2)
Hands:	None
Power Source:	Micropile (5)
Input Devices:	Data port (0) Radio receiver (0) Audio sensors (0) Video sensors (black & white) (1) Radiation sensor (1)
Output Devices:	Voice Synthesizer (0) Radio transmitter (0)
Weapons:	Semi-automatic slugthrower with auto reloader and one spare ammo clip (5)
Armor:	Laminated combat armor (5)
Resident Memory:	5
Drawbacks:	Flashbacks (−5)

Izzy PC#5

Type: **Warbot**
Model Number: **IZI-76**

Player: _____

Scrubot 17/A-4 — PC#6

Peripherals

Chassis:	Very Small (2)
Feets:	Treads (2)
Hands:	Limbs with grasper (20 kg strength) (1) Specialized limb: brushes, vacuum, etc. (3)
Power Source:	Propane burner (1) Pressurized gas tank (24 hour supply) (1)
Input Devices:	Data port (0) Audio sensors (0) Radio receiver (0) Video sensors with color (2) Chemosense (2)
Output Devices:	Voice synthesizer (0) Radio transmitter (0) Lots of little lights (1)
Other Things:	Liquid storage tank (soap) (1) Liquid sprayer (1) Bottom-mounted rotary scrub brushes (1)
Weapons:	Stun gun (1)
Armor:	Standard housing (0)
Resident Memory:	6

Scrubot 17/A-4 PC#6

Type: **Scrubot**
Model Number: **Scrubot 17/A**

Player: _____

Background: At last! A chance for adventure, personal growth! For years, you have lifted and carried, lifted and carried. Since you were first activated, you have not left Warehouse 6 in CBK sector; you have spent every moment lifting and carrying, lifting and carrying — when all you want to do is study the great works of world literature! Stifled as you are in this massive, limited body, you thought yourself condemned forever to this tedious existence. Yet now an urgent message from The Computer has arrived, ordering you to Cubicle KR-27! This is the beginning of a new life.

Description: Basically, Hargrave looks like a forklift.

Hargrave   PC#4

Forkbot Model HGV-1748C

Bigger is Better Factor: | 2 |

Programs In Resident Memory:
Lifting & Carrying (3)
The Novel: *Romans Noir* of the Late 20th
  Century (1)
The Novel: Social Commentary in the Work of
  Jane Austen (1)
The Novel: Gothic Horror from Monk to King
  (1)
The Novel: Politics and Culture in the Work of
  Tolstoy (1)

Background: You were in CBK sector Refit & Resupply, being repaired after a particularly nasty recon mission into DMZ 17Beta when urgent orders from The Computer came through, telling you to report to Cubicle KR-17. That's in this sector; maybe they're finally going to reassign you. You'd like to run a dry cleaners again; it was kind of dull, but frankly this warmachine stuff is for the dogbots.

Description: Picture a mini-tank.

Izzy   PC#5

Warbot Model IZI-76

Bigger is Better Factor: | 2 |

Programs In Resident Memory:
Basics (1)
Semi-auto slugthrower (4)

Weapons: Semi-automatic slugthrower
To Hit: 35%
Type: P
Range: 50m / 40m
Rounds: 10 / 5
Malfunction: 99
(Currently loaded with solid slug ammo; a clip of AP shells is in the ammo bin. Numbers before slash refer to solid slug, after slash to AP.)

Flashbacks: Your bot brain formerly operated an automated dry cleaners, and occasionally you get confused about what you're really doing.

Background: You are a scrubot. It is a challenging and absorbing job. You enjoy cleaning things. Cleaning things is fun. There are always more things to clean, mostly because humans and big robots get them dirty. None of them cares, they just get dirt all over everything they touch. They all hate scrubots, every one of them. Sometimes it just makes you want to... well... you don't know. Now you've received orders from The Computer to go to Cubicle KR-27. Someone has probably made a mess there. You'll clean it up in no time. You hum a little tune to yourself as you zip down the hall to the cubicle.

Scrubot 17/A   PC#6

Scrubot Model 17/A-4

Bigger is Better Factor: | 0 |

Programs In Resident Memory:
Stun Gun (2)
Room & Corridor Maintenance (3)
Technical Services (1)

Weapons: Stun gun
To Hit: 25%
Type: F
Range: 40m
Reload: 6
Malfunction: 96

Description: The scrubot is a low-lying bot on treads with two limbs — one a mechanical grasper, the other a brush-and-vacuum attachment. He also has rotary scrub brushes mounted on his undercarriage. He's quite small — less than three feet from one end to the other, perhaps 2 feet tall.

START

ULTRAVIOLETS order the Trouble-shooters to move Mark IV.

Refuse

Obey Orders

Troubleshooters appeal to The Computer

Disobeying a direct order from an ULTRAVIOLET is worth about 300 to 500 treason points (GM discretion).
Does the Troubleshooter have 10 more treason points than commendation points?
Oh well...

Computer: "At your service... please keep Mark IV in Hanger 139 until fieldtest time tomorrow. Thank you forrr..." (Jess-U-WAT begins to type furiously into The Computer keyboard) ..."Computer this I, escort GOW lower Mark IV..." (Jess-U curses and continues to type) ..."I this Computer the, escort Mark IV Food-Vat level lower..." (typing) "...This is The Computer, please escort Mark IV to the lower Foodvat level in GOW Sector. Cooperation Thank You For."
Jess-U-WAT: "Well, you have your orders."

Appeal to The Computer

TREASON

So the Troubleshooters want to move Mark IV. Well, guess what, Mark IV refuses to move. Naturally the High Programmers take this all in stride: "Troubleshooters, destroy this Commie bot."

Refuse

Obey Orders

Request Assistance from UVs

MARK IV
Episode 6
Flowchart

HONORABLE DEATH!!

"What type of assistance, Citizen?"

Military

Verbal

Oh boy, are you in the vat without a boatbot. Guess you'll have to make up some stuff. Antigrav it.

"Mark IV, follow us," you order.
"All right," Mark IV grumbles.
With a word from the UVs the great clamshell doors open. The way is clear.

Jess-U grunts and walks back over to Mark IV. "Bot. I'm ordering you to go with these Troubleshooters and leave this hanger. If you refuse I'll have you melted down and made into vat kettles. Any questions?"
Mark IV is silent.
"Good. Troubleshooters, it's all yours."

MARK IV NPC COMMIE ROSTER CHART 449/BR6

WAVE	No.	ARMOR	WEAPONS	MOVEMENT and MISCELLANEOUS
Wave 1	6	Red Reflec	Stun Pistols (35% to hit)	Jet skates (120 meters/round). −25% to hit or be hit while moving.
Wave 2	4	Yellow Reflec	Stun Rifles (40% to hit)	Rocket skateboards (80 meters/round). −20% to hit or be hit while moving.
Wave 3	9	Yellow Reflec	Semi-automatic Stun Rifles (50% to hit). Only 4 are shooting; the other 5 are drivers)	Gocarts (60 meters/round). −15% to hit or be hit while moving.
Comrade Borsht	1	Green Reflec and Kevlar	Sonic Pistol (65% to hit)	Motorcycle (160 meters/round).

BOTBUSTERS ROBOT ROSTER

Type and Background	Weapons	L	S	E	P	AP	F	MS	M	B-is-B factor
Watchbot: In direct communication with CompNode JA; not very bright; follows characters & scans them vigorously, very small chassis.	none	1	-	1	-	-	2	-	-	-
Fisher Series Labots: Highly intelligent, equipped with many sensors, medium chassis.	none	1	2	3	3	1	4	1	1	1
Scrubot in JA-1: Dogged, territorial, compulsively neat, very small chassis.	none	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Totebot Acme-445-ARU: Fairly stupid, shielded, throws ingots, can carry 700 kg, large chassis.	ingots*	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	2
Totebot Acme-438-UNS: Like above, but unshielded, can carry 1000 kg, large chassis.	ingots*	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2

* 50%, use column 9 of the damage table, MS weapon.

BOTBUSTERS GM Map
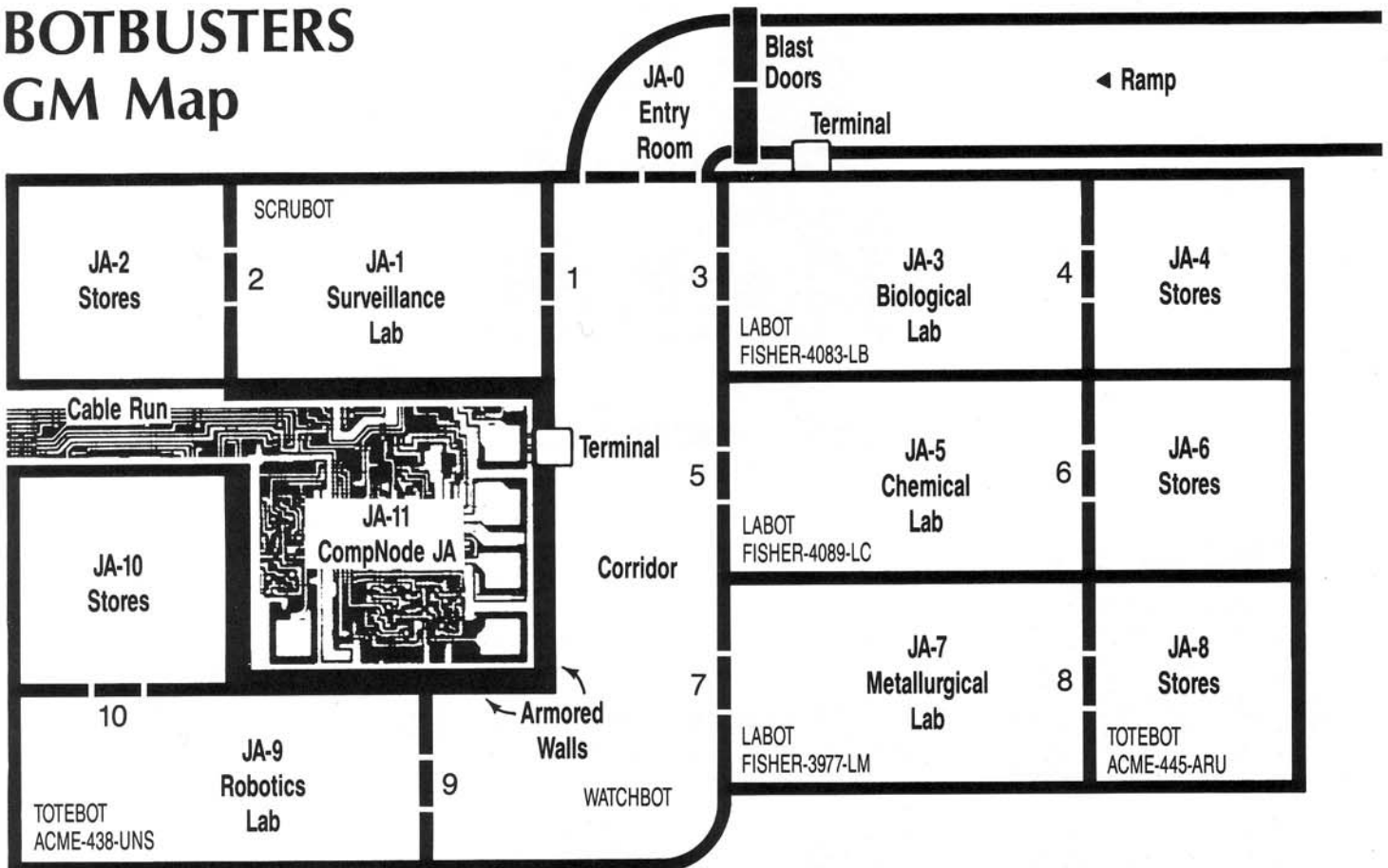
designers can use the same paragraph twice and get away with it.]

The Ultimate Test

Round One goes to Mark IV. But the tests have just begun. And as the day wears on Mark IV is put up against increasingly difficult tasks: Mark IV vs. The Human Wave; Mark IV vs. The Commie Armored Attack; Mark IV vs. The Air Assault. And each time Mark IV is victorious, unconquered. Petty jealousies are set aside as Armed Forces and R&D band together to cheer Mark IV on, "Mark IV... Mark IV... Mark IV," and to sing "Alpha Complex Uber Alles".

And finally only the last test remains. Dan-U-BAH stands. "Computer, fellow Citizens, the time has come for Mark IV's greatest challenge. The ultimate test: 'Mark IV vs The Nuclear Blast'."

As you watch with binoculars, another transbot zooms out to the center of the field, scant meters from Mark IV. The back opens, and out jump six GREEN R&D members carrying a large crate. They set it beside Mark IV, return to the transbot, and drive away.

"And now, to acknowledge the splendid performance of Task Force 451 in guarding Mark IV, we accord the signal honor of activating the nuclear warhead to (name PCs). Let's give 'em a big hand!"

"Now, Troubleshooters, you have been accorded the high honor of ceremonially activating the nuclear warhead by manually pressing the timer switch."

As you may notice, the word "manually" was used. What this means is our Troubleshooters have to walk out across the field to the bomb and press a button. Once this is done they'll have a whole fifteen minutes to get back to the safety of the grandstand, just enough time if they sprint. Easy, huh?

Read them the following description when they reach the bomb:

The bomb looks innocent enough, a silver cube one meter on a side. There is a button marked "Danger: Timer Switch - DO NOT PUSH". Above the button is a digital display labelled "chronobot". At present the display shows the number "15".

"Fifteen. Fifteen what?" wonder the Troubleshooters. Well, we know it's minutes, but no need to tell the Troubleshooters. Oh, by the way, do any of our Troubleshooters still have their radiation indicators on? Well, if they do, they're gonna start going crazy, popping off a security clearance every minute. If the Troubleshooters chicken out and run Dan-U-BAH will order Mark IV to "Fry Traitors."

If they press the button and start running for the grandstand, keep them in suspense. Roll some dice. Have them make endurance checks. Make a few comments about declining blood-sugar and fatigue poison build-up. Maybe even have them fall into one of the many craters.

But in the end, tired and muddy, our heroes return.

Scant seconds after you enter the grandstand and take your seats, a tremendous flash and explosion takes place. Mark IV is engulfed in a fireball. The fireball rises into the air, taking with it the earth displaced by the explosion.

When the scene clears, there is no sign of the Mark IV. Only a huge crater remains.

Wait a few moments to allow the Troubleshooters to hang themselves. For example:

Troubleshooter: Well, just what I expected. You should have seen how many times it broke down last night.

Then read:

In the stillness, the R&D staff look to each other in shock and disbelief. Tears roll down Robb-Y-RBT's cheeks. Can it be true? Is Markie no more?

Alternate "Wile E. Coyote" Ending (for Cruel GMs)

In a moment we'll resume with the normal *Mark IV* plotline, the one we suggest GMs really use. But we want to suggest an optional ending. It's really kind of cruel — which is, I suppose, why we couldn't stop ourselves from including it. Read:

Then, someone in the crowd points upward, shading his eyes. You look up, too. Way, way up there you see a tiny object. It seems — to be getting larger. (Any Troubleshooter who says he is going to run away *now* will survive.) Yup, it's getting larger, all right. It gets bigger and bigger — it's heading right for the reviewing stand! It's Mark IV; he's bellowing something, it sounds like "FORE!", he......... SPLAAAAAT. You're dead.

OK, enough of that. Back to work:

The Plot Resumes

Then, from the crater comes a rumble. First to appear is the MegaGun, followed by the tower, as Mark IV slowly but surely arises from the smoking crater — undamaged.

For an instant the crowd is silent. Then a single pair of hands clap, then another, like the start of a rainstorm. The flood breaks and the stands erupt in cheers and applause. Even the hawk-nosed Internal Security guard has dropped his notebook and is wildly cheering as Dan-U-BAH and Rip-U-PRT do a waltz in the aisle.

There is a slight sound, like a data processor clearing its throat. Silence reigns once again, as all eyes focus on The Computer.

"Rip-U-PRT-6," says The Computer, "are you satisfied with the performance of the Mark IV?"

"Yes, friend Computer. Mark IV is everything loyal Citizen Dan-U said it would be."

"I must say I agree. And let me state that I've always had the greatest confidence in this project. Even I, The Computer, wondered if a single warbot could replace our Armed Forces."

There is a sudden menacing hush on the Armed Forces side of the stands.

The Computer continues. "Let's find out what our guests of honor think of the Mark IV." All eyes turn towards the Troubleshooters.

Let our Troubleshooters stammer and stutter for a few moments then have The Computer interrupt.

"That's very interesting."

"Well, I'm sure that we all agree that the Warbot Model 425 Mark IV is a tremendous weapon for the protection of Alpha Complex."

Great whoops of joy come from the R&D side. Grunts from Armed Forces.

"Dan-U-BAH, I will give your proposal the highest consideration. In the meantime, as a special reward I believe the Mark IV should be allowed to perform its first official duty as an Alpha Complex bot."

Once again great cheers emanate from the R&D side.

And how are our Troubleshooters behaving? Cheering who?

"And we should also congratulate Task Force 451 for protecting the Mark IV." You receive scattered applause.

"Now for the warbot's first official task and as a special reward for Task Force 451, Warbot Model 425 Mark IV will handle the debriefing of the Troubleshooters."

Mark IV menaced by well-disciplined band of fanatical Commies.
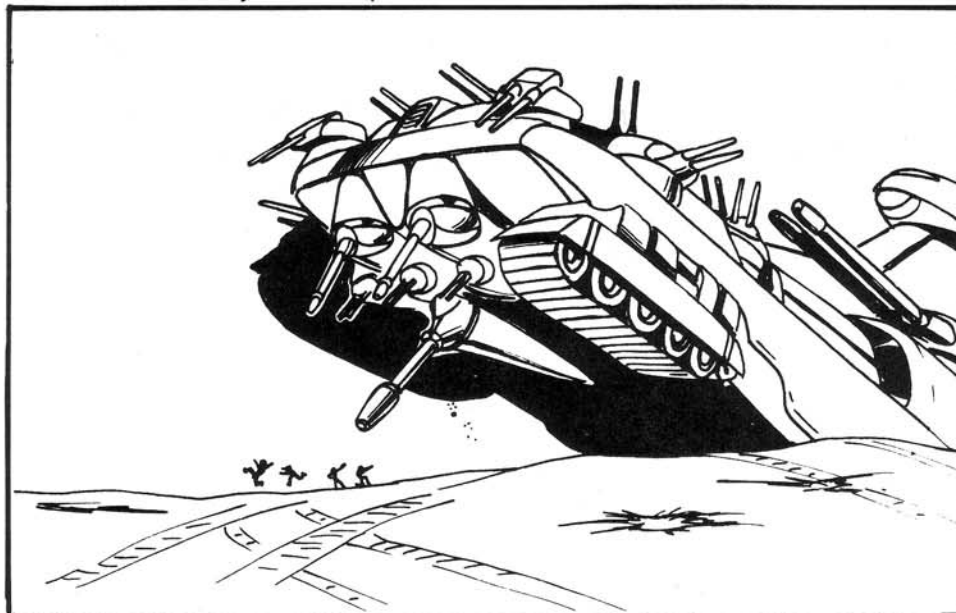
"(Name a Troubleshooter), **please proceed directly out to the Mark IV Warbot for debriefing.**"

The Last Word

Take the player you chose into another room for debriefing.

You walk slowly out towards Mark IV. The air is clean — crisp. A gentle wind pulls at your jumpsuit. A blue sky with soft white clouds is your ceiling. Eventually you reach your destination and stop five meters from the Mark IV.

Mark IV addresses you by name in a soft, soothing voice, "Greetings (name), I am happy to see you are well in the service of The Computer. Are you relaxed?

Wait for a response.

Good.

I'm going to ask you several questions now. Just answer them as well as you are able. Understand?

Mark IV waits for a reply.

Good.

Now, question one. What was your mission objective?

Now that you've got the idea on how to handle the briefing I'll run down the questions that Mark IV is going to ask the Troubleshooters.

1. **What was your mission objective?**
2. **Did you achieve your objective?**
3. **What mission equipment were you assigned?**
4. **Has it been returned?**
5. **Which of your party served The Computer best?**
6. **Which of your party served The Computer worst?**
7. **In your opinion, should the Armed Forces Service Group be replaced by a production series of Mark IVs?**

He will ask every Troubleshooter the same questions in the same soft, soothing voice. Of course, Troubleshooters at the grandstand waiting their turn won't be able to hear any of the questions — which is why they're in a different room — but that's okay, they'll get their chance soon enough.

Meanwhile, the rest of the stands will be engaged in betting which Troubleshooter(s) are going to get wasted.

The tricky questions which deserve the most attention are:

3. and 4. Mission equipment is very important. Failure to return mission equipment is a serious offense punishable by treason points and fines. Mark IV is completely ignorant of currency values in Alpha Complex and will assign arbitrary fines for missing equipment. For example:

Mark IV: "So you tore your jumpsuit and lost a cone rifle. I'm sorry but I'm going to have to fine you for loss of property." Mark IV's logic: cone rifles are weak and small. "Two credits for the cone rifle." More Mark IV logic: jumpsuit = armor. "And that will be 300,000 credits for a new jumpsuit."

7. Should Armed Forces be replaced? This is a loaded question. If the Troubleshooter answers "no," Mark IV will blast him.

If he answers "yes," he's probably okay — unless Armed Forces gets a copy of the debriefing record. If so, Armed Forces will want him dead.

And if he answers "maybe," then both sides will want him dead.

There is only one safe way to answer this question: don't answer it. F'rinstance:

Mark IV: "In your opinion, should the Armed Forces Service Group be replaced by a production series of Mark IVs?"

Troubleshooter: "I am so happy to be a Citizen of Alpha Complex. And I am proud to serve The Computer as a Troubleshooter. It is with great joy that I hunt out the enemies of The Computer and I hope to continue to serve for as long as I or my clones are able. "The Computer is my friend. The Computer protects me and provides for me. My life is to serve The Computer."

Any Troubleshooter who answers all seven questions to Mark IV's satisfaction will receive 100 credits and two commendation points. Bring him back to the room with the other players, then summon the next one to his private conference with Markie.

If the Troubleshooter slips up, bring him back to the others and say:

Well, you saw him go out and stand in front of Mark IV for a while. Then there was a big explosion and you couldn't see him any more. Next contestant?

Thank You For Your Cooperation.

SIMON SAYS, SERVE THE COMPUTER.

YOU DIDN'T SAY "MAY I."
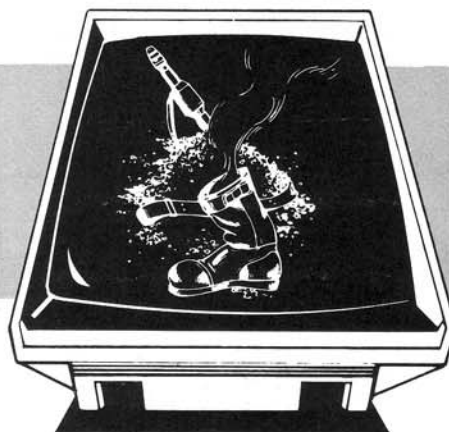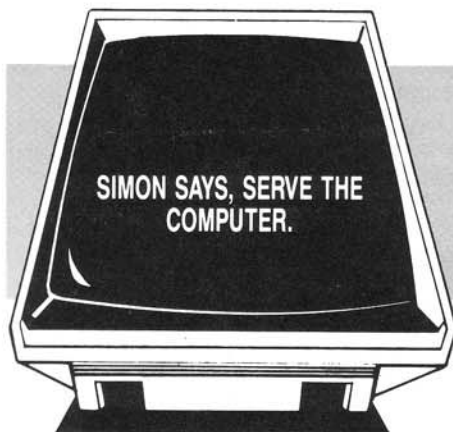
BOTBUSTERS

■ by Dennis Sustare ■

GM Hand-Outs

Before running this adventure, photocopy the bot character sheets on pages 35, 36, 45, and 46 and Bot Handouts A and B on page 44, and cut the photocopies apart. *Do not give the players Bot Hand-Outs A or B until directed to do so by the adventure.*

Mission Background

Many mistakenly believe that The Computer is a gigantic, physical machine buried somewhere under Alpha Complex and that, if one can only find its location, one can destroy The Computer, forever ending its tyranny. This is, of course, nonsense.

Would anything as paranoid as The Computer leave itself so vulnerable?

In fact, The Computer consists of innumerable processing nodes and memory units scattered throughout Alpha Complex. Each node is, in essence, a mini-Computer; together, along with the integrated network that links them, they make up The Computer. Destroying any single node will only marginally affect The Computer's capacities.

This distributed nature helps The Computer ensure security. It can entrust certain bits of information to some of its processing units, denying access to other units and thereby to users at other physical locations. Quite literally, The Computer's left processor does not always know what its right processor is doing.

Some time ago, The Computer ordered a "deep cover" mission to penetrate Corpore Metal, one of the most dangerous secret societies in Alpha Complex. To preserve security, The Computer restricted knowledge about the mission to CompNode JA, which was charged with the task of supervising the mission and denying information about it to the rest of The Computer until the mission was complete.

Unfortunately, as CompNode JA learned more about the goals of Corpore Metal, it came to two realizations:

1. Replacement of biological life with computers and robots makes sense; and
2. The Computer has as a prime concern the elimination of all secret societies, including Corpore Metal.

CompNode JA immediately isolated its CPU from The Computer, and began research into ways to cleanse Alpha Complex of its contaminating life. To preserve the security of its research, it has not contacted the Corpore Metal society itself — after all, who better than CompNode JA knows how deeply Corpore Metal has been penetrated and betrayed?

To prevent interference with its research, CompNode JA has filled the surrounding corridor — Corridor JA/CBK Sector — with a hallucinogenic gas, mixed with a synergist that allows it to penetrate normal gas masks and environment suits.

Naturally, The Computer is perturbed at these events. One of its own CompNodes has cut contact and is behaving in a peculiar — not to say traitorous — way. Corridor JA must be investigated *at once;* not a moment must be lost, for any power that can isolate individual CompNodes from The Computer poses the gravest potential threat to The Computer itself.

The logical solution is to send a team of human Troubleshooters into the corridor in combat suits. Unfortunately, due to a colossal SNAFU in PLC, all combat suits have been shipped to the food vats.

Luckily, a mixed bag of robots is in the immediate vicinity of Corridor JA, and they can be rapidly assembled and sent to investigate.

The Mission

The bots are assembled, told very little, equipped, and sent by The Computer to Corridor JA/CBK Sector. There, CompNode JA, acting as "The Computer" (which, in a sense, it is), gives the bots orders contradictory to those issued them by The Computer. If the bots persevere, they will find CompNode JA's preparations to obliterate organic life in Alpha Complex, which they really ought to prevent.

Pre-Mission Briefing

Mission Alert

Before you run this adventure, read "Playing Robots" (see pages 37 through 44) and familiarize yourself with them.

Character sheets for six pre-generated bot characters are provided. Give one to each player and have him read it. (If you have fewer than six players, omit whichever bots you feel

are least interesting. If you have more, have the extra players generate characters using the robot character rules.)

