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CRASH
COURSE
MANUAL



MegaWhoops
Alpha
begins inside!

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PARANOIA®

Crash Course Manual

PARANOIA

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What In Blazes Is Going On?

And well you might ask! Look around you, former Citizen. Notice anything? Notice that the monitor cameras no longer have those little red lights? Notice that some of the bots are simply sitting in the corridors, heads down — or heads gone?

Notice that no one is bowing or bootlicking, and armed mayhem is the order of the day?

Better get with the programming, Free Citizen. The Computer is down! Crashed! Gone! Dead! Fini! Kaput! It's time to start

living like a man instead of a clone!

This book will tell you how.

If you're going to survive in the new, improved Alpha Complex, you obviously need A CRASH COURSE.

Read on.

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Chapter One: Introduction

What's Happening???

I know you're bewildered, but bear with me for just a few minutes and you'll understand all. If you want to survive without The Computer around, you'd better learn to listen. You used to know how to do that, at least for The Computer, right? Now all you have to do is listen to other clones instead. And learn when *not* to listen to other clones.

Hey, like I said, it's bewildering.

My name is Nicc-O-LOW, and I'm gonna help you survive. Don't worry, you can trust me because I'm gonna make sure I get paid for my services — and I want you to survive so I can keep on getting paid. I work with a group called The Foundation, and I've studied for a long time to be able to help clones after a Computer crash. No, we didn't cause it, but we did think it might happen someday.

Why did we think that? Okay, you know that The Computer is — was — a machine. And that machines sometimes malfunction — you've seen bots do the fizzle-pop spin, right? Well, the same thing, on a much bigger scale, is what just happened to The Computer. In a way, it was almost inevitable. ♦

Yes, I know you've been told The Computer is perfect in every way and could never fail. Well, the people who told you that were wrong. The Computer Himself told you that? I rest my case. If you're going to get anywhere but to an early grave, you're going to have to start thinking of The Computer as Gone. No more living in the past!

Treason, huh? What's treason? Turn me in to who? Sorry, bub, but all the IntSec agents are in hiding, and all the CPU paper-shufflers are dead or clinging to each other like monkeys. You don't even know what a monkey is, do you? Pitiful.



An Editorial Aside

What have we done? The Computer, gone? Crashed? Say it ain't so!

Sorry, it's so. It had to happen sooner or later, and with the abuse The Computer has been taking lately (destruction of equipment on a mass scale, rips in the cross-dimensional fabric of reality, decreased production of Chapstick caps) ... well, this sort of thing takes its toll, you know. So now the MegaWhoops has occurred; the Great Dark is upon us, and what does this mean to *Paranoia* players?

Well, for one thing, it means more excitement and drama than ever before! As if things weren't frantically exciting enough, the crash opens up all kinds of vistas for Troubleshooter missions — some of which you'll see in this book. It also means that your semi-campaignable *Paranoia* world becomes a lot more open to ongoing adventure. Finally, it means new life to an old concept. Have your players ever complained that *Paranoia* lacked free will? Well, we've given it to them in spades. Have they complained about "no matter what you do, this happens" adventures? Well, adventures are much more freewheeling! Have they complained that *Paranoia* is too deadly?

Sorry, can't help them there. What more could you ask for?

Well, heck, if more excitement and added campaignability isn't enough for you, how about some hot *Paranoia* fiction? That's right! For the first time anywhere, *Paranoia* short stories from some of the most paranoid writers around! And, maraschino-cherry-like, we top it all off with "101 Uses For The Dead Computer!"

Now back to Nicc-O.

Well, you'll just have to listen to me and learn something. So as long as I have the laser pistol and you don't, you'll listen. And that's your first lesson: clones are going to be pushing their weight around a lot. If you wanna survive, you've gotta know how to push back.

What Exactly Happened?

I'll tell you more about the possible causes of the crash (no one's really sure, so everything is just 'possibilities') later on. It doesn't really matter, right now, how it happened. The important thing is: The Computer has gone bye-bye.