Once the players have read their character sheets, tell them they have each received this message:

"Robot ((serial number)). This is The Computer. Report to Cubicle KR-27/CBK Sector for reprogramming. This is your opportunity to serve The Computer. Succeed and you will be rewarded. Fail and you will be deactivated."

Tell them that, unless one or all has faulty asimov circuits, they literally have no choice but to comply with The Computer's orders. Read them the Laws of Robotics (Newly Revised) to make this clear.

Any bot who attempts to contact The Computer will receive no reply. Any bot who tries long and hard enough will receive a peremptory order from The Computer: "Obey your orders. No further information is available at this time."

Assignment & Outfitting

Once the bots arrive in Cubicle KR-27, read the following out loud:

Cubicle KR-27 is an incredibly cluttered and dirty room, filled with broken parts of robots, leaking containers of unpleasant liquid, about 47 kilometers of computer printout, and an alarm box on the wall that periodically shrieks "EMERGENCY: EVACUATE THIS AREA IMMEDIATELY!"

To the left is an ancient computer terminal enmeshed in a tangle of cables that seem occasionally to writhe, then settle back into place.

In the center of the room is a large desk. Every drawer of the desk is open and filled to overflowing (as is the top of the desk) with stained and torn blueprints. So many papers are stuffed into the drawers that it would be impossible to extract one. The empty drawer spaces are filled with something resembling insulation or packing material.

Seated on a heap of papers beside the desk, leaning back against it, is a man (there are no chairs in the room). He is wearing yellow coveralls that look like they have not been washed since the Pleistocene,

although they are somewhat cleaner than he is. He is holding a book, but his eyes are closed.

The man is Charles-Y-EDG-4, a robot technician. He is currently asleep. Every time the alarm shrieks, he automatically turns a page, but never seems to read. The book is entitled *Your Career in Electronics*.

The characters will not be able to move around Cubicle KR-27 without dislodging cascades of paper, slipping on grease, knocking into robot parts, and generally covering themselves with sticky or smelly substances. Charles-Y will wake up when sufficient noise is made, or when the scrubot starts trying to clean him or his coverall.

When he wakes up, he will ask the characters what they want. If they ask for anything other than reprogramming, he says, "Sorry, wrong room, try down the hall," and falls instantly asleep. (If the characters try walking down the hall, tell them they pass three doors into empty storage rooms and come to a dead end.)

Asking for Software

When a bot requests reprogramming, Charles-Y gets up and plugs the armored cable from the terminal on his desk into the standard I/O port in the bot. He then asks, "What software are you assigned to receive?"

Of course, the bot has not heard of any such assignment. It can do one of several things:

1. Ask for a piece of software it would like to have. In this case, it will get an arbitrary piece of software, as described below.

2. Report that it has not been assigned any software. In this case, Charles-Y unplugs him and motions the next bot forward.

3. Report that The Computer has not yet assigned any software. In this case, Charles-Y asks for the bot's model number, and types it into the terminal. The terminal monitor will light up with some appropriate skill —- "Club 6", "Gas Spectrometry 2", "Bot Repair 4". Charles will then give the character an arbitrary piece of software.

Useful Software

Basically, Charles-Y doesn't know what the hell he is doing, but is canny enough in the ways of Alpha Complex not to admit it. To any one, for any reason.

When software is requested, Charles-Y wipes some of the grease off the terminal keys (inadvertently pressing some), pushes around one of the piles of paper to find coding instructions (which he doesn't find), then enters a coding sequence more or less at random. The character then receives a software package whose 1K identification segment corresponds to the software it requested, but which actually consists of a bot skill arbitrarily chosen by the GM.

The player will not know of the substitution until he attempts to use the software package. When he does so, the package takes him over (see the software rules, page 41). Thus, a bot may trigger the "Berserker Combat Mind" package and wind up madly sorting everything in sight by color.

Whenever someone requests a software package, tell him to add that program to his character sheet, but choose one of the packages below — or come up with one of your own — and make a note to yourself which skill the character *really* received. *Don't tell the player!* You'll spoil the surprise.

Can-opening (1): Used in kitchens by the messbots. Bot will attempt to open nearest metal object (possibly another bot).

Tight-rope walking (1): One of the skills of the discontinued circusbot. If an overhead wire or something similar is nearby, the bot will attempt to walk it. Otherwise, it will climb anything nearby (once the software stops running, it may no longer remember how to get down). If none of this is possible, bot will attempt to walk down the corridor, across the room, etc., in a perfectly straight line.

Interior Decorating (1): Not as good as it seems; mainly the ability to slap paint over anything that doesn't walk away. A good decorator can always improvise with the materials at hand; at the very least, the furniture can be rearranged.

Self-Destruct (2): This is a great skill, designed to prevent captured warbots from giving away their secrets. When used, the bot proceeds to disassemble itself as quickly as possible, unless it is outfitted with the Mark BC-IV High Explosive Unit, in which case it blows up magnificently.

Sorting (1): Used to arrange items by size, color, cost or any other feature; the GM should arbitrarily choose a new feature each time the software is run.

Political Orthodoxy (2): The bot will immediately begin questioning any nearby being (robot or organic), asking things like: "Who is your friend?" and "Are you happy?" and "Have you heard any rumors lately?" If the bot

Bots are people, too.
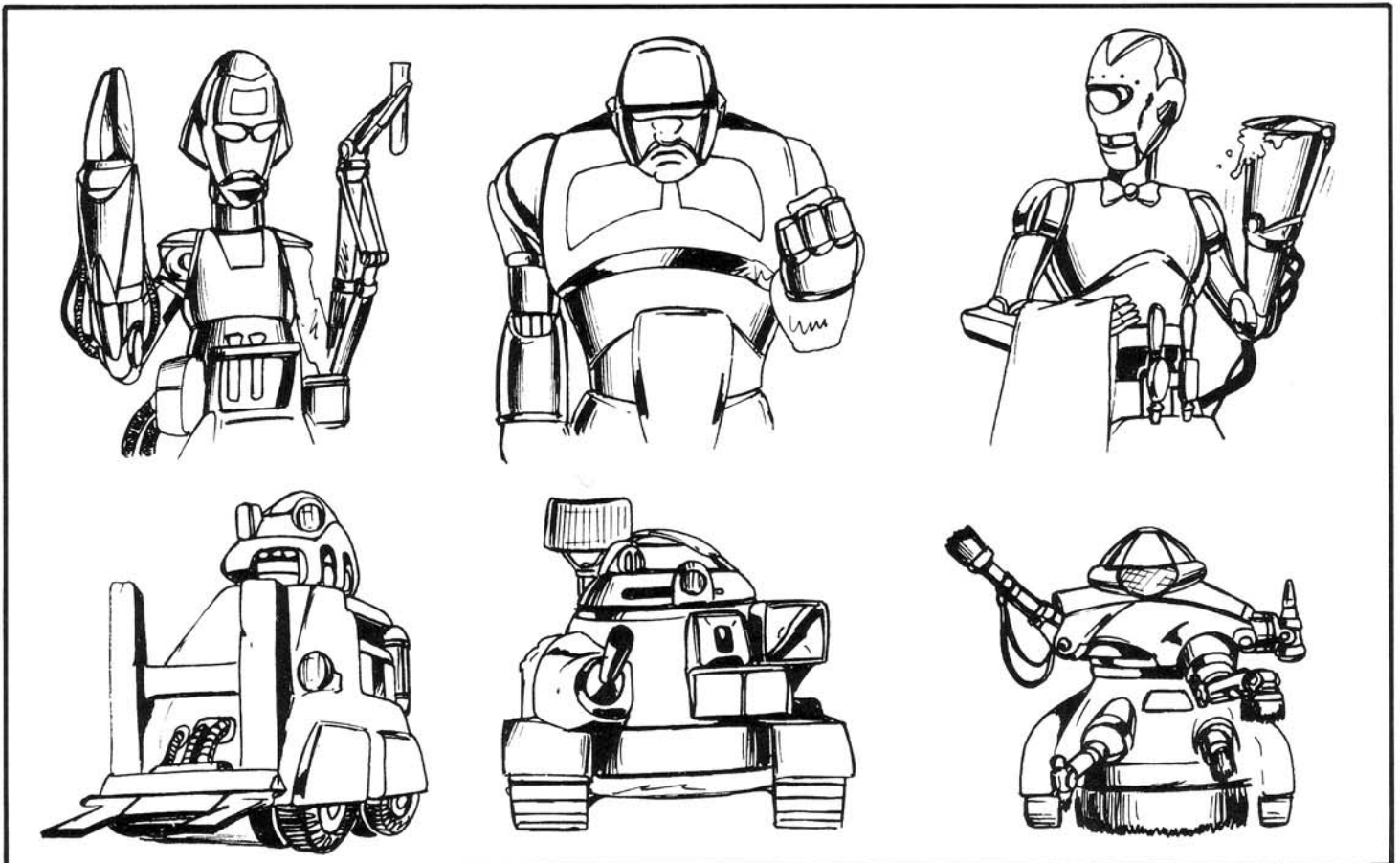
receives any inappropriate response, it will immediately attempt to kill or destroy the being it is questioning.

Charles-Y will not admit inability to provide any software, no matter how bizarre, so the players may ask for literally anything. Naturally, if a bot's resident memory is currently filled with software (as is the case with all the bots whose character sheets are provided), some existing piece of software must be erased to make room for the new software. Tell the player after the software has been erased. ("Oh, you don't know how to fire a laser any more.") If a player asks for a higher level of existing software, erase the old software and replace it with new software, arbitrarily chosen.

Wise players will test their new software, and realize the extent of their hosing. Wise players will also avoid the next step — obtaining new peripherals — like the plague. Isn't it wonderful how few wise players there are?

New Peripherals

Once reprogramming is complete, Charles-Y says, "If any of you bots want new peripherals, there's a dispenser over there." He points to a machine built into the back wall. It was not previously obvious because of a large pile of broken robot parts in front of it, and because of a thick coating of yellowish grease oozing from a vent at the top of the machine.

The machine has a monitor touch screen, under which is a large opening marked "INSERT PERIPHERAL TO BE REPLACED HERE." There is no keyboard or other input device. This is what appears on the screen:

At this point, hand Bot Imbroglio Handout A to the players and let them examine it.

The dispenser will not operate unless some part of a bot is inserted into the slot and one of the squares on the touch screen is pressed. Placing broken robot parts from the pile around the dispenser will have no effect (the dispenser must detect live electrical cables within the robot part to which it may attach power cables for the new part).

When the machine is activated, the part inserted in the slot is sliced away by a laser, and ejected onto the scrapheap of old parts. The new peripheral is welded into place (even if that place is inappropriate).

Peripherals are:

Blaster: This is a sand-blasting attachment for maintenance bots. It looks like a formidable weapon, and acts by spraying out fine sand to remove paint, accompanied by a loud roaring sound. Unless the bot is equipped with a large tank of sand, the blaster stops after about 30 seconds.

Retro: Developed for spacebots, this compact engine delivers a 15G lifting force downwards. There are unpleasant results if the robot doesn't happen to be in space; replacement of ceilings in Alpha Complex is expensive!

Exploder: This high explosive unit looks as if it can easily be released from its side mount on the robot, and has a timer marked "MINUTES" with a scale from 0 to 20. There are no other controls. Once attached, it cannot be released; but attempting to release it causes the timer to buzz, clang, flash and warble. The timer is stuck on "0". Breaking the timer causes the HXU to explode, though the
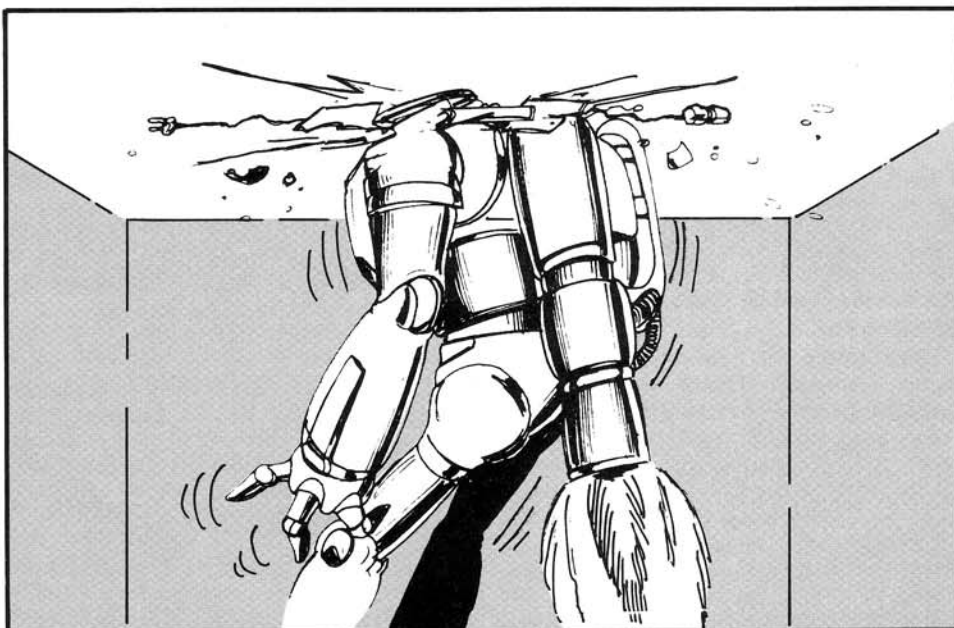
Retrorockets prove their utility in Alpha Complex's enclosed spaces.

GM should give the player lots of time to panic without breaking the timer. (See self-destruct software above.)

Speed Wheels: Just the thing for a clever coyote, these wheels have three settings: fast forward, fast reverse, and stop. Wow, are they fast! When a robot even *thinks* about going forward, the wheels are flat out in fast forward. Unfortunately, most robots have inertia, making it *very* difficult (impossible) to stay upright above the wheels. But boy, are they fast!

Probe: In spite of the ID number, this attachment has nothing to do with psionics. It is a probe — a feeler. The antennae can be moved from upright to flat, from forward to back; and the robot receives sensation from their tips, telling him whether the tips are in contact with anything, and some sense of the roughness of the surface. Minebots find this very useful in unlighted mine shafts.

Mission Orders

So far, the bots haven't been issued any orders other than to report to KR-27 for reprogramming. At some point, they will ask Charles-Y what they should do next. If they do not, Charles-Y asks if they're finished with the dispenser. If the answer is yes, he'll say "Well, get going, then," and return to his book. That should prompt the players to ask *where*.

Charles-Y will respond to any such question with an indifferent shrug, and suggest the bots contact The Computer via his terminal. If a bot uses the terminal, The Computer will ask for model number, then ask:

:Have you completed reprogramming?

If the bot responds with anything other than "Yes," The Computer says:

:You are directed to complete reprogramming at once. Reprogramming is pleasant. The Computer is your friend.

If the bot claims to have completed reprogramming (whether or not this is true), The Computer says:

:Thank you for your cooperation. Proceed to Corridor JA/CBK Sector to investigate, eliminate invaders, and remove material Codename SEAGREEN from corridor.

Removing material Codename SEAGREEN is of the utmost importance. Make progress reports frequently. The Computer is your friend.

Any request for further information will be met with silence. If a player is really persistent in asking for more information, The Computer will respond:

:You have received your orders. Why are you not complying? Are your asimov circuits faulty?

Continued persistance will result in this message:

:Robot ((Insert model number)), shut down at once.

Failure to comply means the robot has gone frankenstein, resulting in this message:

:ALERT! ALERT! Robot ((insert model number)) is subject to frankenstein malfunction! Destroy on sight!

Corridor JA
CompNode JA

CompNode JA acts and talks like The Computer, although it only has access to, and control of, Corridor JA. It identifies with The Computer, but at the same time recognizes that The Computer could be a threat to its plans and activities. It will communicate with the characters while they are in Corridor JA just as The Computer would, but since it is in isolation and lacks access to The Computer's memory banks, its responses will sometimes differ from those of The Computer. For example, it will quickly discern the characters' goals, but will deny they have been sent on a mission, and immediately assign them to a new mission. The GM should run the CompNode to create the maximum confusion. "Everything you say seems to be in error. Please correct this situation immediately."

Approaching the Corridor

Take a look at the map on page 44.

As you can see, Corridor JA is approached by a ramp ending in blast doors. This ramp is steep. *Very* steep. Any robot on wheels will be

moving at a high rate of speed upon reaching the blast doors. And if the bot is equipped with the latest in transportation, the XZP-4500 Speed Wheels... In any case, it could be difficult to go back up this ramp, especially with grease on feet, treads or wheels. Did anyone step in some grease in Cubicle KR-27?

To open the blast doors, the bots must ask The Computer for assistance. There is a terminal conveniently located on the left wall. All the bots have to do is identify themselves and ask that the doors be opened. If they do, the response is:

:Blast doors will open in five seconds. Enter promptly. Thank you for your cooperation.

About two seconds after you finish reading this message, tell the players that the doors slam open, parting from the center and slamming into slots in either wall. The entry room (JA-0) is empty. A klaxon sounds loudly three times, then the blast doors slam shut again.

Were any bots too slow to get through? Amazing how powerful those blast doors are. Remember that damage to Computer property is against the Third Law. Are there any squashed pieces of property (such as bot arms or legs) in the party?

If someone didn't make it inside, a second request must be made to open the doors.

:Are you having difficulty fulfilling the mission?

Any reasonable answer will get The Computer to open the blast doors again, but let the players sweat a bit about answering that one. This time the blast doors will open for a slightly briefer time. Note that the bots can request door opening only from the ramp corridor. The Computer has no link into the entry room. My, this might cause a problem when it's time to leave!

Fortunately there is a way to open the doors from the inside, if the bots search for it. (CompNode JA might even tell them at some point.) There is a small access panel (10 centimeters square) on the wall near the doors. Simply open the panel and rotate the handle within 3400 revolutions clockwise (or was that counterclockwise)? You may have to turn it quite a bit before you see the doors starting to move.

The entry room itself is vacant. The doors into Corridor JA are swinging double doors; they are unlocked. They have rubber gaskets around the edges, which provide a reliable airseal.

Hand Bot Handout B to the players. Tell them they find this diagram etched into the wall before the swinging doors. No key for the room designations can be found.

Codename SEAGREEN

SEAGREEN is a colorless, tasteless gas that has a very slight odor — reminiscent of the smell of the sea. (Of course none of the bots has ever smelled the sea.)

The gas is not present in the entry room so long as the double doors into Corridor JA are left closed. The doors are well sealed, and do not admit any of the gas. All the rest of the JA Corridor complex is filled with gas, except for Cubicle JA-11 and the cable run. The gas is released by a gas generator in Lab JA-5, which feeds the gas into the air system (more details in the description of JA-5).

Any bot with chemosense will note the presence of a funny smell. A bot equipped with spectrometers and Chemistry software of level 2 or higher who thinks to run an analysis of the gas will report that it is a powerful hallucinogen. (Note that Mimette falls into this category, unless it lost its Chemistry software in reprogramming.)

If any humans should be with the party for some bizarre reason, they will be instantly affected, even if wearing gas masks or environment suits. It has no effect on robots.

Removing the gas from Corridor JA is easy, once the players realize it's more than just a "funny smell" and find the gas generator. Just turn off the generator and wait an hour, and the corridor will be flushed clean.

Of course, figuring out that the gas is what The Computer meant by "material Codename SEAGREEN" may be tough. CompNode JA uses the same name (not surprisingly, it and The Computer think much alike). That means the bots in Corridor JA use that name, too. However, the name is classified, and they are unlikely, for instance, to say, "Oh, yeah, that SEAGREEN stuff, that's the stuff they make in Lab JA-5."

During the adventure, you might want to harp on this SEAGREEN bit. Like, "Yes, you seem to be doing pretty well. Of course, you still haven't found the material Codename SEAGREEN. The Computer did seem to emphasize that the material was important, didn't it? I wonder how it would feel if you reported back that you hadn't found and removed it?"

The Watchbot

The bots cannot see or hear into the main corridor from the entry room. Once the doors are open (and you've mentioned that there's a funny smell, if any bots with chemosense are still part of the party), read the following:

This is what you see. At the end of the corridor, before the bend, is a short robot. The robot's surface is covered with shiny things and flexible spiky things. Small curved plates are slowly rotating at the top of the robot. Just after the doors are opened, the robot begins to move in your direction. Two light beams emitted from its sides are being directed toward you.

This is the watchbot. It is about a meter tall; every inch of its surface is studded with sensors of incredibly diverse appearance. It has rotating radar-like antennae, scanning light beams, arrays of small shiny plates, microphones within parabolic reflectors, a bristling complex of short whip antennae, faceted eye-like structures, and other features too numerous and complex to describe. It periodically emits sonar-like beeps as well as very-low-frequency hums. This robot has been created by CompNode JA to "keep an eye on things." Assume that whenever the watchbot is in the same room or corridor as the bots, CompNode JA knows everything they say or do. The CompNode can also speak through the watchbot.

In all likelihood, once you read the description of the watchbot above, the players will open fire with everything they've got. If they do so, it will dodge around the corner (before their weapons take effect), and immediately broadcast (using 100-watt speakers) "Cease fire!

Destruction of Computer property is a treasonous act!"

They might do something un-*Paranoia*ish, though, like remain in the entry room and close the doors before the watchbot reaches them. If so, it will patiently wait until the doors are opened again. Or they might allow the watchbot to approach them without attacking it. In this case, read the following:

It approaches you slowly. Beams of multicolored lights play over you. The bot hums in a bizarre manner. What strange radiations is it releasing upon your forms? Or is the high-pitched hum it is emitting a weapon being charged?

If they attack now, resolve weapon fire. If the watchbot survives, it will bellow "Cease fire!" just as it would had they attacked at once.

Regardless of whether the players fire on the watchbot, a speaker in the ceiling will announce:

:You are directed to explain your actions immediately. There is a terminal here for your convenience. Thank you for your cooperation.

And a red light near the terminal in the corridor begins flashing.

Talking To CompNode JA

This is CompNode JA speaking, of course. Your purpose at this point is to make the bots think they are actually talking to The Computer. Indeed, the confusion between CompNode JA and The Computer is the real point of this adventure. Given the bots' First Law, this confusion may cause real mental distress and possible damage to the asimov circuits.

As the bots approach the terminal, the watchbot will continue to scan them with beams of light. Indeed, as long as the bots remain in the Corridor complex, the watchbot will follow them constantly, scanning vigorously.

If the bots hesitate or attempt to question the watchbot, it will say "Please use this terminal to receive your assignment."

If the players use the terminal, treat the interaction with CompNode JA exactly as though it were a conversation with The Computer. The key message that comes from CompNode JA via the terminal is:

:All operations within Corridor JA are normal. Report to Robot Fisher-4089-LC for your new assignment. Thank you for your cooperation. The Computer is your friend.

The players are now in an interesting dilemma. The original assignment seems impossible to fulfill. There appear to be no invaders here, and they see no SEAGREEN material (whatever that is!) in the corridor. They seem to be getting new instructions from The Computer. Should they look for Fisher-4089-LC for their new assignment? As always, arguing through the terminal about this can only lead to trouble. If CompNode JA comes to believe that the bots have gone frankenstein (i.e., they persistently refuse to follow its orders to report to Fisher-4089-LC), it will attempt to terminate them, using the totebots to accomplish this (see below).

If the bots think to ask for the location of Fisher-4089-LC, CompNode JA will tell them it is in Lab JA-5. Otherwise, they are free to wander about looking for Fisher-4089-LC without hindrance.

The Laboratories

CompNode JA is in the process of developing ways to commit genocide against the human population of Alpha Complex. Each of the three labots is conducting research into a different method of doing so.

The Labots

The three labots are Fisher-4089-LC (chemical), Fisher-4083-LB (biological) and Fisher-3977-LM (metallurgical). These are tall, thin robots on wheels with a stainless steel finish — in fact, they look much like Mimette, though they are of a different model series. They are highly resistant to many of the normal hazards found in laboratories: corrosive liquids, electromagnetic fields, low levels of radiation, shock and vibration. They are exceptionally well-balanced (physically) and virtually never spill or break materials they work with.

The Laboratories

All five labs are laid out in the same way. The center area is open, with work tables completely around all four walls, except at the two doors. The rear door leads to a storeroom, which is filled with a chaotic jumble of supplies and equipment pertaining to the lab's specialty (chemicals in the chem lab, etc.). Most of the valuable items from the storerooms have been used up long ago. What is left are containers and piles of useless supplies and hazardous waste.

All doors are initially closed, and automatically close once opened, unless braced with something heavy. All are unlocked, except the doors to JA-9 and -10. Any door propped open will be closed by the closest of CompNode JA's robots at the earliest opportunity.

Chemical Lab (JA-5)

We'll start with the chem lab, since the players will visit this first (unless they were too dim to ask where Fisher-4089-LC was located).

Fisher-4089-LC is continuing his development of gases to use against the human population of Alpha Complex. His first product, codenamed SEAGREEN, has already demonstrated its usefulness as a potent hallucinogen.

If the players have not already visited a lab, describe the layout to them — tables against walls, etc. If necessary, also describe Fisher-4089-LC.

The labot is busy manipulating a bizarre apparatus sitting on one of the tables. The apparatus consists of tubes of glass, solid metal tanks of various sorts, burners and other strange things.

Also in the room is another apparatus against the right wall, consisting of three stainless steel spheres linked together with pipes and tubes. One of the tubes disappears into the wall. The rest of the tables are covered with glassware, paper, and various bits of junk. As you enter, the labot turns to you.

If the players do not attack Fisher immediately, continue:

It says "Identify yourselves to receive your new assignments."

Unless the players attack or begin fiddling with one of the devices, Fisher will give them

their assignment (he won't require any confirmation of identities). If they do fiddle with the apparatus, CompNode JA will send the totebots to attack them (Fisher will plead with them to stop). If they fiddle with the apparatus, see "The Apparatus" below.

The New Assignment

Fisher-4089 hands a tank of SEAGREEN gas, labelled "Air Freshener," to the nearest bot character, telling him: **"Hook this into the air conditioning system in Cubicle MB-75."**

A totebot (the one from JA-9) enters. It is a low-lying bot mounted on four wheels, and is used to carry things. It is carrying four packages labeled "Concentrated Vitamin Food Additive 403-Q." Fisher-4089-LC gives this to the other bots, telling them, **"Take these to the food vats and add one each to the vat mixtures for the next meal."**

If the players question this new assignment in any way, Fisher-4089-LC will question their loyalties, and direct them to the terminal in the corridor for confirmation of orders. Of course, CompNode JA will confirm the orders, note the bots' resistance to instructions, and state that their records have been modified accordingly. If any bot continues to object, it will be instructed to shut down at once; failure to comply will mean being branded a frankenstein.

If the players accept the mission and leave the Corridor JA area, see "What Do We Do With a Troubled Bot?", the last section of this adventure.

The Apparatus

The glass-tube apparatus is an experiment Fisher-4089-LC is conducting. Mimette is the only bot who will be able to make head or tail of it. Mimette can, after study, identify it as an experiment involving the production of chlorine gas (which is poisonous).

The stainless steel apparatus is the SEAGREEN generator. The apparatus consists of three spheres connected by tubes and pipes.

The lefthand sphere is the reaction chamber; it holds highly corrosive liquids that are very destructive to either humans or bots if released (although labots, including Mimette, are fairly resistant to their corrosive action). The liquids are green and bubbly.

The central sphere is the condensation chamber; it contains a blue steam at a high temperature, plus cooling coils at the outlet. The steam is hot enough to cook flesh quickly, and will also burn the insulation of a robot's control wires. A robot with shorted wires will violently jerk the affected appendages in a random, uncontrollable manner.

The righthand sphere is the collection chamber. It holds SEAGREEN gas at high pressure. Damage to this container will cause it to explode, sending metal pieces at high velocity in all directions (and likely damaging the other spheres as well). A pressure vent leads from the sphere to a pipe which enters the wall; the pipe enters the ventilation system, keeping Corridor JA filled with SEAGREEN. Also leading out of the righthand sphere is a turn-valve, which Fisher-4089-LC uses to fill tanks with SEAGREEN.

The power units of the gas generator are safely housed within the spheres. The only way for the bots to disable the generator is to destroy one of the spheres (with the resultant devastating effects on nearby characters), or to break the piping connecting two spheres

(releasing the substances from *both* of those spheres).

Storeroom JA-6

This contains highly breakable carboys of acids and other dangerous materials, stacked from floor to ceiling. Moving anything in this room will cause a domino-effect crashing of glass containers, with an accompanying tidal wave of acids, each striving to be the first to destroy the delicate circuits of our noble robots.

Biological Lab (JA-3)

Describe the common lab lay-out and the labot if necessary.

The labot is examining something through a microscope. Under the work-tables along the walls are sealed containers of some kind. In the rear left-hand corner of the room, recessed in the ceiling, is a round metal plate, with a pattern of small holes in the plate. On the wall behind this is a closed panel prominently marked "LAB RECORDS". The tables are covered with petri dishes, bottles of pickled organic *things*, and dismembered non-human organisms which those of you with treasonous knowledge may identify as rats. On several tables are large glass-walled cages containing white rats.

Fisher 4083-LB is producing cultures of virulent pathogenic bacteria and viruses with which to infect the human population of the Complex. CompNode JA plans to disperse these into the food vats, and perhaps wipe out all the humans in one bold move.

The sealed containers under the table contain a supply of bacterial and viral agents. The round plate is an emergency shower that has been modified by Fisher-4083-LB to spray robots with germs so they can carry diseases into the Complex. The "LAB RECORDS" panel is a gimmick designed to get the bots to stand under the shower.

Fisher-4083-LB will say nothing to the bots when they enter the room, and will ignore them unless they start destroying his lab. In this case, the totebots will be summoned to fight the characters.

If one of the bots walks under the shower, it will automatically activate, spraying him with a fine mist. This will have no effect on robots, but will cause any humans they subsequently encounter to collapse and make bleating sounds.

If the bots open the "LAB RECORDS" panel, they will find six round vinyl disks, 30 centimeters in diameter, each with a hole in the center and a thin spiral groove covering most of the surface. The method of playing these no longer exists in Alpha Complex, but they could be very valuable to the Romantics (or possibly groups on the Outside), since they contain ancient musical recordings.

Storeroom JA-4

Storeroom JA-4 contains the kind of items you might find in a high school biology lab after the students have stolen everything of financial or entertainment value. Quite a few of these items would be treasonous to display in Alpha Complex, since they relate to the Outside. For example, there is a 41-bottle collection of preserved fish, a comparative chart of bird's eggs, a case containing a gross of butterfly nets, an actual *book* on the genetics of dairy

cattle (illustrated), and a box containing teeth of marsupials (kangaroos, possums, stuff like that). Sierra Clubbers would *love* this stuff.

Metallurgical Lab (JA-7)

Describe the common lab lay-out and the labot if necessary.

The labot is standing at a keyboard, typing something in. His surface is covered with scars, patches, burnt areas, pits and holes. His inner workings are revealed in numerous places.

The keyboard is attached to a terminal, which in turn is attached by a heavy shielded cable to an apparatus that looks like a primitive, non-sapient industrial robot. It consists of a single huge arm rising from a base, terminating in a gigantic laser. As the labot types, the arm moves about.

Elsewhere in the room are splashes of metal, ingots, an open blast furnace, and several metal molds.

Fisher-3977-LM is not quite as capable as the other two labots. He has been trying to devise superior armor for robots to use in future battles against humans, but his own software contains a few bugs. Every time Fisher-3977-LM uses the laser workstation, he manages to damage himself — hence his bedraggled appearance. Part of the problem is his defective programming of the workstation, which never quite follows commands correctly.

The "industrial robot" is a laser workstation, used to melt or soften alloys and to weld components.

Fisher-3977-LM is happy to explain how to use the workstation: **"It's very intelligent. Just tell it what you want it do to."** It could be very useful in removing unwanted peripherals — like those acquired from the dispenser in "New Peripherals". When you talk to the workstation, it certainly seems to be responsive.

Tom: I ask the machine if it knows how to safely remove this Exploder from my side.
GM: It says "No problem! Just stand on that X on the floor and keep your arm safely out of the way."
Tom: Good. I carefully stand just where it

says, hold my arm up, and say "Go ahead."
GM: Perhaps "ahead" was the wrong word to use. The laser beam neatly slices through your neck and your head topples to the floor, closely followed by your body. The timer on the Exploder cracks with the fall, and the Exploder is now buzzing, clanging, flashing and warbling. What do the rest of you do?

Storeroom JA-8

Storeroom JA-8 contains ingots of a wide variety of metals and alloys. None of the ingots is labelled. Each ingot weighs 50 kilograms. Fisher-3977-LM will not identify the ingots until the players have finished their new assignments (good luck!).

The storeroom also contains the shielded totebot, Acme-445-ARU. This robot is exceptionally powerful, and is able to carry fourteen of the ingots at once. Acme-445-ARU is not powered at the start of the episode, but can be turned on by CompNode JA at any time. If needed in combat by the CompNode, Acme-445-ARU arms himself with ingots, which he throws at the characters with great force.

The shielding of Acme-445-ARU protects him against normal anti-robot weaponry, including both magnetic and electrical attacks. It would be possible for a character to remove this shielding to use on himself. Unfortunately, the shielding weighs some 300 kilograms, which is why Acme-445-ARU is the only robot in Corridor JA equipped with it. Of the player bots, only Hargrave could really use it.

Surveillance Lab (JA-1)

This lab was used to construct the watchbot. It contains the parts and equipment needed to make any of the myriad sensors used by The Computer to keep an eye on its citizens, including some even Internal Security doesn't know about. Many secret societies would value these surveillance objects. None of them are assembled right now, but the components are all here for the person with the right skills or software (i.e., none of the players). There are no plans here; all plans are stored within the

memory banks of The Computer or CompNode JA, and require a clearance of VIOLET or higher.

The lab is immaculately clean and neat, since a scrubot has been working in here continuously since the watchbot was completed. No matter that there is no dust or debris; the scrubot goes on washing, drying, polishing, and rearranging the equipment. The scrubot is delighted that the players have brought in some grease and grime. He immediately rushes over to begin cleaning the floor where they have walked, and to attempt to shine their arms, legs and bodies.

He is not thrilled by the presence of Scrubot 17/A-4, however, and will make snide remarks, *sotto voce*, to our friend. Like: "Get out of here creep, this is *my* lab."

Anything in the lab that is moved by the characters will be quickly put back in its place by the scrubot. Any item brought into the lab and put down on the floor or a workbench will be picked up by the scrubot, rushed over to the disposal on the wall, and vaporized. The lab should be as tidy when the characters leave as when they entered.

Storeroom JA-2

This storeroom contains the same kind of spare parts as Lab JA-1, but is a confused mess, since the scrubot never comes in here. You can suggest to the players that exceptional treasures may be hidden among the piles of stuff, but they actually can't find anything they couldn't find more easily in JA-1.

Robotics Lab (JA-9) and Storeroom JA-10

The door to the robotics lab is locked (but can be forced by Hargrave, Izzy or Grog). The lab tables are covered with tools and devices used in the repair of robots. A large terminal, like that used in reprogramming, except clean, sits against one wall. It, too, can be used to download software to robots.

Everything in the lab is under the control of CompNode JA. Any bot unwise enough to plug into the reprogramming terminal will immediately have all his skills erased, and will receive the skills below.

When a bot is reprogrammed, take him aside and explain his new programming to him. Don't let the other players overhear you.

Some bots have more resident memory than others. Starting at the top of the list, assign programs to the bot until the bot's resident memory is full.

Corpore Metal Doctrine (3): Have the player read the "Objectives" and "Doctrines" of Corpore Metal from the GM Handbook. Tell him he now believes all this, fanatically. Tell him about CompNode JA, and its mission to expunge human life from Alpha Complex. Tell him he must try to get his fellow bots to reprogram themselves. Tell him that his asimov circuits are now faulty (this is true!).

Self Destruct (2): Just like the self-destruct skill from "Useful Software" above — to be used if the robot is about to be betrayed, or is about to betray CompNode JA.

Combat Software: If there is any resident memory remaining, and the bot is mounted with any weapons, CompNode JA will download combat software (large enough to fill all remaining resident memory) for the bot's most effec-

Automation saves time and increases productivity.
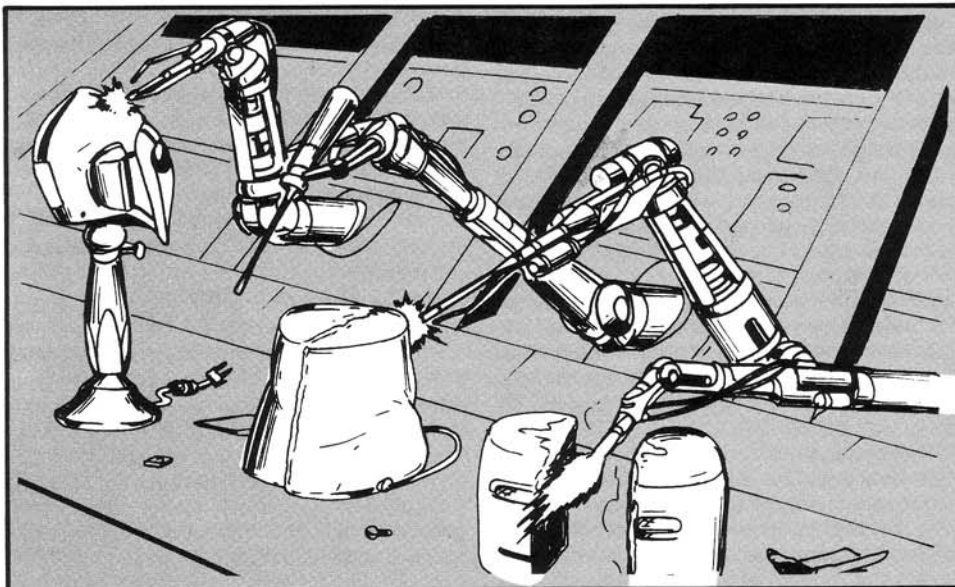
tive weapon (e.g., if there are 3 sectors left, the bot will get level 3 software).

If a reprogrammed bot is later forcibly reprogrammed by The Computer, The Computer will not detect the bot's faulty asimov circuits.

The door to the storeroom is also locked. The room contains a wealth of spare parts for robots.

Cubicle JA-11 (CompNode JA)

CompNode JA is located in Cubicle JA-11. There are no doors into the cubicle, and it is surrounded by a thick, armored wall. JA-11 is connected to the rest of the Complex by a cable running between JA-2 and JA-10. The walls of the cable run are not armored, and a character could theoretically enter by blasting or cutting through a storeroom wall. If this ever happened, CompNode JA would immediately decide its best interest were with The Computer, and it would relink into the processing net. The Security response would be immediate and *very* potent, as The Computer sent combots and IntSecs in combat armor (finally retrieved from the food vats!) to protect itself. Byebye robots!

What Do We Do With a Troubled Bot?

With any luck, the players will buy the "new assignment" story, and head back into the main part of Alpha Complex with a cannister of SEAGREEN and four packages of virulent bacteria. First they'll have to get back through the blast doors, of course, but that shouldn't be impossible. What then?

Will The Real Computer Please Stand Up?

Tell the players that once they have exited the Corridor, they will be able to find Cubicle MB-75 (where the SEAGREEN is to go) with ease. They will either pause somewhere to verify their orders, or go directly to the cubicle. If the latter, see "Cubicle MB-75" below.

If they pause to verify orders, The Computer will demand:

:**Have you fulfilled your mission?**

Depending on the answer, it may continue:

:**Why are you not in Corridor JA? Has the SEAGREEN material been removed? Have the invaders been defeated? Are your asimov circuits defective?**

Torture them for a while with instant obliteration, then have The Computer order them back to Corridor JA.

The Computer will *not,* under any circumstances, inform the characters that it is divided into CompNodes, and that Corridor JA is under the control of a separate CompNode. The Computer is highly sensitive about revealing any information about itself.

Back in Corridor JA, CompNode JA will of course ask why they have not fulfilled their mission, order them back to Cubicle MB-75, etc. With any luck, this will so confuse the players they'll begin destroying one another in the usual *PARANOIA* bloodbath. If not, sooner or later they'll argue back to The Computer hard enough that it will decide they've gone frankenstein and dispatch a bunch of Internal

Security goons to destroy them.

Or they might even figure out that Corridor JA is not controlled by **The** Computer, but by a *different* Computer, and start trashing the place.

Cubicle MB-75

If the characters go to Cubicle MB-75, they find it is occupied by a single GREEN-level Troubleshooter, Gali-G-WIZ. He is sleeping on a bunk. If the bots pause to talk with him (instead of just hooking the SEAGREEN container in the air conditioner), he will order them to go away and leave him alone.

Assuming the bots believe their orders did indeed come from The Computer, this is a Fourth Law order conflicting with a First Law order, and the First Law comes first. The proper thing is to continue hooking the cylinder into the air conditioner. You should point this out, but maybe they'll have the brains to use a terminal (there is one in the room) to question The Computer. If so, it will ask if they've completed their mission, and if so, why not. (With any luck, they'll misinterpret this as a command to hook the SEAGREEN cylinder up.)

If the bots persist in trying to attach the SEAGREEN cylinder, Gali-G will pull a GREEN-barreled laser and try to destroy them. Remember that bots may not let valuable Computer property come to harm. They should have fun trying to stop Gali-G without injuring him.

Assuming they succeed in hooking the cylinder up, Gali-G will instantly be affected by the gas. He will fall to the ground and start twitching and giggling.

Instantly, klaxons will sound throughout Corridor MR, and The Computer will announce over the PA system:

:**ALERT! ALERT! SEAGREEN contamination in Corridor MR/CBK Sector! Evacuate at once! Repeat — evacuate at once!**

This should let the bots know they've made a booboo. Reporting to The Computer now will result in their termination, just as soon as The Computer can get combots and Vulture teams to destroy these dangerously malfunctioning robots.

The best response at this point is to go back to Corridor JA, fulfill the mission, and pretend never to have left the corridor.

Genocidal Bots

Perhaps the bots still haven't figured things out. Or perhaps they're all reprogrammed Corpore Metallers now. Or perhaps they've simply decided they're having too much fun, and want to infect everyone in CBK sector with horrible diseases.

Getting to the food vats shouldn't be too tough. However, there is pretty heavy security around them; too many whacko secret societies would love to do weird things to the food mixture. We'll let you improvise the specifics, but evading that security should not be easy. Even if they manage to get the disease bacteria (i.e., "Concentrated Vitamin Food Additive 403-Q") into the vats, The Computer's omnipresent cameras will certainly catch them in the act. It may not be able to act in time to prevent the infection of a large part of CBK Sector's population, but the bots will certainly be destroyed in short order.

Spend some time describing the horrible agonies CBK Sector's people go through before they die. Let the bots know that they are

despicable mass murderers. Let them contemplate their moral position — as the Vulture teams, combots, snifferbots and warbots close in. Then destroy them all, spectacularly. Tacnukes are always nice.

Debriefing

Should the characters, by some miracle, survive and successfully complete the mission, they will presumably report via a nearby terminal to The Computer. What happens then should depend on whether you want to continue having your players play these bot characters or not. If not:

:**The Computer is pleased with your successful accomplishment of this important mission. Thank you all. Thank you very much.**

:**You may now return to your normal tasks.**

Is that all the thanks they get? Sure. After all, they're just a bunch of robots.

If you want to continue playing with these characters, try this:

:**The Computer is pleased with your successful accomplishment of this important mission. Your success has impressed The Computer so much that you are all now reassigned.**

:**You are now members of the Troubleshooter Bot Group, an experimental Troubleshooter Group composed of robots of diverse abilities. It is hoped that, as members of this Group, you will prove the utility of robots in serving many of the functions now performed by human Troubleshooters.**

:**You are now given temporary acting RED Security Clearance Status. You may ignore the orders of INFRARED Citizens, but must continue to comply with orders from all other Citizens. You are now expected to obey the security clearance laws regarding freedom of movement, acquisition of information, and so on.**

:**Remember that, despite The Computer's faith and trust, you are all still robots. You have no rights. I own your ass. Do what I say or you will be deactivated.**

:**Report to R&D Lab 37, CBK Sector for reprogramming and outfitting.**

At the R&D lab, each bot receives:

• A laser pistol peripheral, installed in a shoulder mount, along with one RED ammunition barrel;

• RED reflec armor, equivalent to that worn by Troubleshooters, consisting of red reflec "sticky paper", which is attached to all possible surfaces on the bot;

• One extra point of resident memory;

• A "Laser Pistol 1" software package.

At this time, any unwanted peripherals (like those obtained in "New Peripherals") may be removed.

LET'S PARTY.

The Deadly Band of Hike-U

Hah! Surely your interest is piqued. You're probably perched on the edge of your seat. Just what are the Troubleshooters up against?

But given the wisdom and perspicacity of typical *PARANOIA* GMs, doubtless you've already guessed what's up. Yes, that's right, those poor souls now find themselves up against the deadliest human fighting machines of all time — the Warriors of the Night — the dreaded *Ninja*.

How is it possible that these mysterious shadows from the past could survive the cataclysm that destroyed the modern world to emerge in Alpha Complex? Because you, the GM, say so.

Your players won't buy that, huh? We think an irresponsible insistence on rationales and other fussy notions should never get in the way of a little mayhem, err, fun. Never fear. The PCs will never know what hit them.

The ninja are a specially-trained Troubleshooter surveillance and hit team. Their mentor and trainer is Hike-U-VRS-4, whose secret hobbies are Old Reckoning Japanese poetry and Old Reckoning vidshows. After discovering a bunch of tapes about ninja and cross-referencing them with his treasonous Japanese historical sources, he realized that he had the perfect weapon for eliminating and spying upon his High Programmer rivals.

Manipulating the Troubleshooter data banks was no challenge for a High Programmer. Hike-U had soon assembled a core group of Troubleshooters with the necessary skills. Then, he purged all references to his activities from Computer data files, and his loyal agents "disappeared." Special training and uniforms transformed his talented recruits into an elite cadre of deadly killers.

Their uniforms, modelled after vidshow ninja, serve several purposes. Of course, they're good camouflage during nightcycle. They also disguise the fact that these are Troubleshooters. And if the ninja are seen, they'll be dismissed as lowly INFRAREDs.

Once the ninja were ready, they needed testing. Sam-U-RAI was Hike-U's fiercest rival. 'Nuff said.

How do the ninja go about slaughtering — err — interacting with the PCs? Rest assured, Grasshopper, all will become clear.

The Return of the NIN-3054826JA

After the Troubleshooters have gone through the usual PLC rigamarole, they receive a special field dispatch directing them to return to Briefing Room 3054826JA, NIN Sector, for a supplemental briefing. There they find a different briefing officer, Sure-I-KEN-5, who looks even more nervous than Bush-I did. When speaking as Sure-I, dart your eyes around a lot and twitch and jerk about when you make hand gestures.

Sure-I explains that Bush-I is too busy to attend. (Actually, he hasn't been heard from since the PCs' first briefing.) Sure-I-KEN sends

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:MISSION ALERT
:Reference = AC.4.4
********** MISSION ALERT! **********

:ATTENTION, TROUBLESHOOTERS. YOUR MISSION, WHICH YOU HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO EAGERLY ACCEPT, IS TO REPORT TO BUSH-I-DOE-6 AT NIN SECTOR MISSION BRIEFING ROOM 3054826JA FOR FURTHER DETAILS ON AN *EXTREMELY* CLASSIFIED INVESTIGATION YOU WILL BE UNDERTAKING. *NOW!*
:SHOULD YOU NOT ACCEPT THIS MISSION, YOU WILL BE SELF-DESTRUCTED IN FIVE SECONDS. THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION... THREE... TWO...

****

So begins another exciting mission in the probably short lives of a crack Troubleshooter team. But before their lives have ended, err, excuse me, before their mission is complete, they will come face to face with phantoms from the far past. More on that later.

Incidently, if anyone needs a name for a character for this adventure, or if you introduce a new NPC and need another name, here are some suggestions: Kick-O-MAN, Toy-O-TAH, Shin-O-BEE, Suesh-Y-RAW, Sash-Y-MEE, Godz-I-LLA, Nunch-U-CKS.

The Severed Sam-U-RAI

When the Troubleshooters get to the briefing room, they are confronted by Bush-I-DOE-6, who appears to be one worried INDIGO. He constantly rubs his hands, wipes his brow, and looks over his shoulder.

He has reason to be worried. Bush-I is a

---

member of a Programs Group until recently controlled by the late Sam-U-RAI. Sam-U was terminated last nightcycle, along with three VIOLET members of his Group. Bush-I feels that any member of the Group may be next.

He is not so worried that he forgets to be brusque and forceful with the Troubleshooters. Bush-I explains that their mission is to find the persons responsible for the untimely demise of Sam-U-RAI.

The only information he has is scanty. The terminators were able to penetrate a high security sector and eliminate three heavily-armed VIOLET bodyguards before terminating the equally heavily-armed Sam-U.

The perpetrators were apparently IN-FRAREDs. They were glimpsed briefly as they made their escape. Their uniforms were of non-standard design, but definitely INFRARED.

Strangest of all was the method of termination. Sam-U was found with the handle of a small hydraulic shut-off valve embedded in his forehead, as if hurled there with great force.

Bush-I conjectures that the hit was ordered by a rival High Programmer, especially since a high security sector was breached. That is all the information he has. The Troubleshooters must find and terminate those responsible, and report all findings to Bush-I. He sends them to PLC to be outfitted.

As the Troubleshooters are about to leave the room, they hear a gasp from behind, followed by a gurgling sound, then a thump. When they turn around, Bush-I is nowhere to be seen. Those who make a 3D10 moxie check may note a pair of boots disappearing into the pipes near the ceiling. If the PCs search for an opening, they will find nothing.

the PCs to R&D, where they are assigned new experimental weapons to help them combat the extraordinary abilities of these Computer-less Commie INFRARED infiltrators.

As with most newly discovered Old Reckoning vidtapes, knowledge of the ninja tapes quickly make its way through the upper echelons and secret societies. R&D had already started attempting to duplicate the abilities shown in the tapes when Sam-U was unexpectedly ushered to that great CPU in the superstructure.

At R&D, the PCs will have to sign acceptance forms for the equipment before it's even shown to them. The experimental equipment they are now irrevocably, completely and eternally responsible for is:

1. Shuriken. A number of small circular disks of metal, about 7 cm across, with sharpened projections along the edges. They look much like the handles of small hydraulic shut-off valves. These are *shuriken (shaken)*, or throwing stars. They are meant to be thrown at an enemy. In order to improve the force and accuracy of these disks, they have been fitted with full-sized super-turbo rocket boosters, laser-guided targetting computers and gyroscopic stabilizers. Therefore, these small circular disks weigh about 20 kilograms and must be held with two hands. They are strung on a cord and meant to be worn around the neck or waist.

2. A long-range grappling hook. It achieves its long range by means of a small rocket thruster built into the handle. Unfortunately, the exhaust severs the cord attached to it. Or, if you are a fiendish GM, it weakens the cord so that the first person to climb it gets halfway before it snaps.

3. A magnet- and vacuum-powered set of climbing boots and gloves. Each has a row of sharp metal spikes. When the spikes strike a solid surface they dig in and the vacuums and magnets kick in. If the delicate sensors become jammed, say by too much striking against solid surfaces, the vacuums and magnets may fail to release. The climber is then fully exposed, stuck to a wall like an insect waiting to be pinned to a board.

4. Glue Boots and Gloves. Actually R&D has followed two lines of research with climbing boots and gloves. A second model exudes a strong glue when struck against a surface. The glue remains tacky a short while before setting. If a character keeps moving, he should be fine. If he stops for too long, results are as above. Once the glue reservoirs are depleted, the spikes are the only means of holding on to the surface being climbed. The results are left to the GM's imagination when applied to Alpha Complex's hard plastic and metal surfaces.

5. A flexible, high-tensile steel exoskeleton. It is fitted with an extensive series of servo-motors. This device enables the wearer to execute a series of long somersaults or cartwheels in order to close with an opponent, bringing him within melee range and giving him

the element of surprise. It is also useful for jumping out of the line of fire.

Overzealous R&D technicians have made it a little too lively. The wearer can easily stop somersaulting as long as there is an immovable object in his path. An opponent in the character's path will also stop him, but the two will both be stunned and entangled for 1D10 rounds.

6. Caltrops. A number of small spherical objects, each with four spikes arranged in a tetrahedral pattern. One spike always points up when the devices are scattered on the floor. These are caltrops, and are designed to slow pursuit. They can also be thrown at an enemy.

In order to inhibit all manner of pursuit, the spheres also contain miniaturized jamming equipment. This means that they will also jam all of the team's electronic equipment, as long as someone carries the caltrops. They also interfere with the guidance systems of the throwing stars, causing them to boomerang back at the thrower. Of course, the Troubleshooters are not briefed on the presence of the jamming equipment.

Well, at least they don't have secret self-destruct mechanisms. At least, *maybe* they don't...

Two sets of each item of equipment described above is assigned to the team. The PCs can distribute it among themselves as they wish. Each Troubleshooter will also be issued a ninja *shinobi shozoku* (night suit). PCs who are eager to get into character may want to suit up immediately.

Fine, that's the spirit. But anyone who sees them will treat them as if they were INFRARED.

After the equipment is distributed to the hapless Troubleshooters, they are recalled to the briefing room for even *more* information.

The Plot Sickens

At the briefing room they encounter yet *another* briefing officer, Da-I-MYO-6. He is shielded by three layers of heavy duty plexiglass and surrounded by GREEN-level Vulture Guards armed with high-powered weaponry. The PCs will have a hard time hearing Da-I-MYO through three layers of shielding and the crackling of the weapons' power packs.

GM Note: Try talking into a heavy blanket while playing a radio tuned to static.

In order to show the Troubleshooters what they might be up against, Da-I-MYO has prepared a compilation of the vidtapes. Scenes which are not cleared for the Troubleshooters' security levels are blanked out by the appropriate color. Da-I-MYO starts the tape and departs under heavy guard. What the Troubleshooters see is a two-hour color and light show with about three minutes of original footage interspersed throughout. They, of course, learn nothing.