No, really. There's little or nothing left of the software network that was The Computer. Clones are on their own. The surviving bureaucracy has to keep things going on sheer chutzpah. Sure, there are still library files that can be accessed and so forth — but the personality and utter control that The Computer once showed are all gone. This means that you, the Alpha Complex clone, have to learn a whole new way to survive. Look at it this way:

It used to be you'd get up in the morning when The Computer told you to, and eat what The Computer gave you, and go to work in the place The Computer sent you and do work given you by The Computer. You'd eat more food whose production was supervised by The Computer, and in a Computer-provided dorm you'd watch entertainments produced by The Computer on Computer equipment. If you needed something, The Computer was the one to get it for you (someday) and if you needed discipline, The Computer provided that, too. Lots of that!

So now imagine no one around to wake you, or give you work or food or anything to do (even the vidshows are gone — no, really!) Since no one is being forced to, no one will work, which isn't so nice when you consider some of the messy jobs that have to be done to keep this place running. Speaking of which, it's likely that as the machines bust no one will fix them, since no one is there to tell Tech Service to get on the job. Or to provide information about *how*. Or to provide parts.

And about those sleeping quarters ... I hope a big group of smelly Infrareds doesn't decide that your dorm would be a nice place to live, because without The Computer's IntSec enforcers to bring the masses into line, the Infra's are gonna take what they want. Stick around, and you'll learn some ways to keep that from happening.

Don't even think right now about where you'll get food, or power, or clothing, or any of the other necessities. Don't even ask what's happened to R&D, or the secret

Do I Hafta?

You, Mr. GM, may be asking, Do I have to use post-crash Alpha Complex as my campaign environment? Well, The Computer isn't around to tell you one way or the other, so you'll just have to decide for yourself.

Seriously, we suggest you give it a try. If you don't like it, you can always re-boot your campaign and pick up where you left off (and just think of the punishments possible for those clones who publicly doubted The Computer's return!). But for a while, West End is going to support post-crash Alpha with adventures and supplements, so you might as well get on the bandwagon! Once you try it, we're sure you'll be hooked by the overwhelmingly terrifying possibilities of the grand vista spreading out before you. You may not even want to go back when we say it's over (if we ever do). And think of the possible adventure hooks *then*, once the players have had a taste of the good life!

societies, or High Programmers (you *really* don't want to know what happened to High Programmers). And especially, don't even think about the fact that the clone banks are closed up tighter than a drum.

Where Do We Go From Here?

Listen and find out. Mainly, we'll teach you about the balkanization of Alpha

Complex into Alpha Simplexes, the path of the Bureaucratic Empire, the new role of Troubleshooter Mercenaries, and how to live day-to-day in the New Society. There's plenty for you to do — heck, even finding enough to eat's gonna be an adventure until things die down a little. And I do mean *die* down.

If you just stop and think, you'll realize the magnitude of what's happened. First of all, the Armed Forces and other power-hungry groups like some of the new 'Not-So-Secret Societies' are gonna move in and take possession of all the vital resources. Who'd dare stop 'em except The Computer itself?

So what are you gonna eat? To get anywhere, you'll have to declare your loyalty to some group, unless you wanna go renegade, because a clone-on-his-own isn't going to stand a chance.

So who do you side with? It's too early to tell who's gonna win the power struggles, so you'll have to gamble. And whoever you choose, you've gained one friend ... and 368 enemies. Cheering thought, isn't it?

Meanwhile, the Bureaucratic Empire is trying to keep things the way they always were (as if The Computer had just stepped out for lunch, or something) and they're maybe even working toward bringing The Computer back. So even though it's in the background, you still have to deal with things like accusations of treason, filling out forms, and surprise underwear inspections.

At this point, you may be thinking, "Hmmm, sounds like a good time to head Outside." Assuming you even know what

Outside is, I'd still recommend against it.

Sure, in some ways it is a good idea, but consider the difference in lifestyles available there and here. Even with the other clones running around the complex, you have as good a chance as they to carve a niche for yourself that will give you power, luxury, and an occasional nostalgic meal of Hot Fun. Outside, you'll have to struggle for every inch of progress you make, and the sheer resources available for good living are ten times as prevalent here as there. So take my advice and stay inside. Besides, the sun would just give you wrinkles.