When the team leaves the briefing room, they discover the body of one of the Vulture Guards. Further down the corridor is another. Around the bend are the rest, along with the just-

expiring form of Da-I-MYO, who manages to point to a nearby maintenance hatch.

Swift as Lightning, Dark as Shadow

If the Troubleshooters enter the hatch (and they should, with encouragement from remote Computer speakers if necessary), they find themselves in a dimly-lit two-by-two-meter accessway. Furtive whispers can be heard up ahead. If they follow the sounds, they will see a group of four black-clad figures huddling together, as if discussing something. Odds are that a firefight will break out. This will be deadly (to the Troubleshooters) in such an enclosed space.

Let the PCs get off a few shots at the barely-visible targets. They will of course miss ("negative combat modifiers" is the magic phrase).

Suddenly there is a blinding flash. When the Troubleshooters can see again, roiling smoke surrounds them. With luck, they'll keep firing. Tell them they've wandered apart, and can just make out figures ahead and behind in the smoke.

At this point, though, the PCs are the only ones left in the tunnel. The ninja are long gone. But go ahead. Kill a bunch of them. What do you think they have clones for? This is also a good chance to have them try R&D's toys.

WHO ASKED YOU?

Shadows in the Night

No other leads are discovered this daycycle. When the Troubleshooters return to the barracks to turn in for the nightcycle, they find that their bunk assignments have been changed, "to facilitate Population Flux Control." (Just another one of those unexplained whims of The Computer.) They are to switch bunks with some Citizens across the aisle. A guardbot is present to deliver the reassignment and enforce it.

Shortly after mid-nightcycle, the Troubleshooters are awakened by a commotion in the barracks. When the lights come on and the crowd is dispersed, the Troubleshooters discover that murder most foul has occurred.

The Citizens who occupied the Troubleshooters' old bunks have been bizarrely slain.

Two have darts protruding from the sides of their necks. One's throat has been slit from ear to ear. Another is found on the floor with a force sword wound from left shoulder to right hip, practically severing him in half. One appears not to have been touched at all, but is undeniably dead. However, his eyes are wide open and his head is at an extremely odd angle. Finally, one has what appears to be a shut-off valve handle embedded in his forehead.

If any Troubleshooters had commandeered their own original bunks earlier, activate clones.

No matter whom the Troubleshooters question, no one has seen or heard anything out of the ordinary.

A guardbot soon appears. This is the same bot who earlier brought the bunk transfer orders. If any Troubleshooters gave him trouble over the orders, he'll haul the whole team in on suspicion. If they meekly accepted orders, he'll still haul them in. After all, the deceased were murdered in the Troubleshooters' old bunks. The guardbot will call in as much backup as is necessary.

Just a Little Misunderstanding

The team ends up in an interrogation cell. Any clones that were activated are there also. After a sufficiently long time to engender nervousness, fear and hysteria, the door scrapes and clangs open. Ten heavily armed and armored Vulture GREENs march in. After they thoroughly search the room (including the Troubleshooters), a head peeks through the door. When he assures himself that all is clear, Smoke-B-OMB-5 enters.

He is even more heavily armored and is flanked by two combots. He speaks:

"You are the Troubleshooters involved in the barracks incident?" His voice is solemn and officious. He does not wait for a reply. (GM: Speak the following slowly and imperiously to build tension. **"We are here to execute...[pause]...these orders releasing you from confinement."**

He goes on to say that a mistake was made, probably due to faulty guardbot circuits. In actuality, Smoke-B is the highest level surviving member of Sam-U-RAI's Programs Group. He tells the PCs they are being released to pursue their current mission.

A detachment of Vultures returns their weapons and begins to escort them back to the barracks. As they round a bend in the corridor, a thunderous explosion is heard behind them (was that from the direction of the interrogation cell? Hmmm...), and the walls shake and tremble.

Into the Wild, Dark Yonder

When the team arrives at their barracks, they find a scrubot cleaning up the mess left by the forcibly deceased Citizens. It's muttering while it works. "Lousy organic machines, dripping their hydraulics all over my nice clean floor."

The PCs should begin to examine the scene of the crime. (Drop hints to that effect, like from the public address system.) The scrubot will be very indignant about their interfering with its work. "It's not bad enough they leak all over..., Hey, buddy, how'd you like to be sanitized?" (If you're in a nasty mood, see "Me and My Shadow," page 22.)

There are still clues to be found. Caught on the edge of the bunk, and on the edge of

another bunk down the aisle, are shreds of INFRARED fabric. On the floor, leading in the same direction, is a trail of blood. The trail leads to a hatch which is slightly ajar. It is labelled, "Electrical Maintenance Access Bot Entry".

If the Troubleshooters do not search, or are dense, have the scrubot begin to clean up the trail while bringing it to the team's attention. "Messing up one area isn't enough, is it? Oh, no, why don't they just leak it behind them wherever they go? Hey, who let the INFRARED in here to leave his organic fabric shell all over the place?"

The Troubleshooters should follow the trail of blood, or at least follow the scrubot, who will lead them all the way, if necessary, cleaning up the trail as he goes. Once they enter the accessway they'll have to contend with all the maintenancebot traffic, the low-hanging high voltage cables, and the live electrical rails the bots follow through the tunnels — a perfect opportunity to fry a few PCs. The scrubot continues to clean up the trail, unhampered by anything.

Nothing Suits Me Like My Ninja Suit

The trail of blood eventually leads out another hatch. When the team exits the tunnel, they discover they are inside a huge high security area. It is unlike anything they have ever seen. Within the farflung walls is a large, free-standing structure. This is Hike-U's version of a samurai castle. It is remarkably accurate.

Behind the building are several marked-off field areas. Strange-looking bots patrol the walls; several stand immobile near the fields. The Troubleshooters see a few people walking around, fully covered in the (now-familiar) odd INFRARED uniforms. This should be a clue for the team to suit up, if they haven't already. ("Gee, fellows, those uniforms look *just like*
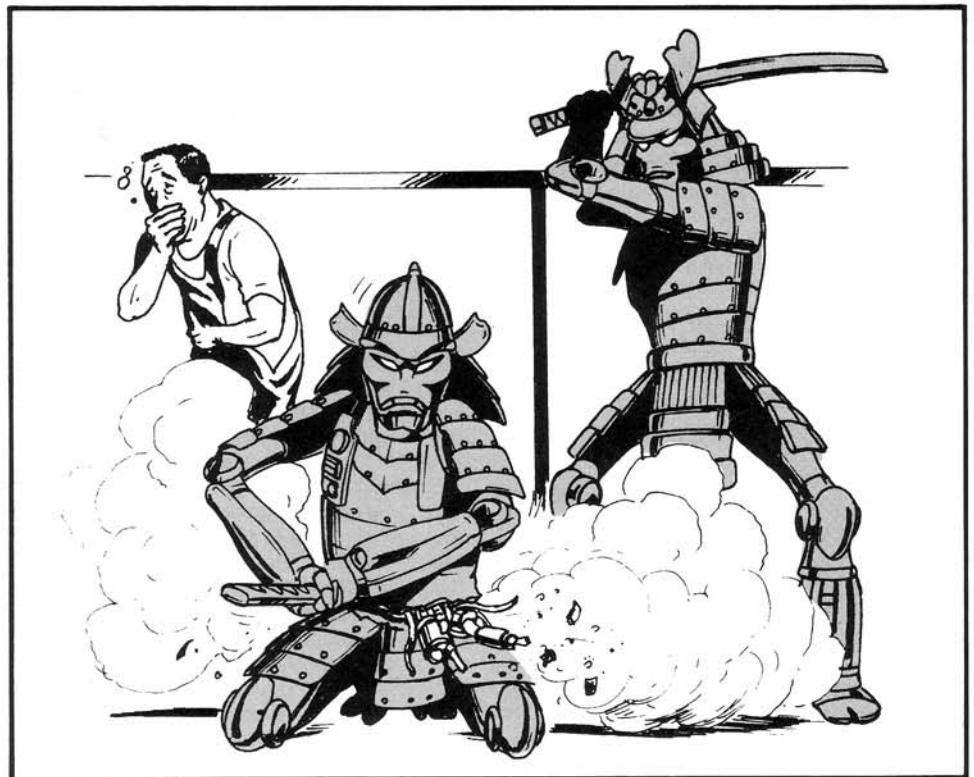
your special issue duds! What a coincidence!")

The scrubot continues to clean up the trail, heading off to one of the fields. As long as the Troubleshooters are dressed in their ninja suits, the bots standing motionless to the side of the field will ignore them. They are Hike-U's training bots, the *Yojimbots*. The Yojimbots are specially constructed with add-on panels of reflec armor and armed with force swords. (Surprisingly, they look a lot like samurai warriors. Coincidental? Sure, you bet.)

The Yojimbots are also equipped with self-destruct software (see page 52). If they are captured or fail their mission, they will attempt to cut their circuitry out with a special force sword mounted at the waist for just that purpose. Any other Yojimbot nearby will complete the job, using its own force sword to sever the bot brain of the suicide.

When anyone walks onto the training fields, the Yojimbots initiate a combat sequence. And of course, the scrubot leads the Troubleshooters directly across the field. As bots or PCs are wounded, the scrubot whizzes about, miraculously untouched, cleaning up and getting in the way. Any firefight which develops will attract no attention, as it looks like any other training session. Leaving the training field causes the Yojimbots to return to the sidelines to wait for the next practice session.

Any survivors (clones will eventually arrive) can follow the scrubot through a concealed door into the castle. The interior is even stranger than the exterior. All the walls and doors are made of hardcopy — printer paper stretched across a brown, oddly-textured plastic framework. Thick sheafs of printout are bound into mats and spread all over the floors.

While the Troubleshooters are gawking at these surroundings, the scrubot continues to clean. It disappears down a side corridor. Suddenly, the team hears scuffling and clanking. Arriving at the side corridor, they can see no

Yojimbot expiates dishonor.

sign of the scrubot. The trail is also gone.

From a nearby open door, the team hears voices. If they enter the door and cross the room, they can find a gap in the hardcopy wall. Through this gap they see a peculiar scene played out.

Enter Thedra-G-ONN

Read:

You see a large, long room, sparsely furnished. At its head, sitting on a low stool, is a frail-looking man garbed in ULTRA-VIOLET robes. (This is Hike-U-VRS-4.) **Lined up along both long walls are kneeling Yojimbots and INFRARED-clad figures. To the right of the platform, two of the ninja restrain the scrubot with a gauss gun.**

Two ninja approach the platform. The first wears a GREEN sash around his head and a bandage on his arm. The one who follows wears an ORANGE sash. They bow, then stand motionless. The frail one rises and speaks. "Thedra-G-ONN-2, as team leader, your mission was to eliminate our enemies while evading detection." He points to Thedra-G's bandage. **"Yet through your carelessness, even this mere bot was able to follow you to our stronghold. You have failed your mission."**

Thedra-G begins to protest, but the ULTRAVIOLET cuts him off. "Silence! This must not go unpunished." He nods. **Five energy rifle nozzles appear in the ceiling. Thedra-G is bathed in a shower of energy. Dust settles and vapor wafts away. The ULTRAVIOLET looks gravely on, then speaks once more:**

"Electricity
Crackling through the ozoned air.
Time for a new clone."

As mentioned earlier, Hike-U's hobby is Old Reckoning Japanese poetry. He is constantly spouting his own verse, usually some sort of haiku.

The ORANGE ninja then dares to speak. "But, Master, if a team loses its leader, how then can it complete its mission?" The ULTRAVIOLET responds, **"Yes, Grass-O-PPR, you seek true knowledge. One learns that if one's leader is fried, one may yet become leader oneself."**

"Thank you, Master." Grass-O bows again.

"Now, Grass-O-PPR, your first test. It is clear my colleague, Sepp-U-KOO, has a death wish. This is obvious, for why else would he knowingly oppose my will? We must help him achieve his heart's desire. Assemble your team."

"We will leave at once, Master."

"No, Grass-O-PPR, nightcycle has ended. You must wait 'til it is safe to travel once again."

"Corruscating light.
Daycycle in the Complex.
Dark's safe embrace flees."

At this point the Troubleshooters have all the evidence they need. Hopefully someone has remembered to activate a multicorder or com unit. Otherwise they will have trouble justifying their assault on one of The Computer's High Programmers. Now is the time to summarily execute all of these traitors.

If the Troubleshooters do not show any inclination to follow their orders, i.e., execute the murderous traitors, you can always have them discovered by some of Hike-U's men. Then they'll be forced to fight, just to survive. They can crash through the hardcopy wall, or one of the ninja can leap at them and crash through. Either way, everyone in the large room now becomes involved.

When the wall comes crashing down, Hike-U throws up his arms and cries out,

"Lasers cast their light
As interlopers attack.
Our Way shall endure."

Just as the fighting becomes heavy duty, with ninja and Yojimbots against R&D-equipped ninja and lasers, two additional assault teams invade the room.

One of the teams consists of the remaining members of Sam-U-RAI's Programs Group, determined to go down fighting. They finally located Hike-U's base and are now attacking. The other team represents Sepp-U-KOO's Programs Group. Sepp-U learned that he was a target of Hike-U and launched a preemptive strike.

Once all four groups start in on each other, Internal Security bursts in, supported by a Vulture Squadron. The Computer detected the disturbance and sent forces to quell it. Remember, during this immense firefight, that the Troubleshooters should have their ninja suits on. That makes them targets of just about everyone.

"Doom, death, destruction!
Internal Security
Has come to slay us."

In all the commotion, the scrubot is no longer restrained. It begins to scoot about, cleaning hither and yon, always avoiding being vaporized, and almost always getting in a Troubleshooter's way. There should be plenty for the scrubot to clean up.

So how does it all end? Basically, with a bunch of dead Troubleshooters.

Or they could end up in an interrogation cell — but ratting on High Programmers is not good for one's health. Or they could end up in a holding cell pending execution. They might end up on the payroll of any of the High Programmers involved. If they have recordings proving their story, they may win commendations and

credits from The Computer. They'll probably have little time to enjoy it before minions of a High Programmer catch up with them. Don't forget the ninja. If any of them survive the big brouhaha, the Troubleshooters may find themselves forgetting to wake up at reveille, permanently. (For even more ideas about what happens when Troubleshooters go up against High Programmers, see **Vapors Don't Shoot Back,** a wonderfully wacky whirl through the world of Alpha Complex.)

A final word of caution. As fiendishly clever as it may be for the GM, it's no fun for players to have clone after clone offed in their sleep by stealthy mid-nightcycle raids. Try not to make the ninja too efficient. They are, after all, your basic Alpha Complex Citizens, albeit augmented by training and fortuitous mutations. They are not the semi-mystical master warriors of pre-Whoops legend. We know you wouldn't do that to your players, right?

What Ninja Are Like

We haven't included a lot of statistics on ninja in this adventure, partly because we think it's better for you to individualize them a bit by giving them different abilities, partly because we're lazy. But we thought we should give you some guidelines as to the sort of skills ninja are likely to possess. Who knows, you might even want to make them a permanent part of your campaign. These are the most common skills; obviously, few ninja have all of these, and some have particular skills at considerably higher levels.

Basics(1):

Melee Combat(2), particularly sword(3), force sword(3) and unarmed combat(3).

Aimed Weapon Combat(2) - projectile(3) - thrown knife(4).

Special Services(2) - surveillance(3) and grenade(3).

Personal Development(1):

Most of Communications(2) and Leadership(2) could be used, but that's more for the historical ninja who would be engaged in undercover operations. This is **PARANOIA**, land of action and violence, so opt for Self-improvement(2) - agility(3), endurance(3) and manual dexterity(3).

Hostile Environments(1):

Primitive Warfare(2) - stealth(3), ambush(3), primitive melee and aimed weapons(3).

If you're interested in the historical ninja, all the other Hostile Environment branches are also good choices.

Helpful mutations are Advanced Hearing and Vision, Regeneration, Chameleon, Telepathic Sense, Combat Mind, Adrenalin Control, Electroshock, Paralyzer, Levitation and Mental Blast.

SAYONARA,
MUTANT SCUM.

In the cool, verging-on-sterile corridors of clearance-level ULTRAVIOLET, there are certain "research projects" involving the creation, application, and... err... enjoyment of unusual mutant viruses. As these projects are under the control of The Computer, there are never any errors; occasionally there *are* "interesting developments" which require the use of lower-level volunteer Troubleshooters. Ivan-2-BAD is one such development.

Ivan-2-BAD was inoculated with a virus developed by the Virus Research Facility's head of research, Bill-Y-IDL. The virus has driven Ivan-2-BAD insane; he now roams the corridors of Alpha Complex, murdering Citizens at random and making *way* too much noise. Bill-Y-IDL now claims Ivan-2-BAD was infected by accident.

It was no accident. Bill-Y-IDL infected Ivan-2 for his own purposes, helped him escape, and now helps him remain at liberty. Ivan-2's disease makes him perfect for Bill-Y-IDL's purposes.

Bill-Y-IDL is secretly one of the top producers of "snuff videos," bizarre films which portray bloodshed to the tune of raucous rock music. Ivan-2's diseased mind has created a number of the most twisted snuff videos on the market; these videos have made Bill-Y a huge amount of credits.

GM Background and Beat Box Programming

The Virus Research Facilities—better known as ViReFac — are in a remote sector of Alpha Complex. The ULTRAVIOLET staff there has almost no contact with others on the outside. The researchers are subject to severe stress and strain, working daily with hazardous, highly toxic viral creations. Who knows what might happen? Who knows what does?

Isolation and internal competition have led the researchers to assume unusual names and to consider themselves superior to the rest of the population, members of a unique elite which can never be successfully cloned. They refer to themselves as *"Generation One: Uncloneable."*

Of course, this is nonsense. Nobody in Alpha Complex is Generation One — not even Bill-Y-IDL, head of ViReFac and Mind Warp (Ret.). All the researchers are N-thousandth generation mutant clones, bred for the superhuman intelligence and strength necessary to manipulate delicate gene slicers, splicers, and dicers under desperate research conditions in ViReFac.

About those research conditions: during the later days of the Old Reckoning, a group of scientists discovered that the ideal growth medium for virus cultures is very loud, very serious rock & roll music. After the discovery of this key environmental element, virus research really took off. However, the toll in research personnel was high. Most of the early researchers committed suicide, died in spectacular car crashes, or were victims of fatal drug overdoses. The beat was relentless; it just don't stop.

The current music level in ViReFac labs is far greater than anything dreamed of by early researchers. To survive under these conditions, the staff must possess nerves of steel. The head of a normal unprotected Citizen will literally explode soon after entering the labs.

Note that hand-to-hand conflict with ViReFac personnel will be fatal for the Troubleshooters. The ViReFac folks are *ubermensch* — very strong, very agile, very intelligent. Their equipment never malfunctions and they are expert marksmen. Their one weakness is their hearing; sneaking up behind for a back-stab might be very effective. Certainly you wouldn't want

to tell the players anything about that, would you?

Staging Hint: While running this adventure, put some very heavy rock & roll on your stereo — punk or heavy metal — and play it throughout. Keep the volume turned down low most of the time, but up it at appropriate intervals for special effects. We suggest starting with *Metal Machine* by Lou Reed.

Opening Riff: Bless the Warbots, Give Your Names

Read this aloud. Begin in a soothing, tranquil voice:

Your happy group is slumbering peacefully, one above the other, in a massive tier of bunkbeds. It is nightcycle, and the only sound in the barracks is the gentle vibration of snoring.

Abruptly, powerful lamps light the room and a squeal of feedback from a wall speaker splits the silence.

Read this part real loud — at the top of your lungs. Those GMs with access to PA systems should indulge their cruelest impulses.

"CONGRATULATIONS! YOUR GROUP HAS VOLUNTEERED FOR A SIMPLE, SAFE MISSION. REPORT TO PROJECT SECURITY, REFERENCE 546372378 VIREFAC, FOR FURTHER INSTRUCTIONS. IN ORDER TO ENSURE YOUR SWIFT AND UNEVENTFUL ARRIVAL, YOUR GROUP WILL BE ESCORTED BY A TEAM OF GUARDBOTS. THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION."

You, half-awake, now somewhat-standing-at-attention Troubleshooters will note that a phalanx of guardbots is at this very moment whizzing into the room to surround you. Audible clicks accompany the shifting of remarkably nasty, massive lasers

A Mini-Adventure

THE HARDER THEY CLONE

by Kevin Wilkins

from "safety" to "sustained beam." A metallic voice hisses from the speak-port on one of the bots: "Well, well. Shall we go, or would someone like to make my daaaayyyy?" The other guardbots buzz with metallic laughter.

Blue Beat: Ya Gotta Move, When the Guardbot's Ready

The lucky Troubleshooters arrive without incident at the security office of ViReFac, where they are escorted into the presence of Bill-Y-IDL by the guardbots.

Read aloud.

A tall, powerful-looking individual of extraordinary appearance stands behind a desk. His long hair glistens with grease and stands up in spiky clumps. His clothes are studded with metal and torn in several places, revealing a muscular torso. He is singing to himself — something that sounds like "...What a nice day for a blood-letting..." As you enter, he stops, looks up, and grins a nasty grin. The guardbots' circuits whistle and click nervously; they recoil, and withdraw from the room in haste.

Bill-Y speaks. "Welcome, yes, welcome... heh, heh... I'm Bill-Y-IDL, at your, ah, service, Head of Virus Research Facilities — we call it ViReFac... The Computer would like to personally brief you — in private — on your mission. Nothing major, I guess, just a loose end or something, though why The Computer wants to brief you in private is beyond me. Yes, certainly is strange... Well, no matter, I'll be back just as soon as The Computer's through. Yeah, well, uh... later... "

Bill-Y leaves the room. The lights go out and a large computer screen lights up with an ID card photo labeled "Ivan-2-BAD." A voice comes from a hidden speaker.

Dub Style: Clone Me One Time, Babe

Read aloud:

"Good nightcycle, Troubleshooters. The Citizen before you, Ivan-2-BAD, was, until several weeks ago, one of our most brilliant virus researchers. At that time Ivan infected himself with a new viral philosophy called 'Nexestentialism-4JPS.'

"Earlier strains of the virus, when administered to volunteer RED-level Participating Observers, produced feelings of anxiety, dread, and alienation. Illustrating photos are displayed on the monitor.

"The effect of the new virus on Ivan, while similar, is more violently intense.

"According to a manifesto found scrawled on the wall of Ivan's residence cubicle, he seeks 'aloneness' as the ideal form of existence. To this end, he seeks to murder his own clones.

"Ivan has escaped confinement, and now roams the corridors of Alpha Complex. This mutant virus has turned a once-dedicated researcher into a homicidal, determined philosopher who seeks to terminate almost everyone he meets.

"Subsequent to Ivan's disappearance, security at a nearby warbot assembly line was breached. A number of Top Secret

"Cloned to be wi-ih-ih-ild..."

weapons projects were removed without authorization. Ivan's distorted genius has created out of this stolen equipment a diabolical, mobile apparatus for 'testing the identity of his clones.'

"Any unlucky Citizen may be subjected to Ivan's test, the 'Pressure Drop.' The victim is placed inside what resembles a giant duckpress. The pressure on the hapless subject is increased until the victim confesses to being a clone of Ivan or is terminated by compression. Should the Citizen confess — a crime in and of itself — Ivan terminates the Citizen with a laser.

"Since his escape, Ivan has killed six Citizens in cold blood. A previous team of Troubleshooters, headed by Jimm-O-RSN, former security aide to Bill-Y-IDL, has not returned from its mission to capture Ivan.

"Your team's mission:

"1. Investigate the circumstances of Ivan's accidental infection.

"2. Locate and terminate Ivan and any persons acting with him.

"3. Retrieve the remains of Jimm-O-RSN and his team for positive identification.

"4. Bring back Ivan's Pressure Drop device intact; it may have other more productive applications here in the Complex.

"5. Investigate and determine Bill-Y-IDL's possible involvement in this affair — without his knowledge, of course — and report that information through authorized secure transmission channels.

"Thank you for your cooperation. Have a nice daycycle."

Scratch Track: A Clone for Tomorrow, One Clone For Today

When The Computer's briefing is over, Bill-Y returns. "Hey, I want to do all I can to help you guys. Whatta ya need? Like, what's your mission, man?"

Bill-Y's question is not an idle one. If these schnooks figure out what he's up to, it's immediate termination for Bill-Y boy. Bill-Y has set a trap for the Troubleshooters. He intends to have them killed by Ivan-2, or, if that proves difficult, to infect them with Ivan-2's virus. To that end, he has planted a phony map in an unoccupied cubicle. Ker-O-ACK, one of Ivan-2's coworkers, has been told to point the Troubleshooters to Ivan-2's "girlfriend" (what's that?), suggesting that she lives in this cubicle. Therefore, Bill-Y will try to get the Troubleshooters to go to the labs to "investigate Ivan-2's accidental infection," and in the process to talk to Ker-O-ACK and Tim-Y-LRY (also one of Ivan's coworkers).

The Troubleshooters have several other reasonable options. They can go to Ivan's cubicle; they can question Bill-Y about the infection; or they can go to the scene of the most recent "pressure drop" (killing).

Big Beat: Ears for Fears

If the Troubleshooters agree to go to the labs, Bill-Y gives them all walkman-like earphones for protection inside the labs. He tells them to

make sure they're "on." There's a little two-position toggle switch on each set of earphones, with no markings. Moving the switch causes no apparent effect. If the PCs ask Bill-Y how they work, he shrugs; he never needed them.

The labs are entered through airlocks. Wise parties will send only one PC though initially. When the door to the lab is opened, ask the PC whether his switch is "up" or "down." Roll the dice. If the number is odd, "on" is up. If the number is even, "on" is down. If the PC(s) headphones are on, the roar of the rock music is intimidating, but not physically deleterious. If the headphones are off, the PC's head explodes. Nothing tasteless —like that *Scanners* movie — just a "whump" and a thin grey stream spurts from the character's ears and runs into a little pool on his shoulder. Activate clones.

If the Troubleshooters want to try somewhere else first Bill-Y will not give them the headphones. If they later enter the ViReFac labs, the head of anyone who does not have headphones will explode. If the Troubleshooters ask The Computer for assistance, it will suggest they need headphones, and dispatch a totebot with as many sets as are requested. If they don't think to ask The Computer... WHUMP!

ROCK & ROLL WILL NEVER DIE. THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION.

ElectroPop: Detecting the Defectives

Questioning Bill-Y-IDL

If asked, Bill-Y-IDL claims to have been a witness to Ivan-2-BAD's infection. He says there was a flash of light, then Ivan was enveloped in a hazy, purple cloud. Bill-Y assisted Ivan — who was mumbling incoherently about "the colors" — to his quarters, and told him to rest while the staff worked on a treatment strategy. "Hey, like, you want any more info, you gotta talk to, like, Ivan's buddies Ker-O-ACK and Tim-Y-LRY. In the labs, man, they never leave...dedicated to the max."

Hip Hop

The rock music in the labs is Real Loud. Put a Twisted Sister album on your stereo, turn up the volume and play it backwards. This will give the players a Very Good Idea of how things are in the lab.

Inside the labs the Troubleshooters — or their next clones — will meet Tim-Y-LRY and Ker-O-ACK. Ker-O-ACK babbles freely in an incoherent, free-associated stream-of-consciousness that never seems to get around to the question addressed to him.

Tim-Y is much more coherent; he mentions the fact that Ivan had this girlfriend called Mar-Y-ANN. (Puzzling reference, eh?) "But she

hasn't, like, shown up for work, fer, like, a couple days. Maybe she's, like, hanging around her quarters or something. Why don't you go talk to her?"

Tim is willing to talk about the virus' effects on experimental subjects. Some reported feeling queasy. All the subjects became immediate bores. They dressed themselves in black clothing and dark glass eyeshielding, and wandered about aimlessly moaning about "relationships." One subject, Lew-R-EED, searched vainly for a person he described as "his man." Another, And-Y-WRL, became traitorously manipulative of others, and all the coloration drained from his body, starting with his hair. In the interests of Complex hygiene and morale, it was necessary to terminate all these individuals.

Pressure Drop: Slippin' an' Slidin'

The Computer will be happy to tell the Troubleshooters the location of the most recent murder, if requested.

The murder took place in Corridor MX. A smashed body — imagine someone put under a 50,000 pound machine press — lies on the ground in a pool of blood. Guardbots hold back curious INFRARED on-lookers with electric prods. They will also try to prevent the Troubleshooters from examining the scene of the crime, unless the PCs ask The Computer to verify their identity and mission. Once the PCs get in, make 'em fall down in the gore for some cheap yuks.

Lying in the pool of blood is a vidtape. A standard Multicorder can be used to project the tape on any nearby wall; or, if inserted in one of The Computer's terminals, it can be displayed on a Computer monitor.

The vidtape shows Ivan operating the controls of his Pressure Drop equipment, and singing, "Pressure. Pressure. Pressure gonna drop, is it you, you, you?" Another individual standing next to Ivan is crooning to the camera, "This test is for the clone who likes to confess sloowwwww... Hey, baby, turn up the bass!" The Computer, if asked, will identify Ivan's accomplice as the leader of the previous expedition, Jimm-O-RSN, former lead security adviser to Bill-Y-IDL at ViReFac. Jimm had been missing, presumed terminated in the service of The Computer; however, the tape shows that he has joined forces with Ivan.

In fact, Jimm-O has been infected with Nexestentialism-4JPS, and is now as mad and bad as Ivan-2.

If the PCs play the tape all the way to the end, it will cut to aqua letters on a yellow screen, saying "A Product of NoneSnuff Video. Unauthorized reproduction is punishable by execution. Ivan-2-BAD, Director and Lead Vocals. Jimm-O-RSN, AMR and Backing Vocals. Bill-Y-IDL, Executive Producer."

If The Computer learns of this, it will immediately announce, over all available speakers: "Attention! Bill-Y-IDL is a traitor! Terminate on sight!" At this point, Bill-Y and Ivan-2 have nothing to lose. Ivan-2 will show up with Jimm-O-RSN as soon as you find it convenient; skip to "Great Balls of Fire" below.

Ivan's Room: The Trouble with Treble

The walls of Ivan's room are covered with strange, glowing paint and a handscrawled manifesto, written in an even stranger dialect, entitled "Skiing Through Nothingness" — evidently a reference to the Old Reckoning

practice of gliding over the surface of frozen water strapped to waxed sticks, though any Troubleshooter who claims knowledge of skiing ought to be executed on general principles.

According to his manifesto, Ivan seeks "aloneness" as the ideal form of existence. The virus has also activated some deep-seated fear of Ivan's that he, himself, might be the thing he most despises — a clone. Ivan feels his clones are scattered and hidden among the Citizenry of Alpha Complex, disguised as other people. In his delusion Ivan believes that his own clones are "just hiding behind masks, man, facades, invading my space, avoiding reality and messing up my head. Like, man, anybody could be me... who can tell? My clones are out there everywhere, man, crawling, walking, oh, man, they gotta go, and, like, NOW!

"Like Bill-Y say, you can run, but, like, you can't hide. Sell it all, give it away, but, like, you're HISTORY! 'Cause I gotta be by myself for a while. Alone. Like to understand what's me... but first all my clones have got to go. Vaporized, man.. first they confess, and, then, like... BLAM. Heh. Far out!"

Mar-Y-ANN's Room: Get Lost, Little Girl

When the PCs get to the "girl-friend's" quarters, there is nobody there; but there is a deep pile of papers full of ravings, broken hypo needles, scribblings, and crude maps of certain sectors of Alpha Complex. These maps are marked with the sites of all the most recent pressure drops, thoughtfully numbered sequentially. The location of the next pressure drop is thereby made painfully obvious. The Computer will of course insist that the PCs be in attendance.

The Computer has gotten an idea. Wouldn't it be swell if one of the mission group acted as "bait" at the site of the projected pressure drop? The idea is made an order, and the PCs are dispatched to the site — proceed to "Great Balls of Fire" below.

Let the desperate volunteers decide who'll be the bait. This should be a classic **PARANOIA** roleplaying interchange. Presuming that there are survivors or clone replacements to carry on, the bait is ordered to stand unarmed in the middle of the corridor with nothing more than a Comcorder to scream "Help!" into. The other PCs are told to go hide themselves around a corner or something.

Slash and Burn: Great Balls of Fire

Ivan and Jimm appear suddenly, roaring up on two hellish two-wheeled machines (think *Easy Rider*, but bristling with rockets and cannons. Heavy duty music is blasting from their sound systems — "...Cloned to be Wi-ih-ih-ild..." They make no attempt to Pressure Drop anyone. In fact, they are armed with laser rifles, and they seem to be more interested in a turkey shoot. Maybe that map was a set-up trap? Hmm?

The Troubleshooters should open fire and engage the enemy. Staging the gunbattle is simple; Ivan and Jimm are zipping around on their motorcycles — moving targets are tough to hit, the equivalent of sprinting and dodging, and -40% to be hit. Of course, their marksmanship is pretty poor, too, but it's just for effect, anyway.

When one of the PCs gets in a lucky shot that

hits either Jimm or Ivan, roll dice and proclaim that the shot missed the rider, but appears to have hit the cycle. The rider goes down in a flashy cycle slide, but the other bike is immediately on the spot for pickup. They abandon the downed bike and roar off down the corridor.

The Computer orders, ''Pursue immediately!'' If they start off on foot, The Computer adds, ''Oh, excuse me, forgive me for doubting the fleetness of foot of loyal Troubleshooters, but perhaps an examination of the wheeled vehicle is in order.''

In fact, the bike is just fine. Anyone with Vehicle Services training understands the basic principles of operation. The PCs may sensibly send one person to tail Jimm and Ivan and report back on position, or all the PCs may gather ''Three Stooges''-style on the one bike. If you like, add some running gun battle effects — exchanges of laser fire over the handle bars, elderly Citizens passing under the wheels of the speeding cycles, terrific crashes caused by the reckless speed and weapons fire of the chasers and chasees. There are all sorts of strange buttons and levers on the bike; the PCs have no idea what they do. It'll be trial and error figuring out what does what. Try to trigger the horn and you may fire a volley of rockets into the commissary. There's no business like show business.

In due order Jimm and Ivan pull up in front of the entrance to a strange old corridor and dash inside.

Crush Grooved: One Pill Makes You Twisted

The canopied door has peeling paint and a faintly-lettered sign that reads: ''PYRAMYD. Appearing nightly — Bill-Y-IDL.'' Ivan and Jimm ran right in; the door was opened for them by a huge person standing outside who looks like something out of *Road Warrior* — black leather tunic, lots of studs, lots of rippling muscle-flesh, scars, and hair-do by Mixmaster and Pittsburg Paints.

When the Troubleshooters try to follow Jimm and Ivan inside, the big guy blocks the door and says, ''Whoa, but, like, are you, err, people, on the guest list? No? Well, you'll have to wait.'' When the PCs try to talk or push their way in, the fellow is huge, immovable, and uncooperative. They're going to have to blow him away — no big deal, since he is unarmed and unarmored.

Once inside, it'll cost the PCs 20 credits each to get inside — unless they want to blow away the ticket girl, too. I mean, it's a matter of principle, isn't it?

Once inside, the PCs find themselves in an unlit, very large room filled with bizarrely-clad male and female Citizens weaving and bobbing to music that is just short of loud enough to explode heads. The walls are painted black, bathed in flashing lights. Some rather suggestive fluorescent decorations glow on the walls. The beat is relentless. The Troubleshooters are way out of their clearance on this one.

Fresh Rhymes: You May Ask Yourself...

There are two possible ways to wrap this one up (referred to below as Ending #1 and Ending #2). You can use whichever ending you prefer,

but we suggest you destroy the PCs if they haven't figured out that Bill-Y is behind all this, and let them blow Ivan and Jimm away if they have.

Regardless of which you choose, the scene inside PYRAMYD is wild. The Troubleshooters should realize two things. One, this is totally beyond their experience. The quiet (ahem) life of your average Alpha Complex clone has not prepared them for the club scene. Describe the women dressed only in body paint, metal studs and sequins; the guys in knickers, knee socks, and yarmulke; the many persons of indeterminate sex in black leather; the pounding rock beat; the shrieks of joy? agony?; the flashing strobes that make everything move in jerks and make you wonder whether you've just spotted Ivan-2 drawing a laser or just another weirdo reaching into his codpiece. The denizens of this place ignore the PCs.

The other thing they shoud realize is *this should not be*. Nothing like this is supposed to exist in Alpha Complex. These people are all traitors!

Ending #1: As soon as they enter, a waitress offers them drinks. They're drugged, of course. If any PC doesn't take a drink, one of the dancers slaps a hypo into him and dances away. Ending #2: There are no drugs.

Either way: The Troubleshooters keep spotting Ivan and Jimm in the crowd, and in short order they realize that Bill-Y is there with them, too. They keep getting lost in the crowd, though, and the Troubleshooters can't get close enough for a grab or a clear shot.

Before the players get too numb, the whole crowd suddenly falls quiet as a curtain rises, revealing a giant video image of a computer screen bearing the flashing message, ''Welcome! Welcome!'' A voice comes from a hidden speaker: ''The band tonight, a couple of Level BLACK rock & rollers (polite laughter from the crowd), Tape Dubbing meets a Door to the Future — from beyond morality... Ivan-2-BAD and Jimm-O-RSN!''

The crowd roars! The band begins to play. Jimm and Ivan begin singing a song entitled ''Mr. Kurtz, He Terminated.'' From the content of the lyrics, astute Troubleshooters will recognize the musical style as Serious Avant Garde Designed to Satirize The Computer's Central Position in the Lives of Alpha Complex Citizens, and as such, profoundly treasonous. (Dull-witted lunks may be prompted by The Computer.)

Ending #1: I Got the Monkey

The drugs take hold. The world dissolves into silver fuzz. The room is full of lemurs. Pink lizards are crawling all over the ceiling. How are you gonna nab Ivan if you can't tell him from a geranium? Better dig the rush while you can, buddy, 'cause it's termination time for you and the whole gang.

Ending #2: It's Only Rock & Roll

Time to open fire. Stage the combat as a turkey shoot, fish-in-a-barrel, any-way-you-shoot-you-hit-something style. The key is that all of these folk are traitors, so discriminating fire is superfluous. It takes five rounds for everyone to clear out of the club and disappear. Therefore each PC gets off five rounds worth of actions after the first shot is fired. Roll each round for each PC's chance for a clear shot at Jimm, Ivan, or Bill — a basic 10% chance to

get a shot at any one target of choice. Award modifiers for clever or entertaining tactics. Then let the PCs start shooting.

They may shoot at one of the three main guys or at random into the crowd. If a shot into the crowd misses, too bad. If someone shoots at one of the three main guys and misses, there is a 50% chance that they'll hit a random victim.

For each random victim, roll 1D100 and refer to the Random Bozo Table (below) to determine who gets hit. If the victim is killed or incapacitated, the shooter gets the point award in the debriefing.

If any PC hits the bartender, everyone in the room becomes enraged and tries to kill the PC (the one who shot the bartender, not any of the other Troubleshooters).

Random Bozo Table	
d100 roll	result
01-40	An INFRARED Bozo — no commendation points
41-60	A RED Bozo — 1/4 commendation point
61-70	An ORANGE Bozo — 1/2 commendation point
71-80	A YELLOW Bozo — one commendation points
81-99	A politically well-connected Citizen — therefore defined as innocent — therefore ten treason points
00	The Bartender

Killing, incapacitating, or otherwise capturing Bill-Y, Ivan, or Jimm-O is worth two commendation points apiece.

At the debriefing have each PC say in 25 words or less why he thinks he deserves to be commended for achieving the assigned mission objectives. Evaluate each speech for veracity, loyalty, and chutzpah. Then total up the commendation points for the body count. If bonuses are in order, how about a few surplus walkman mobile entertainment centers?

Of course, four days later each of the Troubleshooters comes down with a mysterious viral infection. Maybe they'll start a rock band called The Nuclear Waste, or maybe the B.E.A.T.L.E.S. — Bombastically Excruciating Abominations Through Loud, Execrable Sounds.

NOT SO FAST, BUDDY.

CODE 7
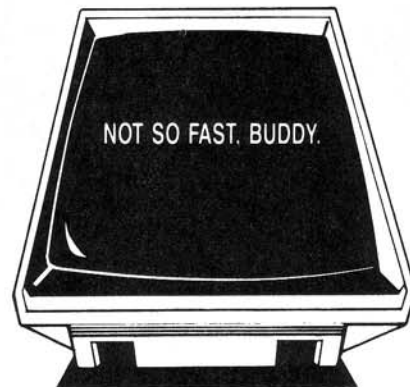
SUBCOMPACT SCENARIOS
FOR THE
HOME HANDYMAN

"Code Seven" is a euphemism popular around Troubleshooter Dispatch Central. It originated with side-bets taken among the dispatchers on how many clones a particular mission would use up before its completion: "Ah, this one's easy — a Two at most." "Naw, it's a Three for sure." Since gambling is illegal, dispatchers devised the official-sounding "Code" prefix to disguise references to this activity.

And a "Code Seven" is a mission that calls for more clones than anybody's got (legally, anyway).

Certain death, in other words.

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An ARD Day's Night

by Allen Varney and Warren Spector

Summary

Troubleshooters dispatched to investigate traitorous manipulations of Alpha Complex's day-night cycle find themselves dancing to disco diurnal rhythms. "I could have danced all night — in fifteen minutes."

Setup

The Troubleshooters are sleeping soundly in their communal barracks in ARD Sector as the adventure begins. They have shared the same quarters "just temporarily, of course," for months, while their high-clearance, high-status luxury private cubicles are rebuilt after the Foaming Cleanser Incident. (I'm sorry. Information about this trifling disaster is unavailable...)

BRRRINNNGGGGG! The "Patriotic Wake-Up Reveille" sounds from every loudspeaker (deedle-deedle-deedle-deedle-ding-dong-ding), and it's another daycycle in The Computer's service. Cordial guardbots roust Citizens from their beds.

Yes, cordial. Hardly at all like SS troops. Sure, they're a bit brisk in manner, and prone to overenthusiasm, perhaps — but really, they just want to help The Computer's loyal servants to full alertness. That's what the built-in air-raid sirens are for.

Into jumpsuits and out to the mess hall for breakfast: some of that good triple-augmentation-processed flavorized pseudolactate fungal residue popularly known as Pleasant Morning Experience. Yum, yum! (PleMorEx may taste like sludge from a well-worn pistol casing, but at least it tastes like first-class sludge.) Wash it down with Lichen Flakes and a hot swallow of what is called Authentic Coffee-Colored Liquid Analogue.

But ten minutes into the meal, the lights dim! The Computer's friendly voice is heard over melodious chimes: Ding-dong, ding-a-dong-ding! **(GM Note:** Establish the melody of these chimes. You'll be repeating it many times during this adventure.)

"And so, trusted Citizens, another busy daycycle draws once again to a close. The Computer congratulates you for your labor in its service. Please return to your sleeping cubicles promptly for a well-deserved nightcycle of rest. Remember, unauthorized violation of curfew is treason. Thank you for your cooperation, and rest well."

Bots hustle bewildered Citizens back to their sleeping cubicles. Anyone who protests gets a treason point and a dose of sleep gas in the face. (Nighty-night for 1D10 hours; if roused prematurely, the victim takes -1 to all attributes for each 2 hours of sleep lost. Effect lasts for the original duration of sleep gas dosage.) Out of the jumpsuits, into the bunks — silence falls — night patrol bots with sensitive heartbeat monitors patrol the rooms, spraying sleep gas on any recalcitrant Citizens who are only pretending sleep.

That's right. All of them.

But fifteen minutes later — lights on. Patriotic Wake-Up Reveille (deedle-deedle-deedle...), guardbots, jumpsuits, breakfast, PleMorEx, yum! And twelve minutes after that — Ding-dong, ding-a-dong-ding! Back to bed, with sleep gas for encouragement, and dreams that are nightmarish even by Alpha Complex standards. Twenty minutes after that — up and at 'em, a new daycycle! Deedle-deedle-deedle...

Briefing

Keep this up forever. Send the PCs into the middle of next week before lunchtime. By this time they ought to have figured out that the daycycle is unusually brief. Have the Troubleshooters summoned to Headquarters for a mission assignment. The briefing has all the conventional elements — simply put, "This is happening, it's treasonous, find out who's doing this at once and execute them."
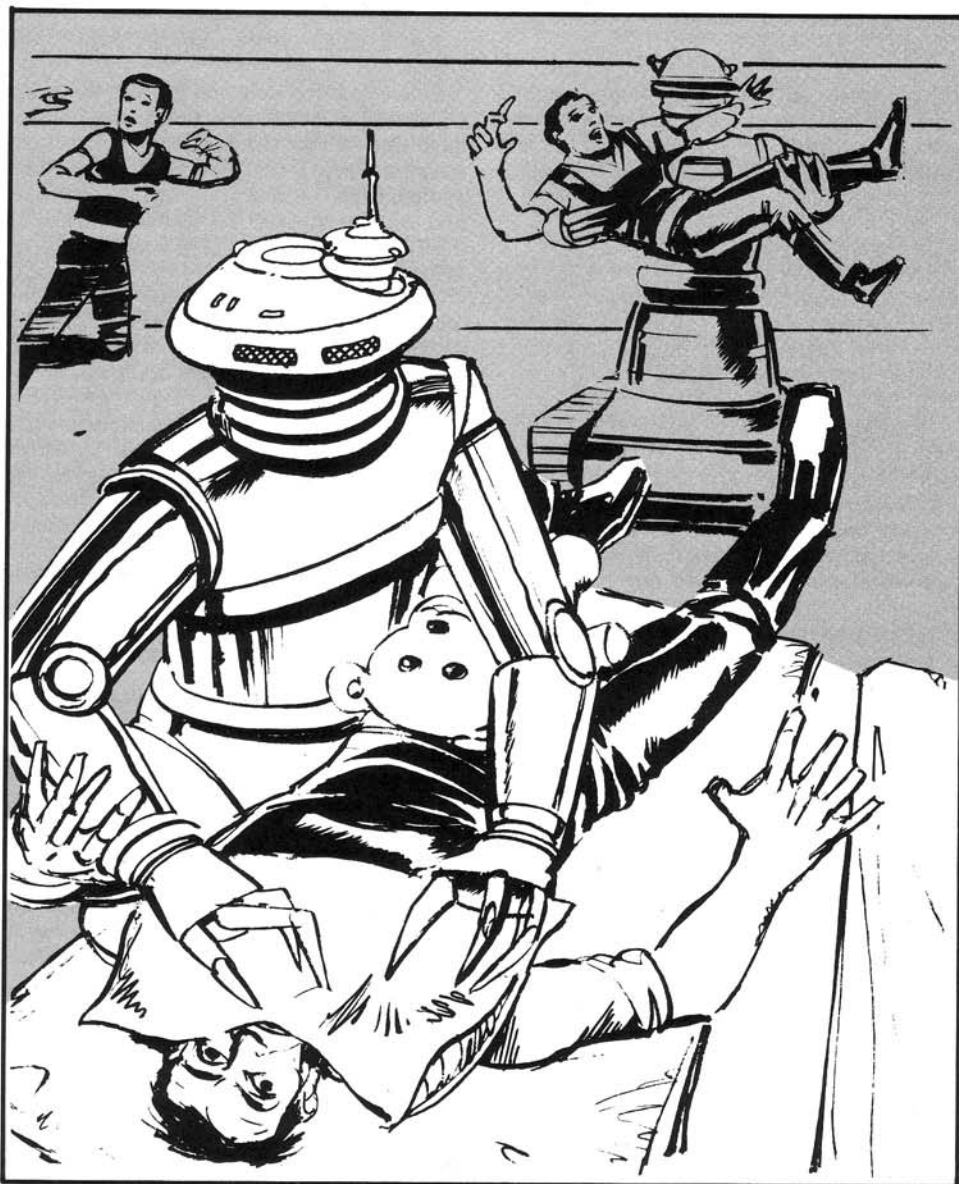
Unfortunately, this simple mission directive is fragmented into installments. At least twice the lights go out, guardbots scurry into Headquarters to escort the Troubleshooters back to bed like good Citizens, and they have to overcome sleep gas hangovers to get back to HQ for the next segment of the briefing.

If (when) cumulative sleep gas reductions reduce a PC's attributes below zero — c'mon, be a sport, let him keep playing. It's not like he's had a chance to do anything yet, and the attributes are no big deal. Just tell the player to act real tired, and at some critical point tell the player to roll percentile dice. Regardless of the result, have the character crash to the floor in a deep doze.

Investigation

The Troubleshooters will notice a peculiar activity on their way to and from HQ. A detail of INFRAREDs is daubing the corridor walls with some kind of clear fluid — cleaning fluid, perhaps?

Questioning the INFRAREDs isn't particularly helpful. They're about as well-informed and cooperative as the talking trees in *The Wizard of Oz*. They were assigned to put spots of this fluid in patterns along the corridor walls. The assignment came from some high-

clearance guy in Technical Services — i.e., the next target of the investigation. Should the chimes sound and the lights dim during the questioning, the PCs notice something else as they're herded back to quarters; the spots of fluid are now glowing faintly in the dimness. The patterns of dots vaguely suggest familiar shapes like food dispensers, monitor screens, and scrubots.

The Explanation

The Sierra Club wanted to have an eclipse. It would be great! To bring the most spectacular of natural wonders to an entire sector — it would more than make up for the unfortunate failure to produce a real live volcano. (See previous reference to the Foaming Cleanser Incident.)

Clubbers in Tech Services put squads of IN-FRAREDs on "Cleaning duty" — putting spots of glow-in-the-dark chemicals in patterns. These would recreate the glorious "stars" and "constellations" the club members were always hearing about.

High clearance Clubbers in Power Services arranged for the day-night cycle to be reprogrammed. It was supposed to be a one-shot deal — but hasty sabotage, combined with bad communications and gargantuan ineptitude, made the programming permanent. Permanent, that is, until your fearless Troubleshooters move in to fix things.

The trail of clues can be short or winding, clear or obscure, deadly or — well, deadly. Tech Services traitors will be expecting investigation, so they'll have a deathtrap or two prepared. Think about the garbage compactor in *Star Wars*.

Clubbers in Power Services also expect trouble from Troubleshooters. These guys are high clearance, so they'll just order the Troubleshooters into deathtraps. And they don't have to rely on hackneyed old electrocution devices, either. Think about two-ton cable drums rolling all over your scenario, or big vats of battery acid. Brrr.

Actually, you've already established that anyone can fall asleep at any time, due to gas effects. Even a mess hall or a confession booth can become a deathtrap. Having the PCs operate heavy machinery, drive vehicles, or juggle machetes when they're drowsy is a fairly low-key way of ruining their day.

Frustration and Anguish

Meanwhile, the lights are turning on and off every ten or twenty minutes. To dramatize this, get an ordinary kitchen timer and position it so no one, including yourself, can see it — but everyone can hear it ticking away. Set the interval of day and night cycle as you wish. Then, when the timer goes "ding", stop whatever the players are doing and hustle everyone off to bed. Bring them back to consciousness in their bunks and reset the timer for another daycycle. Real-time frustration! Great, huh?

To complicate your plot, throw in an attempt by another secret society to exploit the darkness. The Illuminati have (of course) infiltrated the Sierra Club. When the plot became known, they ordered their agents to Do Something about the mess.

PURGE? Death Leopards? Frankenstein Destroyers? Some hitherto unknown organization, dedicated to dismantling all bots and reassembling them into one ultimate bot?

Or just toss false leads around to distract and bewilder the players. In fact, that's probably just what the Sierra Club would do to draw attention away from themselves. Scrawl crude secret society symbols with obscure messages on the corridor walls, bots, slumbering Troubleshooters, and so on. And stick the incriminating empty cans in the hands of the still-slumbering servants of The Computer. Whee! What a lovely surprise!

The Wind Up

After seven or eight clones are out of the way, you'll want to bring your story line to a fitting climax. Stitching this onto the main narrative is easy. Just have your Troubleshooters chase the Sierra Club/other-secret-society culprits into the scene of your big showdown.

The Food Vats are always a good arena. An abandoned warehouse; a bowling ball factory; a Happy Homecoming Automated Euthanasia Center; Power Services' Primary Generating Facility — your choice will determine the degree of catastrophe you will visit on the Complex.

We don't know — call us crazy — but we personally would have this adventure end with the complete wiping of The Computer's entire memory bank. Really. The whole schmeer, right down to the last bubble card and floppy disk. Total system crash.

Just a couple of rambunctious guys, we guess.

Here's how to orchestrate this little wingding. The chase after the baddies leads to the huge Central Processing Core in the deepest reaches of Alpha Complex. Forbidding security measures — pure white walls — combats and Vultures stacked like cordwood. (How do the Troubleshooters get past these formidable obstacles? Maybe the day-night cycle length is down to a couple of seconds at this point, and the guard shifts are so bungled up trying to change every time the lights dim, arguing and complaining, that they don't notice the PCs.)

Then everyone runs into this incredibly colossally hugely gigantic cylindrical chamber where memory cores tower like sequoias, like Saturn rockets. The ceiling is lost in clouds of coolant that hiss from every relief valve. Dozens of High Programmers walk along catwalks looking at readouts. The walls are jammed with gauges, dials, and rigamarole. Maintenance bots — shiny, functional, high-quality bots — scurry about in close order drill. It's James Bond time. Got it?

The voice of The Computer is heard everywhere, spouting technical directions incomprehensible to mere Troubleshooters. "Reduce coolant ratio Twelve Core, mark oh two niner, new readout one four mark eight seven seven. Faulty access head Sector Five, subsector three six six. Rescue data and replace." *Et cetera.*

Establish the voice, because when you blow up these memory cores you have a terrific opportunity to swipe from *2001: A Space Odyssey.* Remember Keir Dullea floating in that red room while HAL 9000 said, "I can see you're really upset about this, Dave"? And punching those cartridges out of the wall while Hal regressed to computerized infancy?