What do I mean by resources available for good living? Well, once you've taken care of the necessities, consider this: somewhere in Alpha Complex are millions of tons of supplies, food, weapons, bots, and all the other materials The Computer built but never used ... stored away in some forgotten PLC warehouse or High Programmer Secret Sanctum. They're waiting for the first clever clone to find them and take them ... and why couldn't that clone be you? What an adventure!

A New Land, Full of Adventure

Speaking of adventures, the lucky Crash Course GM will find within this book: ideas for brand-new post-crash adventuring (including new Troubleshooter missions, Simplex assignments, and the Bureaucratic Empire), a full-length mini-adventure (now how's that for a contradiction in terms?) that takes you on a travelogue-ish tour of MegaWhoops Alpha, and lots of adventure hooks that you can string together into your very own (gasp) *Paranoia* campaign! Not to mention ideas about how to string your players together to tell a satisfying *Paranoia* story.

Now that things are no longer controlled by the rigid orders of the all-seeing Computer, your players will also find they actually have some *free will* to choose the type of adventures they'd enjoy. From political machination to simple survival to exploration of the deepest reaches of Alpha Complex: it's all here waiting for you!

But What Is a Crashed Computer?

Just what it sounds like! The Computer is not communicating in any way, anymore! No confession booths, no treason points, no acknowledgement of security clearance levels, no maintenance, no nothing. There are no orders to take, but no orders to give either. All bots who were under direct Computer control are now



Choosing your friends carefully is more important than ever.

deadweight — ditto some people. You're all on your own.

The surviving bureaucracy will try to tell you to do things — you don't have to do them. They might be able to drum up some IntSec enforcers to make you toe the line (if the enforcers haven't run off to have fun on their own). As long as you've got strong buddies, who cares?

See, used to be that if a problem got too big to handle, the desk-riders would tell The Computer, and it would summon up vast resources of mind-numbered Vultures and IntSec agents and everything else, and squash the resistance. Nowadays, with no Computer to call, with almost no resources available to numb minds with, if your side is as strong as theirs ... there's not a thing they can do about it.

If you're strong enough, you can have a lot of fun in today's Alpha Complex.

So, let's get started! The first thing we oughtta do (just to get a better perspective on things) is see if we can figure out exactly what went wrong ...

Comment Boxes

By the way, you'll see plenty of these tinted boxes throughout the text, as well. These are direct comments to the GM and pertain to organization, rules, role-playing theory, and all that neat stuff. They're also not as narrative as the parts written by Nicc-O. Players who are reading this book really should ignore these sections — technically speaking, they are security clearance Ultraviolet. Of course, now that security clearance is not quite as important as it once was, you can do anything you want. But someone is still watching you, and your name is being entered in the Big Book of Bad Deeds, so look out! Better not finish reading this para —

How the Book is Organized

The Crash Course Handbook has a lot of information for the GM on how to handle a post-crash Alpha Complex gaming environment. In the first section ... we introduce ideas (you're reading that part now!) Next, we give an overview of what the moment of MegaWhoops was like for a random sampling of Alphans, and describe the typical day of a post-crash clone who used to be a part of the bureaucracy.

Once you've got a firm idea of what it's all about, we introduce some brand new concepts to Alpha Complex, concepts that logically extend from the changes the crash would cause, such as "Supply and Demand," (now that things aren't controlled, who gets the resources, and how?) and the new Alpha Simplexes (somewhat akin to petty lordlings, the powerful and charismatic individuals in Alpha Complex guarantee themselves power by setting up mini-states, and leading them to prosperity and conquest). Then we take a look at some old concepts (security clearances, Troubleshooter missions and so forth) and see what changes the crash has wrought there.

For instance, now that The Computer does not monitor security clearance files, does the notion have any meaning? Don't forget — old habits die hard (sometimes literally). There are lots of clones out there who still mindlessly follow those of higher security clearance ...

The main body of the book concludes with some actual rules to add to your *Paranoia* campaign to bring it up to speed, including new character generation rules (allowing for slightly increased health standards and some additional choices), some new ways to handle experience, damage, medicine, and mutant powers, and an explanation of the use of the all-important Sleepers.

Then there's the adventure section, chock full of adventure ideas and even a full mini-adventure to keep you going for a long, long time (or at least until we publish our first post-crash adventure!)