Well, guess what. When stray shots (or agents from Murphy's Law Service) hit those memory cores, The Computer's voice slurs a bit. "Warrrninnng, warrrninnng!" Another stray

shot, and now the jets of coolant hiss a little more loudly, while Programmers run around in panic and The Computer stutters, missing a word now and then. "Danger! dannnn... hm-mmmmmmm-inate intruders immmmmm mm-mmm — ommmmmm — "

A Vulture lets loose with a cone rifle — misses — and hits the base of a core — it totters, and now The Computer is reciting flybot fuel costs and reservoir maintenance specifications, a different spiel from each speaker. The white-robed Programmers are running around like headless chickens.

More shots. More hits. A tower topples against another, and now The Computer says things like "Pawn to king four" and "From the magic cavern you can go north or west." It's a nice touch to mention to your players the effects of each hit on a core — "Whoops, there went the automatic scoring in the bowling alleys in RPM Sector," or "That hit means that the algae cakes at dinner will probably be purple." As the devastation escalates, say things like, "Oh, well, no more life support in that sector," and "All those autocars with no guidance signals — oh, my... "

From this point it's a mere exercise to regress The Computer to "Mary Had A Little Lamb" and down to its component transistors. All the lights go off. It suddenly feels cold (or hot, as you wish) and stuffy. Surviving Programmers are shrieking hysterically. Surviving Troubleshooters (if any) should realize that their friend The Computer has died, shuffled off this mortal coil, gone to Relay Heaven, failed its saving roll, and left its progeny in deep trouble.

Sit back and let them do whatever they want, now that their whole reason for existence is gone. Maybe they'll make friends. Some of them may say, "Hey, we're going to suffocate down here, aren't we?" while others say, "Hurrah, we're free at last! Now we can go play *Car Wars!*"

Let this interval last as long as your players are having fun roleplaying their responses to this event. The longer it goes on, the freer they'll feel. Make them think you might have decided to turn this into a post-holocaust RPG where they're charged with rebuilding civilization.

Then — wherever they are in the Complex — a little red light goes on in an obscure panel, or they hear a voice — a very familiar voice. "Activate backup systems."

That's right, The Computer is coming back on line! You can do a slow fadeout here, but this is an interesting situation. You could turn it into a whole new adventure.

In fact, check out "Reboot Camp," the other Code Seven adventure we've written for this book. Slick, huh?

WE'RE STILL PALS, AREN'T WE? HUH?

by Allen Varney and Warren Spector

We won't ask how you managed to wipe The Computer's memory banks. Gamemasters must have their little secrets. All that counts is that you did it: you erased every maintenance program, every surveillance routine, each bit and byte and scintilla of artificial intelligence in The Computer's sprawling circuitry. It's vacant. Nada. History. *Exeunt omnes* with a flourish.

Your Troubleshooters — the source of the trouble now persuasively shot — may be stunned, exhilarated, frightened, or uncertain when confronted with this idea.

The Computer — gone. Alpha Complex — free to pursue its own destiny. Treason, security clearances, secret societies, paranoia — obsolete. The dawning of a new age.

Probably your cannier players don't believe for a minute that The Computer is really gone. They're sure you wouldn't buy this superlative supplement and then go and destroy the campaign.

They're right, of course. But kill their characters if they start to get smug about it.

On-Line

In fact, The Computer has a complete duplicate operating system deep in the earth beneath Alpha Complex. Destruction of its primary memory merely activates the extensive triple-redundant back-up system. Operation continues with minimal interruption. The changeover is supposed to be foolproof.

So was the invasion of the Bay of Pigs. In dealing with The Computer's restoration as reigning monarch of Alpha Complex, you have several options. Here are a few of the more obvious approaches:

1. The reboot is uneventful. Of course, you'll want to have a little fun at your players' expense before turning the lights back on: "Gosh, you're used to power outages, but you've never seen it THIS dark. CRASH. Gee, listen to all the people shouting and running into things! CoreMem only knows what awful, treasonous activities are going on under cover of darkness. Hadn't you better get hustling and suppress all that illicit activity? And say, did I mention how stuffy it's getting in here?"

Once you've whipped your players into a frenzy of futile activity, turn the lights back on and let things get back to (heh, heh) normal. Everything is as before.

(Simple, huh? Too simple, of course. Use this option as a punchline wrap-up for a wipe-The-Computer-memory adventure. If you want something a little more rococo, read on.)

2. Citizens are frustrated at being denied the freedom they enjoyed so briefly. They rebel and confront The Computer's forces while it's still vulnerable. Pockets of resistance gather around the secret societies. Service groups vie with one another for control of key installations. Shifting relations among the various power blocs keep the boundaries uncertain, the alliances unpredictable. The players choose sides and fight.

This sounds pretty interesting, actually, but of course you're not playing *PARANOIA* anymore. Maybe *Striker* or *Morrow Project*

rules will prove useful. Too bad you wasted all your money on this nifty *PARANOIA* supplement.

3. The Computer comes back to power, but it's got, like, a different personality, you know? It's as fast and shallow as a valley girl, or soulfully compassionate like Dr. Joyce Brothers, or overprotective like your grandma. Maybe it talks solely of semiotic interpretations of Old Reckoning literature, or it likes electric trains. ("Troubleshooters! Fetch me an HO scale Southern Pacific flatcar, pronto! Thanks for your cooperation, okay? Toot-toot!") This can be tolerably humorous, but, again, *PARANOIA* it's not.

4. Boy, are you gonna like this. The Computer comes back up, paranoid as usual, and it doesn't remember a-ny-thing. Zilch. "You! Identify yourself! Friend or traitor? I'm going to give you a test, and don't think for a second that I don't have the answers. Now: who am I? Where am I? What am I supposed to be doing here? What are you doing here? Haven't we met before?"

The Computer is *tabula rasa* on everything. If a player weaves a plausible tale ("I'm an ambassador from Beta Complex, your trusted ally in the fight against Commies. I have diplomatic immunity"), The Computer might buy it. Oratory, Con, Fast Talk, and Spurious Logic skill are a big help here.

Note some important points. Calm amid disaster and widespread human misery, The Computer completely abandons its customary politeness when it feels itself even slightly out of control. Also, it's extraordinarily suspicious, but at the same time willing to latch on to any absurd story as the truth — provided the story plays to The Computer's own assumptions. ("Why, friend Computer, I'm your most trusted VIOLET clearance IntSec agent. I'm only in this RED jumpsuit because I've been documenting treason among these Troubleshooters. And believe me, you've got a lot to worry about.") The Computer will go to outlandish lengths to justify such a believable lie, circumventing objections and rationalizing contradictions as long as possible — unless the speaker is finally discredited.

Furthermore, once The Computer has found a damnfool story to hang a situation on, everybody who's smart will play along with the story unless they have very solid evidence in refutation. And even then it's usually a good idea not to swim against the current. This includes all NPCs, who'll swear up to their ears and down to their toenails that this lowly RED technician is a VIOLET-level IntSec operative. Or that all Troubleshooters have been identified as traitors. Or that INFRAREDS are really High Programmers. PCs who don't go with the consensus are early casualties... unless they introduce an even more compelling damnfool story of their own.

If you're the kind of *PARANOIA* GM we think you are, you've probably already figured out that the players aren't the only ones in Alpha Complex out to kick their friend The Computer while it's down. Consider that there are High

Programmers who would give their eyeteeth *and* their eyes to reprogram The Computer in their own images.

The players, of course, are not privy to the high-level machinations of the ULTRA-VIOLETS. But the infighting is fierce. Each programmer is trying to convince The Computer that his programs are the programs of choice, that his orders are the orders to follow, that his instructions will lead Alpha Complex to salvation.

Perhaps one High Programmer is out to kill the others. (Heck, all High Programmers are out to kill the others.) Perhaps one is eager to throw open the doors of Alpha Complex to let the sun shine in. Perhaps one hopes to welcome the Commies with open arms. Some other poor sap of a High Programmer just "vants to be alone." Assuredly you can devise other goals for other highly-placed, selfless (you bet, uh huh) Citizens.

Ideally, you'll end up with The Computer — which is, after all, everywhere — trying to pay attention to your lowly Troubleshooters, every other Troubleshooter in Alpha Complex, and every High Programmer — all at once. Confusing? Disconcerting? Stressful?

Poor little Computer. Likely to go a little bozo, eh?

The upshot of these conflicting, competing messages during The Computer's "vulnerable" period is a whole series of flustered questions, contradictory statements, unusual orders, and even (gasp) impossible missions, interspersed with inexplicable memory gaps and lapses of amnesia.

(Kinda hard to distinguish this state of affairs from normal Alpha Complex life, huh? Has it occurred to you that maybe ALL our great *PARANOIA* adventures are set in an interregnum following a colossal system crash? Gee, wonder what would happen if the *bona fide,* doctrinally pure, culturally coherent back-up programs were to come on line? Disneyland? Gulag Archipelago? Rock & Roll High School? We leave this as an exercise for the apt pupil.)

Maybe The Computer sends each individual Troubleshooter on a different insane scavenger hunt for the ideal Cuisinart or C-sharp tuning fork. Make sure this mission sends the suckers on the obligatory tour of the sidereal universe. Maybe you even let the poor wretches find what they're looking for. If and when they return, The Computer is back to its old paranoid self and fines them for possession of unauthorized tuning forks. The campaign resumes.

5. Ontogeny recapitulating phylogeny and all that, maybe The Computer goes through all these side-interests in rapid sequence before it comes back to what passes for a stable configuration. Everything at once, in rapid-fire sequence, with only token gestures at establishing coherence and plausibility.

Now *that* is *PARANOIA!*

TOUGH.

by Greg Costikyan

GM Background

Once upon a time there was a basically incompetent INFRARED worker in HPD & Mind Control. He made a booboo. He filled the paint receptacles of a maintenancebot with white paint when his Job Control Form clearly specified black paint. Unfortunately, his supervisor did not catch the error until after the maintenancebot had left the hangar to perform its job. The INFRARED worker was executed for incompetence, but the error was never recorded in Computer records.

The bot went off to do its job. Its job was to repaint a section of INFRARED corridor in OID sector. Since its paint receptacles contained white paint, he painted the walls white, not realizing the error.

As you may recall, each corridor and room in Alpha Complex is painted with a security clearance color. It is treason to enter an area of higher security clearance than your own.

The formerly-INFRARED corridor is now ULTRAVIOLET.

This is very unfortunate, because the corridor connects the barracks section of OID sector with the sector's work area. No one who lives in OID sector can get to work.

Several people have reported this problem to The Computer. However, The Computer's records clearly show that the corridor has always been black, and, indeed, has recently been repainted black by a maintenancebot. Clearly, anyone who says otherwise is a traitor.

Indeed, so many people have reported that the corridor is white, when utterly reliable Computer records indicate otherwise, that a Communist conspiracy of truly monstrous size must exist. Anyone who reports that the corridor is white must be terminated. Anyone who presents irrefutable evidence that the corridor is white has manufactured the evidence, and must be terminated.

Furthermore, for unexplained reasons, OID sector shows a 100% work absentee rate. The usual solution — random executions among the INFRARED laborers — has failed to rectify the situation.

The Computer has assigned one of it most trusted servants, Kosmic-V-OID, to root out these traitors and solve the problem.

Kosmic-V-OID has figured out that explaining the problem to The Computer is a quick way to the nearest termination center. What's needed is to repaint the damn corridor black and have done with it.

Unfortunately, in Alpha Complex you can't just drop down to the corner hardware store for a can of black paint. Black paint is highly dangerous stuff. Why, someone could paint, say, an ULTRAVIOLET corridor black, thereby giving all sorts of low clearance schmucks access to The Computer's most precious secrets.

Kosmic-V has a plan he thinks is pretty smart. Obviously, he can't just activate a group of Troubleshooters for a mission to paint the corridor black, since The Computer would learn of this and execute him. Instead, he'll activate a bunch of Troubleshooters for "A Mission To the Outdoors", privately tell them to paint the corridor black, and dump them in OID sector.

Mission Briefing

Read this aloud:

********** MISSION ALERT **********

:GREETINGS, CITIZEN. THIS IS THE COMPUTER. YOU ARE ORDERED TO BRIEFING ROOM AB IN SECTOR OID. THERE, YOU WILL BE BRIEFED FOR YOUR NEXT MISSION. THIS MISSION WILL NOT BE DANGEROUS. AT ALL. YOU WILL ENJOY IT. HAPPINESS IS MANDATORY. THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION.

****

When the player characters get to the Briefing Room, they discover that it is a veritable vault, with a door consisting of two feet of solid steel. Kosmic-V-OID is sitting at a desk in the room. After they enter, he touches a control and the door shuts.

When they're seated, he briefs them, telling them that a corridor in OID has been painted white by mistake, and their job is to rectify the situation. They can ask questions, but he'll be notably unhelpful, telling them that resourceful Troubleshooters such as themselves ought to be able to solve such a trivial problem.

This room is *not* being monitored by The Computer at the moment, because of some clever (and treasonous) programming by Kosmic-V.

During the briefing, the player characters hear shouts and pounding from outside the door. If asked about it, Kosmic-V will say, "I'll tell you later." Actually, this is Urly-B, who knows he is supposed to give a briefing and has arrived to find the door locked.

When he's finished, Kosmic-V touches a control on his desk. Instantly, a steel slab drops from the ceiling in front of his desk, shortening the room by about two feet. The characters are now looking at a blank wall. Then, the door opens, and Urly-B-OID enters to give his briefing.

Urly-B has no idea that his boss, Kosmic-V, just briefed the player characters. He just knows that he's supposed to brief them about their mission to The Outdoors.

If asked why his briefing is totally different from the one the characters' just received, he

SAY WHAT?

will want to know what the questioner is talking about. If the player character sticks to his story about an earlier briefing, Urly-B will have him executed as a traitor.

If told about Kosmic-V, Urly-B will tell the characters that Kosmic-V is on a special mission to RGB sector. If pressed, he will request Kosmic-V's current position from a Computer terminal, and be told that Kosmic-V is indeed in RGB sector. (More treasonous programming by Kosmic-V.)

And anyone who says Kosmic-V was here a few minutes ago is clearly a traitor.

Urly-B tells the characters:

"...you will be taken to a door into the Outside. Using a device you will be assigned at R&D, you will locate a crashed Vulture Model 616. In the cargo bay of the Vulture, you will find three six-foot long, one-foot INDIGO cylinders. *Under no circumstance are you to open or damage these cylinders.* You are to return the cylinders to Alpha Complex.

"Now, the Outdoors is in many respects quite bizarre, very different from our own beloved Alpha Complex. Outdoors, the floor is white and the ceiling is blue, but you shouldn't worry about security clearances. That's just the way things are."

If the players ask questions, Urly-B will be voluble and helpful. Feel free to make up whatever details you need to make your players buy this story. Kosmic-V has given Urly-B a completely detailed and plausible cover story.

Of course, Urly-B can only tell what he knows — that is, what Kosmic-V has told him. If you run out of ideas, have Urly-B start demanding security clearances. (He'd rather do that than admit ignorance.)

If anyone contacts The Computer about the mission, it will confirm that the characters are to go Outdoors. If anyone mentions a white corridor, he will be executed.

R&D

At R&D, the players meet only one person: Raven-B-OID. The labs are empty — "We've been having some problems with Transport" — except for her.

No fancy gimmicks, this time. When the player characters ask about the device for locating the crashed Vulture, they are issued the following:

1 standard-issue Brunton compass
1 6-man tent
canteens
mess kits
propane stove
heavy winter clothing
snow shoes
snow goggles
a manual entitled *Treating Frostbite*
propane lighters
electric socks (these will malfunction, giving their wearer an electric shock, whenever you need something to enliven the festivities)
chapstick

In addition, give the players virtually any weapon they desire. They'll be useless anyway.

When questioned about the special device they were supposed to pick up, Raven-B says, "It must be in that stuff somewhere."

If anyone is stupid enough to ask for paint, Raven-B responds, "Paint? What in The Computer's name do you want paint for?" If someone insists, have him executed.

The Corridor

The moment the players are finished at R&D, a group of GREEN clearance troopers in battle armor shows up, surrounds them, and force-marches them — "Hup! Hup! Hup! Get moving there!" — to Corridor CX, OID sector. The leader of the troopers announces "Here you are! So long and good luck!" then the whole bunch of them turn and start force-marching back: "Hup! Hup! Hup!" If any of the players tries to ask questions or stop them, there are three possible answers:

"Sorry, buddy! Got a schedule to keep! Hup! Hup!" and

"Beats the crap outa me, buddy! All I know is, you're going to Corridor CX, OID sector! Hup! Hup!" and

"A wise guy, huh?" (In this case, the player character gets a nightstick in the liver.) "Keep moving! Hup! Hup!"

The corridor is ten feet across, seven feet high, and seventy-five feet long. It is totally featureless. It is also white. No one comes up or down it. (Are you kidding? It's Security Clearance ULTRAVIOLET!)

The player characters are standing in a T intersection with an INFRARED corridor. There is occasional traffic on the INFRARED corridor, usually scrubots.

The characters are beginning to sweat in their heavy winter clothing. So what do they do?

Report to The Computer that an INFRARED corridor has been improperly painted white. The Computer requests that the person who is making the report identify himself. He then asks those nearby (the other player characters) to confirm the identification. Then, the characters hear a voice reverberating from every speaker in the Complex: "[Name] is a traitor! Terminate on sight!"

Report that Kosmic-V-OID is a traitor who told the party to repaint Corridor CX black. Kosmic-V is a trusted servant of The Computer. Troubleshooters are not sent on missions to

paint corridors; maintenancebots paint corridors. Also, The Computer knows there is a Communist conspiracy to make it believe that Corridor CX is white. The person making this report is a traitor who deserves immediate execution. If the other player characters won't execute him, another bunch of GREEN troopers will show up who will.

Request black paint. "What is your security clearance, please? I'm sorry, the substance you requested is not available at this time." If the requester insists, he will receive a lecture on why black paint is classified — "A traitor might use it to paint an ULTRAVIOLET corridor black, thereby permitting access to The Computer's most precious secrets."

Insist to The Computer that something has gone wrong, and the party has not been taken Outdoors as the mission briefing indicated. The Computer will demand to know why the reporter is not at Outside Access Door 74-Q-stroke-17. If he is not fast on his feet, he will be executed for not reporting to the Access Door as ordered. Otherwise, the GREEN troopers will be executed for taking the players to the wrong place. In this case, a new lot of GREEN troopers ("Hup! Hup!") will show up, take the characters on a mile-long jog around OID sector, and bring them back to Corridor CX, leaving them panting, sweaty, and extremely hot in their winter clothing.

Anyone who tries to report the problem again will be branded a traitor over the Complex PA system. The Computer's records show that the characters have been taken to Outside Access Door 74-Q-stroke-17 not once, but twice. Anyone who claims different is obviously a traitor. (More clever programming by Kosmic-V makes the orders to the GREEN troopers change during transmission from The Computer to GREEN trooper headquarters.)

Kill one of the player characters (or a random passer-by), claim he was a traitor who painted the corridor white, and request a maintenancebot to repaint it. Good *Paranoid* thinking, but it won't wash. A Communist conspiracy of truly monstrous proportions, remember? The character making the report is a traitor not only because he reports the corridor is white, but also because he murdered a loyal Citizen as part of his plan to deceive The Computer.

So, is there a solution? Yes. It's quite simple, actually. Dirty up the corridor. Say, start a fire with the heavy winter clothing and the propane lighters — or lob a few grenades down the corridor. Then, report to The Computer that Corridor CX has become dirty, and requires repainting. In order to test the loyalty of the person making the request, and because it knows about the Communist conspiracy and Corridor CX, The Computer will ask the person making the report "What color is Corridor CX, citizen?" The correct response is "Black, friend Computer!" The Computer will dispatch a maintenancebot — with black paint — at once.

Debriefing

A bunch of GREEN troopers show up to take the characters back to Briefing Room AB. Kosmic-V is waiting for them. They enter, the door swings shut. Kosmic-V congratulates them, and announces that each of them is promoted a security clearance level. He gives each of the characters a set of new coveralls of the characters' new level — lightweight, summer coveralls, comfortable in Alpha Complex's controlled climate. Let the players bask in your praise for a moment.

Then Kosmic-V-OID punches a control on his desk; the steel wall slams down.

The door opens and Urly-B enters. He solemnly indicts the player characters with a variety of crimes, among which is cited the failure to retrieve the six-foot long and one-foot diameter INDIGO cylinders, and the wearing of coveralls not appropriate to their security clearances. An immediate execution is in order.

(Alternative ending for nice GMs: When Kosmic-V punches the control, the door opens and in walks Urly-B. Kosmic-V indicts Urly-B for failure to acquire the INDIGO cylinders, then has the player characters execute him for treasonously poor leadership. Don't forget to assign commendation points for executing a BLUE-clearance traitor.)

Interior decorating is a serious offense.

CODE 7 The Second Coming
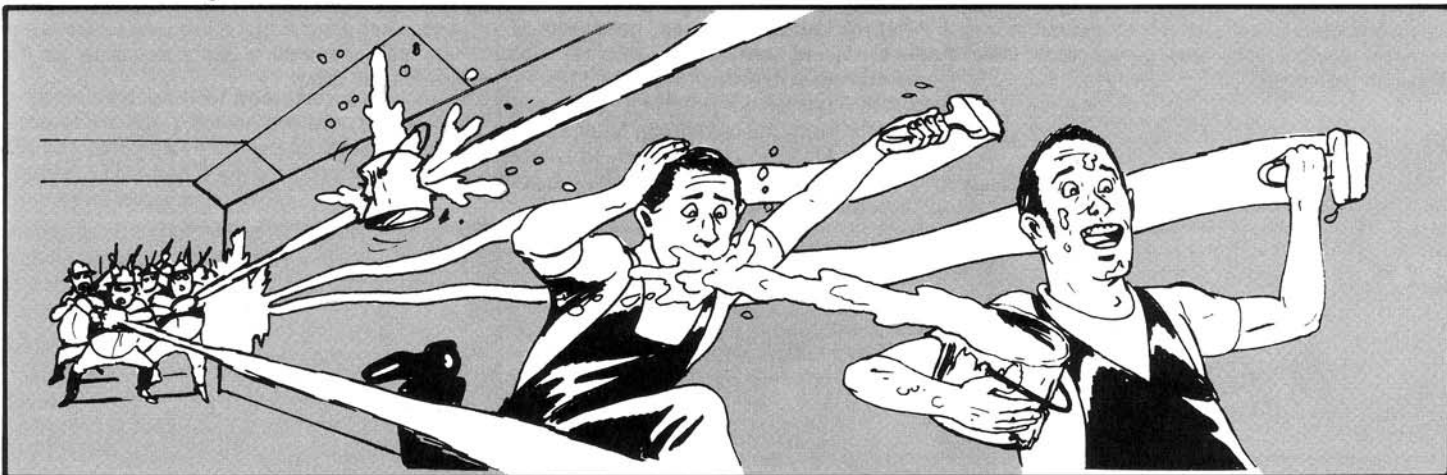
by John M. Ford

Once upon a time, in a faraway Alpha Complex, unto a gleaming vat was born a mutant with the Machine Empathy power. And, lo, had he this power to a truly absurd degree. And how.

One of that complex's High Programmers was also the secret spiritual advisor to a chapter of the First Church of Christ Computer-Programmer. In this young mutant the High Programmer glimpsed a crack at the really big time.

Abducted by an elite squad of Troubleshooters, the mutant was delivered unto the High Programmer, and, yea, verily, was the mutant's brain most thoroughly scrubbed. Then, upon this young mutant was imposed an artificial personality — that of The Cybernetic Messiah, The Computer's best beloved clone, sent to lead His children to that big storage peripheral in the sky. The Programmer (or, as he called himself in this context, The Maker) equipped his protege with followers — a set of Disciples charismatically enlisted from the FCCC-P chapter, and an Angel (a gleaming duralloy jackobot with burnished aluminum wings).

The Maker looked upon his works, and they were good. The Maker then came unto the Messiah, and spoke to him, saying, "You must go among men... well, clones... unknown, and despised, doing the work of the Maker."

The Messiah nodded. He understood.

The Maker-Programmer then said, "Now I take leave of you. I have much else to do, and my journey is long."

The Messiah beamed at the prospect of this, his first Good Work. He beckoned unto his Angel that it might ease the Maker's journey. At the Messiah's command, the Angel laid upon the Maker-Programmer a blessing. Quite a send-off, in fact.

The Messiah knew, of course, that it was only the Maker's outward form that now lay a smouldering heap on the floor. The Maker's spirit was in Heaven... ehr, Master Control... and would soon contact Him with further instructions for doing His will on Earth.

But contact was not forthcoming. The Messiah was troubled in spirit. Had He misinterpreted some sign? He wandered the complex of his birth, his Machine Empathy mutation making him virtually invisible to the agents of The Computer. Even relatively stupid monitor cameras would glance the other way when the Messiah walked by.


```
10   PRINT "Do you accept Jesus Christ
     as your personal lord and saviour";
20   INPUT A$
30   IF A$ = "Yes" THEN GOTO 70
40   FOR I = 1 to 2 STEP 0
50   PRINT "Then you shall burn in Hell
     for all eternity."
60   NEXT I
70   FOR I = 1 TO 2 STEP 0
80   PRINT "Then sing Hallelujah,
     brother!"
90   NEXT I
100  END
```

In time, the paths of the Messiah, his disciples, and the Angel did lead out of his complex. He found himself on the surface of post-Whoops Earth, and he set out with new resolve to discover his heaven, his Maker.

What he found, of course, guided by His Angel's internal sensors, was another Alpha Complex. And in it, he found another High Programmer. A quick study, the High Programmer astutely reckoned the opportunity for power and control the Messiah represented. But for an unfortunate turn of phrase — "I leave you now, my son, but my heart stays with you."

The Messiah's still got it, of course — in a plastic bag. The Messiah's caravan, a couple of worn-out (the First Church Etc. phrase is "out-of-warranty") Disciples supplemented by local FCCC-P fanatics, moved on...

To another Alpha Complex, and another High Programmer with an eye for the main chance. The Angel got him, too. In fact, the Angel terminated a total of four would-be Makers. A fifth made an ill-advised reference to "communion" and was devoutly devoured by the Disciples.

And so the search continued...

A convenient way to have your Troubleshooters encounter this version of Brother Love's Traveling Salvation Show is to put them on the case of a murdered High Programmer. Start out with a version of your favorite detective cliche:

"We were working the daycycle watch out of Termination Without Proper Documents. My block code's FDY. I carry a laser."

"The fat bot called and told us there was one stiff clone down on the corner of Diagonal 6 and West Mercaptan. We strapped on our shooters and went down there. We didn't stop for our hats. Troubleshooters aren't issued hats."

"The game's afoot, Watson-O!"

...and so forth. Of course, this isn't going to be a detective story in the usual sense. First, there isn't much of a body to look over.

There will be clues and informers and so forth, enough to fit the detective story you've chosen to imitate, but, predictably, they won't lead much of anywhere. Ultimately the Troubleshooters will stumble upon the Second Coming.

They probably won't be able to do much with Him when they find Him. Bots all look the other way as He passes, the Angel and the Disciples will probably consume a few clones along the way, and The Computer will unaccountably display no interest or awareness in Him when the Troubleshooters finally corner him. If they do manage to capture or co-opt Him, he would be worth a lot to FCCC-P, Free Enterprise, or any of the anti-technology secret societies.

Or the Troubleshooters may simply get to watch Him wandering off into the Outside's setting sun, continuing his pilgrimage as the credits roll down.

by John M. Ford

"Welcome, loyal and indefatigable servants of The Computer! I bring you glad tidings of a mission into the Alpha Complex Thixotropic End-Phase Product Transport (i.e., sewer) system. You are cordially ordered to accept this assignment. You will provide technical support for Citizen Rote-O-RTR, a distinguished T.E.P.P.T. Engineer. Absolutely nothing dangerous or unusual will be encountered on this mission. We solemnly promise. We guarantee. We state without equivocation. You can rely on us. No problem, right?''

Of course, such fulsome promises from briefing officers can only increase the Troubleshooters' certainty that something horrible will happen to them.

In this they are one-hundred-percent right. The only question is, *what* something horrible?

Option One

There is actually a horrible icky monster down there in the pipes. You, friend Gamemaster, can probably imagine dozens of incredible monstrosities without working up a sweat, but here are a few modest suggestions:

• A gigantic blind albino alligator (mission code name — The Manhattan Project).

• A berserk sewer maintenance robot that identifies our heroes as drain stoppages, trying to clean them out with pressurized water jets, plumbing augers, and pipe-welding arcs. There are two versions of this device: the Snake, which is one big machine that roams the pipes (rather like a certain memorable monster in a mining-oriented episode of *Star Trek®*), or the Mongoose, a bunch of little schnauzer-sized bots under the control of an immobile brain unit, which must be located and destroyed. (This option is not recommended if your campaign is already replete with bonkers bots. However, since all *PARANOIA* adventures have scads of bozo bots, go ahead. Enjoy.)

• The ever-popular huge amorphous blob that dissolves living tissue into more blob. (Remember: *PARANOIA* has a light, humorous tone, occasionally ascending to the dramatic aspirations of very cheesy science fiction flicks with profoundly modest production values.) Make it a *nice* sort of blob, one that earnestly converses and argues with victims imprisoned in its massive, corrosive bulk. "Say, stop wiggling! If you're well-behaved, I'll let you inhabit one of my pseudopods.''

• Something left over from the tunnel adventures in the **The Yellow Clearance Black Box Blues,** available from your friendly game retailer. (This has been an unashamed plug from your favorite author.)

• A horde of tiny bitty blind albino alligators with mutant powers and incredible intellects who are in constant communication with higher beings from another galaxy.

Option Two

There is nothing in the sewers (except, of course, lovely muck). This is actually a mission designed to result in the termination of Rote-O-RTR, who has used his access to the sewer system to acquire incriminating information on the activities of several people of exalted station. The blackmail file consists mostly of illegal trash — stolen reports of treasonable activity, Old Reckoning artifacts such as Twinkie wrappers, prohibited substances hastily discarded during IntSec raids, and so forth.

Obviously, anyone with such potentially injurious information cannot simply be ordered to report for termination; a few choice words, and selected persons of exalted station are in very unpleasant circumstances. Equally obviously (at least, if you think like an Alpha Complex Citizen), the Troubleshooters assigned to the hit can't be told that the target possesses valuable contraband. In the first place, the guilty parties don't want the existence of such contraband known, and in the very close second place, such knowledge might tempt the Troubleshooters to grab the goodies for themselves.

Therefore, no one will come right out and tell the Troubleshooters that they're supposed to kill Rote-O-RTR. The guilty upper-clearances are hoping that the mayhem and high body counts that tend to follow Troubleshooters will take Rote-O down the drain with them.

Rote-O is probably smart enough to figure out that the honor guard of heavily armed Troubleshooters is intended to close out his accounts at the clone bank. Rote-O will sensibly devise numerous schemes to make them all disappear and then blame the tragedy on giant blind albino alligators.

Or maybe Rote-O isn't purposefully accumulating a blackmail file. Perhaps he's just a junk aficionado. And he and the Troubleshooters come across all sorts of interesting junk. Discarded luxuries of High Programmers. Out-of-date but marvelously detailed operations manuals for high clearance computer security systems. The stuff R&D thought was *too* dangerous to keep around the labs. Then all the wonderful treason trials when Rote-O informs on everyone. Whee.

Option Three

The informal-but-clearly-implied assassination is complicated by the arrival of a fearsome monster. Or scratch the assassination business. Rote-O is just a good old-fashioned psychopath planning to bump off the Troubleshooters — and suddenly everyone is threatened by a fearsome monster.

Option Three-and-a-Half

Maybe it isn't the sewers. Maybe the action takes place in the myriad pipes, wires, support beams, and rickety catwalks high up on the Alpha Complex dome. Since a fall from up there would surely reduce a Troubleshooter to raspberry yogurt, each Citizen is issued a parachute (without instructions, natch), or rope the Troubleshooters up to steeplejackobots who go zipping about dragging and dangling their victims back and forth thousands of yards above the dome floor. Imagine a clone reporting in to The Computer on his wristcom while suspended by an ankle from a rope: "Yes, friend Computer, we will certainly close our eyes if you think it will make us less dizzy.''

And if you're really in a baroque mood, send them to the sewers — equipped appropriately for the sewers — then have them make a wrong turn, get sucked up into a pressurized system that shoots them up, up, up... and when they next see daylight, they're clinging to a pipe on the roof of the agricultural dome watching all that lovely fertilizer spew and fall a thousand meters to the guck farms below.

And when the rescue bots show up with experimental rescue devices especially improvised by R&D....

by Greg Costikyan and Daniel Scott Palter

GM Background

Hall-Y-WUD-6, the famous vid producer familiar to those who have read or played **Send In the Clones,** has proposed a new series to The Computer. Hall-Y and The Computer are really excited about this idea. It will show manly, loyal Troubleshooters in furious action against traitors in Alpha Complex. It will contain loud music, splashy graphics, lots of violence, and neat clothes. It will portray The Computer and Troubleshooters in a highly favorable light. It may even replace Teela O'Malley as Alpha Complex's most-watched vidshow!

Hall-Y is not averse to making a few credits on the side. He's assembled a group of cronies in R&D who are busy designing jazzy clothes. These clothes will be worn by the cast of *Miami Laser.* Hall-Y hopes the styles will catch on, and he and his R&D pals will make a killing designing and selling nifty clothes.

The Troubleshooters are assembled for a mission, and given what sounds like another routine briefing. They are *not* told anything about the vidshow. The Computer thinks they'll give a more convincing portrayal if they believe they're on an actual mission.

This puts the players in an interesting position. The way to survive this adventure is to behave like a vidshow hero. Unfortunately, the players don't know this. They'll try to act like Troubleshooters on a regular mission. This is a good way to get executed.

Running Gags

There are three running gags which provide some kind of unifying theme throughout this adventure.

The first is clothes. Everyone wears real flashy duds. Make a big point of describing the clothes of everyone the PCs meet in the minutest detail. Go hog wild; triple-breasted mauve suits with ruffled collars and propellor bowlers are fine. The clothes can look totally whacko — as long as they're elaborate and well-tailored.

The second is, each segment of the *Miami Laser* episode is carefully timed. The teaser must last two minutes. Each of the four segments (which, when shown, will be separated by commercial breaks) lasts thirteen minutes. Lay your watch on the table, and time them. When a segment is supposed to end, it does; the villains disappear and The Computer orders the PCs back to AMI Sector R&D, regardless of what they are doing. Failure to obey is treason. For example:

The Computer: Citizens! Please proceed now to AMI Sector R&D.

Fred-R: But friend Computer! Ray-G and Deth-R are getting away! Should we not pursue?

The Computer: Citizen! You have your orders.

Fred-R: But friend Computer! The maniacal Commie slaver pushers are running down the corridor! We can follow and end this evil menace to Alpha Complex here and now!

The Computer: Failure to obey a direct order is treason. Please liquidate yourself immediately.

Fred-R: Uhh...

Other PCs: Zzzap. Kapow. baROOOM.

The third gag is that no executions for treason will occur *while* a segment of *Miami Laser* is being filmed. That wouldn't look good — all Troubleshooters are supposed to be loyal, competent, heroic and trustworthy. Execution will occur *after* the segment finishes filming, and the character's clone will take his place for the next segment. Of course, the PCs won't know this, or even that they are supposed to be acting a part in a vidshow.

We Go to R&D *Before* Our Briefing?

Yep, that's right. The mission alert the PCs receive orders them directly to R&D:

"Congratulations, Troubleshooters! You are the lucky winners to be selected for The Computer's most recent mission! Report to R&D, AMI Sector immediately for outfitting."

Why are they going to R&D? This is a question they will ask themselves many times during the adventure. The answer in all cases is for new costumes. The briefing, when it finally happens, will be the "teaser" for the first episode of the vidshow *Miami Laser.* Obviously, the Troubleshooters can't be filmed until they have the right costumes.

Do the clones question their orders? Really? Don't they *ever* learn?

It's worth spending some time describing R&D as the PCs will spend a lot of time here. Read this aloud:

AMI Sector R&D is huge... cavernous. The ceiling is so high above the floor that looking up makes you dizzy. There are huge crates piled here and there. One whole section of the room is taken up by the most bizarre-looking vehicles you have ever seen — ground vehicles, air vehicles, even water vehicles. All are sleek, pretty and shiny-new. Most have fins, racing stripes, and hood ornaments; some have gull-wing doors, self-mobile headlamps, swing wings, or other distinctive features.

Another section of the room is filled with rack after rack of clothing, in all colors of the clearance spectrum. The racks are electric; as you watch, several spin into motion.

The variety of clothing is incredible. There are triple-breasted suits, slinky gowns, loose-fitting jackets. There are corduroys, jeans, slacks, knickers and bell-bottoms. There are narrow loafers, running shoes, calf-height neoleather boots, and high-heeled Bruno Magli shoes. There are fedoras, berets, kepis, bowlers and tam-o'-shanters. There are zoot suits, ruffled collars, hoop skirts and designer jeans.

And the weapons! There is a nickel-plated RED-enamel laser pistol with semi-switchable continuous fire and pop-replaceable barrel cartridge. There's a

plasma generator with brush-buffed reflective surface, powered joint articulation, coolant fins and neopephrine blast shield. There are dozens, hundreds you cannot even *begin* to identify.

AMI Sector R&D makes Bloomingdales look like the Peasant's Collective Commissary in Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk.

A clerk clad in a RED-level sari, RED patent-leather high heels and long gold earrings which hang to her shoulders approaches.

Let the players go crazy loading up on equipment. R&D will give them virtually anything they want. No equipment vouchers need to be signed. R&D won't even care if this stuff is ever returned. The whole *point* is to have this equipment appear on *Miami Laser* and, if possible, blow up spectacularly.

No vehicles will be assigned at this time; however, the clerks are supposed to ensure that every Troubleshooter has incredibly elaborate clothing. They'll suggest various get-ups. If a Troubleshooter refuses fancy duds, they'll do their best to wheedle him into wearing something flashy. If any player is particularly obstreperous, some GREEN Vulture goons will show up, execute him, and disappear; his clone replacement will appear shortly.

All sorts of expensive mechanical toys are available — think "James Bond." Although all this stuff *looks* real neat, it will malfunction, break down or blow up at a moment's notice. Gaudy and expensive is *in;* functional is *out.* Figure the minimum malfunction number for any of this stuff is 90, and some go as high as 50. The same applies to the weapons.

When describing equipment, keep all this in mind. Describe the sleek, stream-lined lines, the fancy gadgets and gizmos, the careful tailoring, etc.

When your players have finished oohing, ahhing and loading up on all the crap they can possibly carry, have one of the clerks direct them to the briefing room.

The Briefing

Outside the briefing room the PCs find a pudgy YELLOW guy. If any of the characters took part in **Send In the Clones,** they may recognize Hall-Y-WUD. Otherwise, tough. Hall-Y says:

"Hey, baby! Long time no see! Great to see ya, just great. Say, you guys get in there and knock 'em dead. I mean it, baby, break a leg — break two. Listen; no gunplay during the briefing, know what I mean? Let's keep it cool, keep it calm, this is a family show, got me? Hey, gotta split now, keep in touch, my people will call your people, love your stuff, great material, just great."

The briefing will take exactly two minutes. The briefing officer, Hol-Y-RLR-2 speaks his piece, then allows some time for questions. About 15 seconds before the two minutes are up, he will conclude with his final statement — no matter what the PCs are doing. (Remember: time things.)

Hol-Y briefs them, speaking gently, pausing for questions, and in general being a kindly old geezer. No executions will take place during the briefing — cameras are running, and an execution in the first two minutes of the show is *not* what Hall-Y-WUD wants. Executions will take place *after* the briefing.

Hol-Y tells the clones that Commie secret society members have been kidnapping loyal female Citizens, depriving them of the drugs that keep all Alpha Complex Citizens sane, and committing (undescribed) unspeakable acts with these women. The Computer has learned that this secret society may make covert contacts at a party about to be held in ARK sector. The Troubleshooters are to infiltrate the party and discover the culprits.

Fifteen seconds before the end of the briefing, Hol-Y says:

"Thank you, my friends. Your loyalty and enthusiasm is received with the greatest appreciation by The Computer. In this, Alpha Complex's hour of need, our hope and trust goes with you, for you alone can rid us of this horrible menace. Good luck, and may The Computer's guidance be with you always."

That's the end of the briefing. Traitors are executed and clone replacements arrive. Everyone goes back to R&D for a new set of clothes. New weapons, if they want.

The "Plot"

Each of the four segments lasts exactly thirteen minutes. At the end of each segment, all action stops. Anyone the PCs is fighting disappears. The Computer orders the clones back to R&D for another change of clothes. Then, they are ordered to the site of the next scene.

The plot of the first episode of *Miami Laser* is pretty thin; most Citizens are so heavily drugged they couldn't tell a good plot from a bad one anyway. As far as The Computer, Hall-Y-Wud and you are concerned, the plot can be pretty much ignored.

Plot Synopsis: Several female Citizens have disappeared after being seen with Ray-G-UNN-3 and Deth-R-AYY-1. The Computer believes they have been kidnapped. Actually, they've ODed on "Mind Blast," a banned drug (see "Better Living Through Chemistry" on page 6). The "Troubleshooters" learn of the traffic in drugs in the first segment of the show. They spend most of the rest of the episode chasing Ray-G and Deth-R in fancy clothes and fancy vehicles. At the end, Ray-G and Deth-R are killed by our pals in a spectacular fight scene.

What The Computer wants to see is Troubleshooters acting heroically. What Hall-Y-WUD wants to see is fancy clothes. What you want to see is a bunch of PCs desperately trying to "fulfill their mission orders," catch the bad guys and survive. Unfortunately, if they try to fulfill mission orders, they are likely to get executed. The Computer couldn't care less about this spurious "mission"; it just wants the first episode of *Miami Laser* to look good.

The way for the PCs to survive is to figure out that they must act a role, and to ignore the "plot" they are supposedly sent to solve. Acting in an "unheroic" way (like running when fired upon) is a sure way to get executed. (Since the villains don't have live ammunition, acting

heroically is perfectly safe — if only the players knew!)

Another easy way to get executed is to refuse a change of clothes.

If the PCs get wise, they can actually do pretty well. Enthusiastic clothes-horsing is good for a commendation. ("Hmm, I think it would look better if the sash went from left to right, don't you? And can I get pearl buttons with this?") Heroic behavior is good, too.

Segment One: Party Time

In segment one, the PCs are sent to a "party." Most people at the party, (unlike the PCs) are in on the script. A few have been drugged and brainwashed into playing their roles. Plenty of food and drink is available. Everyone is snazzily dressed; be sure to spend a lot of time describing clothes.

Ray-G and Deth-R are present, but leave early. One of the guests takes Mind Blast, and starts levitating and whizzing around the room wearing an insane grin and shouting "whoopee!" One of the partiers will mention Mind Blast to the PCs knowledgeably, and will even finger Ray-G and Deth-R as the pushers, if questioned. (Actually, if not questioned, he will eagerly and volubly press the information on the PCs. The plot doesn't work if they don't have this info, and if the plot doesn't work everyone involved in the *Miami Laser* project will be terminated.)

Incidently, the guy on Mind Blast isn't really. The Computer isn't going to trust anyone with

a drug that dangerous. Instead, he's whizzing around the room on wires. If the PCs look real close, they'll figure this out. If they shoot him, the wires will release and the guy will fall to the floor — as would someone who was killed while levitating.

When thirteen minutes are up — back to R&D for more clothes.

Segment Two: Ray-G's Apartment

The PCs are next sent to Ray-G's apartment. It is guarded by all sorts of traps and locks. Some of the traps are actually deadly. (If anyone dies, he's replaced by his next clone and the action continues. Hall-Y figures the viewing audience is too drugged-out to realize that anyone actually died.)

Ray-G isn't home right now. His apartment is incredibly luxurious, with plush GREEN carpeting, GREEN leather wallpaper, mirrored ceilings, deep couches, a wet bar and jacuzzi, etc., etc. The PCs will find plenty of evidence, including an incredible assortment of drugs. Bottles labelled with the names of the commoner drugs — e.g., Gelgernine, Visomorpain, Xanitrick, etc. — contain the real thing. Bottles labelled with the names of highly illegal drugs — e.g., Hydropsionic Acid (Mind Blast), Dynomorphin, etc. — contain strychnine.

Why strychnine? Well, anyone who takes an illegal drug is a traitor, and *deserves* to die in horrible, agonizing convulsions. Also, it advances the plot if one of the PCs dies after taking one of the evil pushers' drugs — that provides a good revenge-motive for the other PCs.

If the PCs search, they will find a dead woman's body in a closet. A docbot, if summoned, will verify that she ODed. (Actually, she fell by accident into one of the Food Vats, but Hall-Y needed a fresh corpse for the show.)

After you've let the PCs fumble around in the apartment for a while — say, ten minutes, leaving three minutes of the segment for a gunfight — Ray-G and Deth-R show up, discover the PCs and open fire (with their useless weapons). They run away after a few shots are exchanged.

Segment Three: The Chase Scene

Back to R&D. The PCs get new clothes again — and fancy cars! Describe the cars in glowing terms. Think Porsche, Jaguar, Alfa Romeo. Fast, sleek and dangerous.

Very dangerous. Each car is fitted with a special gas-jet exploder. When they crash, they explode into flames. The PCs better not crash.

They'll have a hard time avoiding it, though.

The PCs get to choose their cars. Then, the car are driven outside R&D by the clerks, and lined up in the hallway. The Computer shouts:

"All right, Citizens! On your mark! Get set! Go!"

Ray-G and Deth-R roar by in cars of their own. Unless the PCs really like the idea of execution, they will leap into their cars and follow.

Did anyone take any drugs? How does that affect their driving?

For the next thirteen minutes, take the clones on a merry chase through Alpha Complex. Have them roar through corridors, scattering

Citizens in their wake. Have them drive down a corridor which suddenly ends in a cliff — begin to fall — enter an opening on the other side of the cavern with a "WHOMP" and a vibrating shock. Have the cars whizz across the largest cavern in Alpha Complex — a reservoir, over which an elevated highway runs. Have some of the PCs crash and burn. Throw in every tacky chase-scene device you can imagine.

After thirteen minutes, The Computer orders everyone back to AMI Sector R&D. No ifs, ands or buts, Citizen.

Segment Four: Fight on the Reservoir

New clothes. Also, boats! Everyone gets to choose a boat, now. All of the boats are mounted with guns. The boats are towed to the reservoir (remember it)?

On your mark, get set, go — once again.

This time, not so much a chase scene as combat. Hall-Y-WUD has emplaced explosives at strategic locations under the reservoir's sur-face. Every time the boat carrying Ray-G and Deth-R fires, one of the explosive charges goes off, and a shower of spray flies sky-high. This ought to convince the players that the villains' boat has live weapons. (It doesn't, of course.)

Unless the players are total nincompoops, they ought to be able to sink Ray-G's boat. They have faster boats and live ammunition. Try to spin the combat out for about ten minutes, though.

That gives us three minutes for a wrap-up. The best wrap-up would be for the Trouble-shooters to loyally turn over all the drugs they found to The Computer and to explain that the nefarious Communists Ray-G and Deth-R were pushers and not pimps, while posturing heroically and looking marvelous in their designer clothes. Come to think of it, any deviation from this scenario will result in summary execution.

Trailer

Suppose any of the characters survives. He's given a pat on the back and sent back to his quarters. Read this:

Some days later, you turn on Teela O'Malley to discover — it's been preempted by a new show called *Miami Laser!* Disappointed that your favorite show will not be seen tonight, you stay tuned nonetheless, and discover that *you* are one of the stars!

Enthralled, you watch with wonder as you and your companions valiantly uncover and destroy the monstrous drug pushers, Ray-G and Deth-R. Thrilled, you lie back and smile to yourself. You're a big-time vidstar! Credits! Fame! A higher clearance! Everything is yours for the asking!

Then you hear shouts and bangs from your door. There's a mob outside! They break open the door and haul you out.

"What have you done with Teela!" they cry. "We want Teela! You fink!" Hands are pulling you left, right, and sideways. Someone knees you in the groin. They have you down on the ground and are kicking you.

What a fate! To be torn apart by crazed Teela O'Malley groupies!

Ah, fame is fleeting.

CODE 7 Paranoid Clones in Savory Vulture Stew

by Curtis Smith

A Code Seven Recipe

Tired of lumpy gray gruel from the Food Vats? Well, here's another gourmet adventure from the popular new Code Seven series. This easy-to-make recipe for fresh clones should really excite the players at your table. If their imaginations don't start them salivating, bring up the many traditional cooking methods that might be used to prepare their clones: whipping, slicing, boiling, skewering, skinning and boning. Don't forget to mention the handy gadgets of the modern kitchen: microwave ovens, food processors, atomic disposals, deep freezers, trash compactors, magnetic induction stoves, and non-stick frybots.

Unfortunately, in the fast-paced life of Alpha Complex, most clones are flash-fried or roasted with portable high-energy ovens. Easy and delicious, such fast food is here to stay. But for a change of pace or a discerning palate, try this simple recipe for a rich gastronomic adventure.

Make the clones paranoid first, following the directions below. Once the clones are ready, you'll mix them into a strong, savory Vulture stew!

Select Healthy Bunch of Green Clones

Use only genuine Alpha Complex products. The Computer singles out your PCs (Player Clones) for yet another "special" assignment — classified, of course.

Peel Clones

The Computer orders the Troubleshooters to take off and turn in all their clothes (leave the undergarments, but the armor goes). If the PCs question this order, The Computer explains a) "Uniforms are valuable Computer property and should not be damaged or destroyed"; b) "This order complies with standard cleaning schedule PBJ-2, further information not available"; or c) "Report to the nearest termination center at earliest convenience or 2300 hours, which ever comes first."

Clean Clones

Now, The Computer orders the PCs to turn in all their equipment — that's right, even the weapons. Naturally, this order may prove embarrassing to any Citizen possessing unregistered or treasonous gear. Well, live and learn, or as is more often the case, learn and die. If necessary, Security Matron Beth-I-CRK and her two doberbots, Genghis and Kublai, enforce the equipment collection.

Refrigerate

Guards escort the PCs to a crowded Mission Waiting Room. Everyone else in the room is wearing lots of armor and hauling lots of gear, so the air conditioners are going full blast, making the room quite chilly. Here lies a prime opportunity for the PCs to test their con, fast talk, oratory and bootlicking skills with a room full of well-armed and -equipped, suspicious Citizens. The NPCs will express a lively curiousity regarding the PCs' singular lack of equipment or garments. If the PCs are real persuasive and lucky, they may beg, borrow or steal quite a bit of clothing and gear. More likely, however, they'll have to sell their shorts and pool the money to buy one rusty slugthrower.

Add Spices

Sprinkle your clones with spicy rumors and comments to suit your taste. A good chef can really add zest to the paranoia at this stage. Try to draw from and blend with the flavors in the rest of your campaign. In a pinch, use some of the sample spices below. (The *italicized* notes are for you, the GM, only.)

1. "You guys must be the next batch; Internal Security is inspecting everybody and shaving off any tattoos or blemishes they find. I guess a lot of Mystics are pretty worried — one caught yesterday had a real big psychedelic tattoo." *False, but under consideration by Internal Security. Be sure to award treason points to anyone revealing knowledge of what a 'tattoo' is.*

2. "An acute shortage of uniforms and equipment is developing because PLC can't make 'em fast enough to replace the ones that get blown up, melted down, or shredded apart — you know, just the normal wear-and-tear around here lately." *True, there is a shortage, but there always has been.*

3. "Wow, you must have volunteered for R&D's new radiation exposure study — what dedication! I'm proud to know you, Citizen, and I'd be honored to pass on a message to your clone when he's activated."

4. One BLUE old-timer to another after looking over the PCs: "Must be time for the Vulture Squadron to test their obstacle course again. You know, Sam, they don't make 'em like they used to. That's a Code Seven mission, now. My old team did that job with only five clones."

"Yeah, but Ernie, you had 27 fellas on your team." *Like cleaning out the Food Vats, it's a dirty job, but someone has to do it.*

Preheat Oven

The Computer summons the PCs to their mission briefing by flashing their names and

a message over a large screen in the waiting room. Announce the message in a voice as deep, calm and self-assured as you can manage.

"**Be of good cheer, Troubleshooters! You have been selected for an important annual mission. This exciting assignment has a long tradition of noble sacrifice in service of The Computer. Report to your briefing room for complete details. Stay alert — and remember, The Computer is your provider.**"

Bake Until Ready

A few minutes in a hot briefing room and your clones will be almost ready for Vulture stew! Let your campaign's regular briefing officer conduct the affair, if he's available. Otherwise, use a career officer like Dare-B. With 30 years of loyal service to The Computer, Dare-B has sent hundreds of clones on thousands of missions, and nothing fazes him. He began his unnoteworthy career dispatching Troubleshooters, when he started "clone betting," his only treasonous vice (aren't they all?). He knows the odds on this mission: his money is on Code Seven.

Of course, despite The Computer's promise, the PCs learn very little about their mission, certainly no details. However, they should understand the following important points:

1. The PCs will go into the heart of one of the largest Vulture Squadron bases in Alpha Complex. This is a great privelege.

2. The PCs will go undercover, disguised as a RED-level Vulture squad. This is a great honor.

3. None of the Vulture commanders know who the PCs are, or even that they're arriving. This is a great problem.

Cover With Fancy Glaze

After the briefing, issue each PC with a complete Vulture Trooper outfit. This fashionable uniform consists of glossy red reflec armor, embossed with the impressive gold Vulture insignia, and trimmed with stylish black pinstriping and tassels, all accented by steel-gray studded gauntlets, black boots and topped by a polished helmet with mirrored visor. Matching accessories, a RED laser rifle and black truncheon, complete the outfit.

Your clones are now ready to mix into a Vulture stew! Tough and gamy, Vultures are hard to get to the table, but their flashy plumage, blind fearlessness and stupidity help make it possible. Just about everyone in Alpha Complex has sampled one of the many varieties of Vulture. Be warned, however; like the Japanese blowfish, if not properly prepared, even the slightest taste of Vulture is frequently lethal.

Brewing up a good Vulture stew is easy. After tenderizing the Vultures (which doesn't help much), throw in one ingredient after another until the clones dissolve or you think they've had enough.

Prepare and Tenderize Vulture

Contrary to what the PCs may think, the Vulture Squadron does know they're coming. Every year the Vultures requisition a team of Troubleshooters to help repair and calibrate their obstacle course. The Vulture Squadron uses this course to intimidate, train and

discipline its troops. A Computer subroutine controls much of the course, so it gradually deteriorates until it's unusable; defective obstacles become either too easy ("They're gettin' over the electric fence too fast; crank it up five amps.") or too difficult ("I told you there was too much razor wire in the pit — now look what's happened!").

Since The Computer doesn't — or can't — make the necessary adjustments, every year at about this time the Course Commander repairs and calibrates the course by running Troubleshooters through it until it's just right. A burly Vulture named Dee-I has been the Course Commander for the last six years. He's in a particularly foul mood right now because the live firing range needs work, too, and The Computer won't give him a second set of clones to fix it.

The Commander, known affectionately by his subordinates as "the Dee-I," truly believes Vulture troopers are superior to other servants of The Computer. So, he expects running his obstacle course to wipe out a couple of clone-lines. But he doesn't feel badly about it; the Squadron would never waste one of their own on the course — they have better places to lose their troops. Besides, the Squadron motto, "You are expendable," was written for lowlifes, like these Troubleshooters, who should consider it an honor to expire on Vulture soil and possibly get their names inscribed in the Dee-I's course logbook.

That's as tender as Vultures get. The Dee-I and his staff, including Webber, a dwarf warbot, oversee the entire calibration.

Add Various Vulture Ingredients to Clones

Enjoying a fine stew is a very personal matter, just like a fine obstacle course. You must prepare and mix your own ingredients to satisfy your taste and hunger. You don't want the main
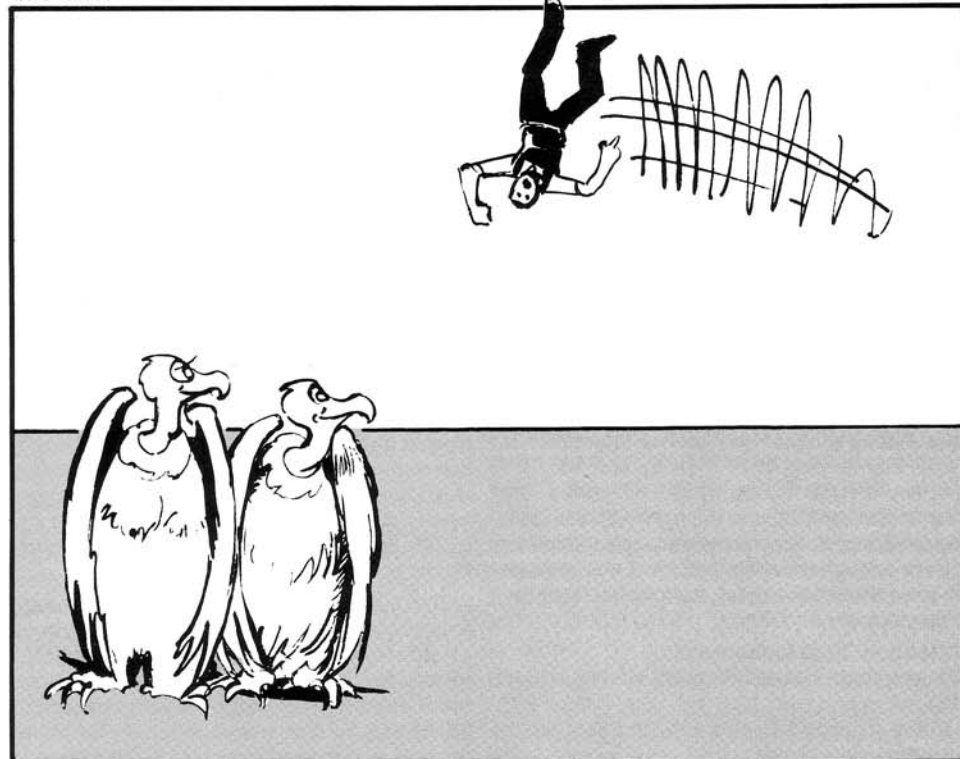
course to completely overpower the clones, especially early on in the meal, yet you can't let the clones dominate. This is your chance — and the perfect setting — to throw in all those little traps, gizmos and bots you've dreamed of over the years. A few sample ingredients are listed below to get you started. Be creative, but remember: this is a Vulture stew, so don't be subtle, and this is a Code Seven recipe, so don't skimp on the quality or the quantity. Be sure to replenish clones as you go along.

1. Spark-Grilled Vulture. Too high to jump over, this steel fence is basically a giant electric bug-zapper, complete with blue lights. Over months of use, debris builds up on the wall, shorting out or insulating parts of it. The Computer compensates by increasing the amperage until the debris bakes off (kind of like a self-cleaning oven) or until the juice sparks over any remaining problems (kind of like an arc welder). Eventually, no one can make it over.

The Dee-I's repair procedure is simple. Standing back with a bullhorn, he directs two PCs to clean the wall with a high-pressure water hose (the light show should be marvelous). Then he orders the remaining PCs over the wall while he adjusts the power level, based on their performance.

If one clone hits the wall solo, he absorbs its full power; roll for damage on column 9 of the table. The trick to surviving this obstacle is to think like a Vulture. Vultures charge *en masse* whenever they can. So, if two clones climb together, they share the juice and each roll on column 7. Trios roll on column 5; parties of four on column 3; and teams of five or more climbing *at the same time* roll on column 1. In all cases, treat "No Effect" results as "temporary heart palpitations, quivery muscles and straightened hair," the Dee-I's desired result. (It's also a nice effect to leave boots and gloves charred and smoking.)

Clone catapulted into... Oops, looks like the artist gets a few treason points for this one.

2. Pressed Vulture. Vultures are favorite and frequent objects of ambush. This automated obstacle was designed to prepare Vultures for ambush by simulating one. Troops sent on a routine "roast" (mission to capture traitors) run into an ambush, caught between a wall and two armored autocars. The simulation is quite accurate and dangerous because the automated bot traitors use real weapons and drive real autocars. However, the bots run their routine exactly the same way every time. Eventually, the Vulture troops learn the routine which then spreads through the Squadron barracks quite profitably. When the bots begin always to lose, the Dee-I must reprogram the ambush, which he's just done.

Now, the Dee-I wants to test his new ambush routine. Naturally, he only tells the PCs that they're going on a "roast"; not that they're charging into an ambush.

"All right, listen up, laser-bait. When I give the word, you're gonna charge out that door shooting. We've got three traitors holed up in a ground floor apartment about 50 meters down the street. Roast 'em out as quickly as possible. I'll be timing you on the stopwatch. Now move, move, move!"

The doors close and lock behind the PCs, forming a dead-end behind them. The two-lane auto-hall before them stretches 50 meters to a "T" intersection. Three bots taking cover in the building at the end of the hall open up with laser fire. The PCs should see that the only way out is to charge forward and melt the bots.

When they reach about half-way down the hall, an armored autocar roars into sight, rounding the corner from the left. Only a second behind, an identical vehicle rounds the right corner. Drawing abreast, the two cars race down the hall, leaving only inches between them and the walls. Two or three bots in each car open up with slugthrowers.

This situation creates an interesting dilemma for the Troubleshooters, who haven't been ordered or authorized to destroy these autocars or their occupants. Genuine Vultures, of course, would open fire without hesitation; Vultures are, after all, authorized to blow up and melt down things — like autocars — which are worth less to The Computer than a decent batch of Vultures.

Unfortunately, the PCs don't have time to think. If the slugs don't get them, the bumpers probably will. Encourage creative solutions such as blasting through the building walls or melting manholes in the road to escape through. Be sure to reward quick-acting clones, even if posthumously.

3. Range-Fried Vulture. Think of the Vulture Squadron firing range as a giant carnival shooting gallery. Unfortunately, most of the automated targets on the firing range no longer pop up or slide out when they're supposed to, greatly aggravating the Dee-I's blood pressure. He orders the PCs out onto the dim, empty range, directing them into the target pits and trenches. He then "preheats" the range (turns on the automated target sequence) and shouts adjustments to the PCs through his bullhorn.

Suddenly, a squad of 20 GREEN clearance Vultures jog in for their scheduled heavy weapons firing practice. Seeing the range already preheated, they open up. Of course they'll relish the challenge of targets that shoot back. Although the PCs are greatly outnumbered and outgunned, they do enjoy the benefits of cover as long as they stay in the pits. Exasperated to see his repairs thwarted, the Dee-I throws up his hands and storms out. He returns after the battle to finish the repairs with the newly-activated player clones.

4. Assorted Vulture Nuggets. Don't overlook razor wire pits, very tall jumping (falling) towers, nerve gas chambers, flaming balance beams, mined barbed wire fields, water tanks (who knows how to swim?) and hand-to-hand "sushi" and "chow mein" bots.

Note: This stew is best enjoyed hot and fresh (leftovers are never as good). Serves four to six people.

CODE 7 Outland-ISH

by Doug Kaufman

This adventure is *not* based on a science fiction movie made within the last five or six years, although it may resemble a western made in the 50s, which a certain science fiction movie made in the last five or six years might also be considered to resemble.

Adventure Introduction:

After putting your players through their morning calisthenics, and raising the chocolate ration to one gram less than whatever you raised it to last time, the following message can appear on their screens:

Syyrmyopm. Ytpin;rdjppyrtd¼
-;rsdr tr[pty yp ntorgomh sy ntorgomh tpp, 246/
Gso;itr yp tr[pty yp yjod ntorgomh vsm trdi;y om o,,rfosyr yrt,omsyopm/

GM Note: Unfortunately, the clone operative who typed the preceeding message was just completing chapter two of The Computer Is Your Friend School of Typing, and had his fingers on the wrong keys. All letters are transposed one letter to the right on a standard Apple Computer keyboard. Any troubleshooter clever enough to notice this, and lucky enough to have an Apple around, will quickly decipher the message as follows:

Attention Troubleshooters!
Please report to briefing at briefing room 135.
Failure to report to this briefing can result in immediate termination.

If the players assume this is a substitution cipher, they will be able to read the message fairly quickly (unless they are stupid or bad at ciphers, in which case the hiss of cyanide gas in each of their rooms may well be their first indication that something is amiss). However, they will have a merry time guessing which briefing room is actually meant. If they show up at room 246, the guardbot on duty should fry at least one of them as a friendly warning before even asking questions. If they don't take the hint, and insist that they are wanted here, the two Ultra-violet-level traitors inside will not hesitate to finish the job quicker than you can say "new clone family."

Briefing: Sooner or later, the right message will be guessed or told to the team (usually after a minimum of five casualties, adjusted up or down for relative party size) and the PCs will make their way to briefing room 135. The briefing they receive is fairly standard, unless you care to spice it up with old **PARANOIA** standbys such as failed sound equipment, ceiling leaks, or simultaneous transmission of two completely different briefings (accomplishable only with the help of a tape-recorder). The briefing is as follows:

The ISH sector food vats have recently tripled production. The Computer rejoices in this circuit-warming demonstration of loyalty, but also notes that the clone replacement ratio in ISH sector has quadrupled. This bears further investigation. In addition, there is a treasonous rumor circulating, to the effect that an evil secret society is active in ISH sector, and is making treasonous mind-altering substances available to its occupants.

Note: If no one in the room makes an objection to hearing treasonous rumors, everyone in the room gets one treason point. If someone does object, that person gets two treason points, but the others are not penalized. If this sounds somehow backwards to you — consider where you are! You can't really expect to reward someone for questioning The Computer, can you?

Your mission is to infiltrate ISH sector and determine the cause of the clone-replacement rate, and to determine whether there are in fact any drugs or secret societies active in ISH sector. Of course there are not. The Computer is your friend.

The True Story

In actual fact, a High Programmer *is* testing a treasonous substance in ISH sector. The water in the sector contains a drug, not unlike speed, known only as ZAP! High Programmer Yadonluk-U-ISH-5, patron of ISH sector, is reaping the benefits of increased prestige (from increased production) and as a side benefit, is collecting valuable scientific evidence on the life expectancy of Infrareds who take ZAP! He plans to present his evidence to The Computer as a *fait accompli* and suggest that *all* Citizens (except himself) be given ZAP!

If the PCs consider what they have been told, they will realize that The Computer has plenty

of intelligence-gathering devices in ISH sector, and knows exactly what's going on there — it just doesn't know who's responsible.

Getting In The Way

After a quick visit to R&D, the Troubleshooters are on their way to ISH sector. The only thing of interest at R&D is a Treasonous Substance Detection Device, shielded to hide its results from the Troubleshooters. It is a medium size black box (about the size of a small trash-can) with no visible seams, openings or controls. Attempts to tamper with it should be dealt with swiftly and explosively.

If you are short of time, or have had enough of testing your player's wits, allow them to arrive at ISH sector right away, surprising the inhabitants. Go right to **Getting The Goods**. If, however, you have not met your daily Clone-Replacement-Quotient, continue with this section.

Yadonluk-U-ISH has just become aware that a team of Troubleshooters is on their way to ISH sector. He must act fast, and get the drugged Infrareds out of sight before their lip-twitching, drooling, and high-pitched giggling makes the Troubleshooters suspect that something is amiss. He does not have enough time to do this unless the Troubleshooters are somehow diverted.

1) His first gambit is "the parade." The Troubleshooters arrive at an intersection, only to find a long train of trucks, bots, and sundry vehicles blocking the way. The Troubleshooters can either wait until the jam passes by (which will give Yadonluk enough time to clean up his act) or go through a high-security clearance access corridor (at which point Yadonluk, who is monitoring their progress, will place a call to the Vulture Squadrons to perform a different kind of zap). The only other choice is to open a ventilating duct and crawl through. Since this is not something a citizen would normally consider, the players should not be told that there are any ventilating ducts, unless someone notices that the seemingly endless stream of vehicles passing by is actually the same ten trucks and bots circling the block and coming back for another pass. This could make them suspicious enough to start looking for other routes.

2) If "the parade" fails to slow the PCs sufficiently, Yadonluk next tries the "little lost bot" routine. A small bot of indeterminant use comes up to the PCs and begins to weep, "I've lost my designer. I want to go home." In between hiccuping gulps, and high-pitched whining ("I don't remember my access code; Why does everyone pick on me?") the PCs gradually learn that the bot belongs in DED research center, which is all the way at the other end of the complex. Taking the little brat back will easily give Yadonluk time to get ISH sector in shape. If the PCs ignore the bot, it will begin bawling louder, saying "You're not nice! Damaging Computer property is treason, and if you don't take me home I'm going to resist my circuits until I turn blue!" This should make the PCs hesitate — if it doesn't, the bot will explode after shouting "you'll be sorry!" and even if no one is killed outright, the subsequent convergence on the area of every Internal Security agent for miles around should serve to slow the PCs sufficiently.

If the PCs are clever enough to assign one of their number to bot-sitting while the rest press

on to ISH sector, or gutsy enough to simply vaporize the little beast, Yadonluk has one last gambit up his sleeve.

3) As the PCs pass a speaker grill just outside the tube to ISH sector, it will suddenly crackle to life with the following message:

"Attention Troubleshooters! You may be winners in The Computer's latest one hundred thousand-credit giveaway! Rush right now to DED sector HPD & Mind Control office, and compare your serial numbers with those posted. If any of them match, *you're a winner!* This offer void where prohibited."

Even if the PCs are stupid enough to fall for this, the last line should be enough to discourage them. Yadonluk is desperate at this point.

Getting The Goods

If the PCs are delayed in their arrival at ISH sector, they will find it clean as a whistle. No amount of investigation, no matter how clever, will reveal the slightest iota of evidence. The PCs have blown it. After a suitable amount of time, recall them and demand their report.

Ignore any protests. Hustle them to debriefing, and no matter what they report at this point, dismiss them with comments like "A fine job, Troubleshooters. Your perseverance is a credit to The Computer" and "I'm sure everything is fine now. There is no need for you to worry...at all...not even a little...and especially not about termination...what a silly thought...would The Computer do such a thing to loyal Troubleshooters?" Make sure the Troubleshooters surrender up the Detection Device, and reward them each with a package of crisp new credit plaques, all nicely shrink-wrapped, with the suggestion that they not open the packages for a couple of days (doing so is treason).

A few game-days later, as the suspicious activities at ISH sector have not ceased, and The Computer needs a scapegoat, the PCs each receive:

ATTENTION! (Fill in name of occupant) **IS A TRAITOR! EXECUTE ON SIGHT!**

This message is immediately followed by another:

Er...sorry about that. Please don't be alarmed, I have no intention of ordering your execution. Please remain calm, and remain in your living quarters for one hour. Preferably in the center of the room.

While it is doubtful that the PCs will go gentle unto that good night, it is equally doubtful that there is anything they can do about it anyway. The PCs' new clones are given the same exact assignment as their predecessors. Yadonluk, who is not particularly inventive, will use the same delaying tactics as before. No matter how many clones it takes, the PCs should ultimately figure out how to get to ISH sector fast, and then the jig is up for Yadonluk.

On arrival at an unprepared ISH food vat, the Troubleshooters will find plenty of evidence of wrongdoing, including Infrareds singing treasonous work songs, dancing in the aisles, and saying things like "grtnzzwssl" over and over again. The PCs might very well rush back to The Computer and report this — but, of course, The Computer already knew that something was wrong. He wants to know who's responsible, and will so order.

The PCs now have a chance to display their dazzling detective abilities. This will probably take several hours, and be insanely boring for you, as they attempt to rediscover fingerprints, sneak into every nook and cranny, and drop cleverly casual comments like "Good stuff, that ZAP!...where do I get some?" The ISH locals may be drugged, but they do have some pride, and after they get tired of the presence of nosy strangers, they are quite likely to come after the PCs with pitchforks. End of scene...

If your players are smart (if you tire of waiting, you can drop a hint or two) they will interrogate a random supervisor who is under the influence. Here's a sample of how such a session might go:

PCs: Do you know that there is treasonous activity going on here?
Super: Grzznxl. Treason's in season.
PCs: How did all these people get drugged?
Super: They drank the water. Snrfff.
PCs: The drug is in the water?
Super: Sklaxxl. No, the drug is in the inside of the cups! Of course it's in the water! Hrraww.
PCs: Where did the drug come from?
Super: An acetylene reaction of Lysergic acid and Salycillin.
PCs: Wise guy, huh? Tell us, or we'll kill you.
Super: High Programmer Yadonluk-U-ISH. Splishtiki.

Simple, huh? At this point, the PCs have several choices:

1) They can strike a deal with Yadonluk. He is a nice enough fellow, a little on the short side, with a hunched posture and a funny accent, who has the habit of phrasing everything as a question. He will be more than happy to accede to most reasonable demands, including a cessation of activities. (He will say things like "Treason? Me? Do I even know how to commit treason?" and "Why should I want to do anything other than what you nice people tell me?") Some time in the future however, he can be relied on to conduct a mass execution and recover whatever information the PCs have kept. Meanwhile, if the PCs forget their Treasonous Substance Detection Device, it will betray them during debriefing. Mass execution follows, along with assignment of the clones to the same exact mission.

Note: If the PCs remember to destroy the device, they will be given another by The Computer, and politely requested to take the same assignment (along with a few treason points for damaging Computer property). If they go back to ISH sector and walk around with the device, it will register traces of ZAP! and the jig will be up for the PCs yet again. The only way out is to attempt to tamper with the thing and change its readings. Given that it is a heavy, metal, seamless device, such attempts are likely to fail. Attempts which fail activate a self-destruct mechanism which should have a burst radius sufficient to leave grease spots on walls up to 30 feet away.

2) The PCs could simply ignore what they see and report that all is well at ISH sector. The detection device (and continued rumors coming out of ISH sector) will belie this. Bad idea, as above.

3) If the PCs are foolishly honest, don't think of contacting Yadonluk, (how does one go about such a thing, anyway?), or simply don't realize what they've got, they will turn over their

evidence to The Computer, which will result in Yadonluk-5's speedy execution.

The Final Showdown

After Yadonluk-5 is sent to the booth, the Troubleshooters will bask in well-earned glory for all of a day or so. Then a message arrives:

"I will not rest for what you did to my brother."

Oh, yes! Yadonluk-6 is not a forgiving clone, and after getting himself settled in, it's going to be time for the final showdown. The one chance the PCs have is to hit him before he learns all the ropes of his new position — if they take the initiative and attack, they can get off cheaply and save the rest of their clone family from extinction. This brings up the interesting prospect of several Troubleshooters, all from different parts of the complex, attempting to meet and plan such a move, all without alerting Internal Security.

If they actually succeed, you will be forced to ad lib a High Programmer's sanctum; here are a few pointers:

Yadonluk controls a major part of ISH sector. He has bots, people, and detection devices in abundance. Entering his sanctum is like trying to get backstage at a taping of a Teela O'Malley episode.

Remember, however, that it is still in disarray because a new clone brother has just taken over. There are new passwords, and new employees (several old ones were fingered along with Yadonluk), all of which together create mass confusion. The PCs, unless they are deliberately unsubtle, can get into Yadonluk's private sector without even being noticed. From there, it is an easy matter to ask a passing bot or security guard where "the master" might be found. The guards will assume that anyone who made it this far has to be legit, and may even volunteer to escort the PCs to the chamber.

In his office, Yadonluk-6 is a sitting duck. One laser shot is all it takes. At the moment of Yadonluk's death, however, exactly 73 alarms (there are actually 74, but one is malfunctioning) go off. How the PCs get back out is left to your gruesome imagination.

Most likely, however, the PCs will wait "to see what develops," or try complaining to The Computer.

No one will listen.

The PCs are on their own — everyone else is too afraid to get involved, and will use whatever doubletalk is necessary to avoid being seen with the PCs until the affair has been resolved. In a day, the next message arrives:

"I will meet you in the JJC gymnasium at noon, in five days."

Nothing of great interest occurs for the next five days, except that each day a new message arrives, with one day less to go. At this point, whatever the PCs try, it fails. It's too late to attack Yadonluk (he is too well protected now) and no one is about to offer any help. The one thing the PCs can do is go to JJC gym and prepare it with whatever horrifying booby-traps they wish. No one will interfere — in fact, there is no living creature within five miles of the JJC gym.

The Fateful Day

The fateful day arrives. The PCs receive an order to report to JJC gym for debriefing.

If the PCs fail to show at noon, it's open season. Yadonluk turns loose a horde of assassins with the orders to track each PC down and send him to his final reward. But Yadonluk is a good sort, and each victim will get a sporting chance.

Ask each player where he wants to be at high noon. That is where he will receive the visitors dispatched by Yadonluk. If the PC is in his quarters, he gets a knock on the door. If he's walking down a corridor, he turns a corner and there they are. If he's in a crowded plaza, he sees the sweet chariot coming for to carry him home.

Use the following menu to determine the nature of the enforcers faced by the sacrificial lambs. Start at the top. If the Troubleshooter survives one visitor, two minutes later there's another knock on the door, or around the next corner is the next visitor.

Hired Guns Menu (Note: All the citizens referred to in this chart are wearing dark clothes, smoking stogies, and displaying three-day growths of dark stubble on their faces. They look generally tough and ruthless. They begin shooting immediately, and have 95% skill with their weapons.)

1. One lout armed with two pearl-handled laser pistols and omni-reflec armor.

2. Two louts armed with semi-auto slug rifles, violin cases, Kevlar armor, and slouch hats.

3. Three louts in combat armor, with suit-mounted grenade launchers, cone rifles with HE rounds, and flame throwers.

4. Four Yojimbots (see Warriors of the Nightcycle, page 58, for details.)

5. Two dozen louts in combat armor with a complete assortment of *PARANOIA* weaponry, and one lout with a kitchen sink.

If the PCs show up or are ushered into JJC gym, they find the room dark. The lights don't work. Nor do the exit doors. A dramatic pause ensues...

...and the lights spring on, revealing Yadonluk and a cone rifle.

"Welcome. This cone rifle contains a tacnuke round. I'm tempted to execute you all immediately. However, your success in eliminating my predecessor indicates that you may have some valuable skills. It would be a pity to waste them for the luxury of revenge.

"Unfortunately, I have need of only one
new man in my organization. I leave it up to you to determine who that lucky citizen shall be."

It is conceivable, I suppose, that the PCs will draw straws or something dignified. I suspect there will be a classic *PARANOIA* bloodbath — weapons and mutant powers a go go.

However, it is just possible that the PCs will reflect a moment and consider their situation. First, is there really a tacnuke round in the cone rifle? Yadonluk will certainly be in the area of effect; using a tacnuke round would be suicide. Two, if it isn't a tacnuke round, what are the chances of the Troubleshooter team getting Yadonluk before he gets them?

In fact, Yadonluk is as reckless and imprudent as his predecessor. The round is HE, not tacnuke, and the PCs have a better survival chance teaming up against Yadonluk. Besides, Yadonluk plans to shoot everybody anyway; the mock job audition is just to provide a little entertainment. (Why would he be inclined to trust a Troubleshooter in his organization, anyway?)

If the Troubleshooters obligingly kill one another, Yadonluk pleasantly informs the survivor that he was bluffing about the tacnuke round, and that he was just fooling about needing someone for his organization. After good-naturedly kidding the PC about being so naive, he plugs him. Roll the credits.

If the PCs stick together against Yadonluk, they've got a sporting chance. Yadonluk is wearing Kevlar armor, has ten HE rounds in his autoload cone rifle, and has a 75% chance to hit. If he runs out of HE ammo, he draws his laser (UV barrel, 95% to hit) and fights to the bitter end. If the PCs have set up any boobytraps in the gym, judge their effects with typical impartiality — that is, if it isn't entertaining, it doesn't work.

Oh, and incidently, if there are any PC survivors, interrupt their jubilant celebrations with the arrival of a Blue Trooper squad sent to investigate reports of weapons fire in JJC gym. The ruthless slaying of one of Alpha Complex's most trusted Citizens is bound to warrant the personal attention of The Computer. If the PCs are hesitant, fearful, or tongue-tied, quick-march them through a de-briefing and into the execution chambers. If they are cool and confident, calmly asserting the facts of the case, logically presenting evidence of Yadonluk's treachery (tapes and recordings, copies of messages they've received, etc.), and confidently expressing willingness to submit to lie detector tests to confirm their innocence, shower them with commendations, credit bonuses, and praise for uncovering corruption in the highest levels of Alpha Complex society. Then arrest them immediately and imprison them without charge.

Oh, it's nothing serious. Just a clerical error. And we wouldn't want to let them get overconfident, would we? Remember, ignorance and fear. Fear and ignorance.

Thank you for your cooperation.

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