And to top it all off, as an extra-special bonus ... the aforementioned, grossly humorous and entirely-too-treasonous manifesto "101 uses for The Dead Computer," finally liberated from the Frankenstein Destroyer archives for all to see!





Chapter Two: Life In A Brave New World

What Caused the Crash

The answer to that question is real easy: no one knows. Oh, you're gonna hear all kinds of rumors (rumors aren't treason any more, but they're still less than reliable, although more fun) about this definite answer and that definite answer, but the truth is nobody really knows. Not surprisingly, no one has claimed responsibility (like by admitting to some tremendous goof). What is surprising is that no one has taken credit either (like by claiming it was on purpose). But everyone (and I mean everyone) has a story that they're just sure is the only true one, about What Caused The Computer to Crash and why it just so happened to be my worst enemy's fault. The best place to pick up one of these tales is around the table of one of the new distilleries, but if you're willing to take a chance, idle chatter in the hall is good for a rumormongering as well. Let me tell you about some of the things I've heard.

Atar-I's Virus

Supposedly there was this High Programmer, see, and she worked in a sector called DOA sector. I know, there's no record of any DOA sector, and no one I know has ever met anyone from DOA sector — but part of the story takes that into account, so it's hard to tell whether the rumors are true or whether it's just a clever story.

So what happened was that Atar-I was working on a special kind of program called a virus, or a papyrus, or something like that. It was supposed to remove DOA sector from The Computer's record files — everything. The Computer would forget that DOA ever existed, wouldn't recognize the tongue prints of anyone from DOA, wouldn't send shipments to or expect shipments from DOA. It just plain wouldn't bother DOA. See how it fits? If the rumors are phony, and DOA never existed, it's the same as if it's true and Atar-I succeeded.

Atar-I's plan, they say, was to remove DOA from Computer scrutiny so that she and her secret society (or maybe just she and her group of flunkies) could move in and take over without interference. She could set herself up as a sort of mini-Computer, running the sector and getting the best of everything ... and no one in the

rest of the complex would ever know.

Except, the rest of the story is that she succeeded too well. The virus or papyrus spread outside of DOA sector and suddenly all the sectors of Alpha Complex were deleted from The Computer's memory. So according to this version of the story, The Computer hasn't crashed at all. It's just disconnected from everything around it so it thinks that the entire complex has disappeared, and it's sitting around waiting for someone to come back. Come to think of it, if the story is true, perhaps Atar-I didn't *accidentally* let the virus spread to other sectors. Perhaps she did it on purpose, and she plans to move in and take over (with no interference from The Computer) across *the entire complex*. Perhaps it really is impossible to destroy The Computer ... so Atar-I did the next best thing.

Internal Programming Glitch

Another version of Why It Happened has to do with an experiment The Computer conducted a while back called Alpha State. You probably never heard of it, but I have visual evidence that it once existed. Supposedly Alpha State was where The Computer took all the Commies that have ever been captured and terminated, and grew clones from their leftover cells. Then it populated an entire sector with them, called it Alpha State, and watched to see how they would act. The ostensible purpose of this was to learn how to stop the Commie threat once and for all.

Well, being Commies, of course they started fooling around with things, and I guess one of their bright boys entered a confession booth/observation center and found a way to sabotage The Computer while it watched. It made a big mistake in letting them anywhere near its terminals during the experiment, if you ask me — The Computer wasn't near as perfect as everyone thought. Anyway, once that happened, Commie programming started infesting The Computer, and it had to start fighting off the Commie parts of itself while trying to put an end to Alpha State.

Supposedly the Commie parts were quite strong, and The Computer had to terminate part of itself. If that's what finally caused the crash, then the Alpha State experiment might still be going on. That means there's a sector somewhere out there populated

completely with real Commies. And even if the experiment was shut down before the crash, there are still files somewhere full of Commie clone cells, waiting to be grown. Perhaps the guys in the next sector who call themselves Commies are busy growing a new wave of soldiers from those cells. Next they'll be coming for us.

The Big Blue Spark

Then there's the one about the Big Blue Spark. No one knows for sure where it came from (all the stories are different). Some say it started in a High Programmer's apartment when he did something strange to his vidscreen assembly in order to play back Old Reckoning video cassettes; others say it started in the food vats during a battle with Commie mutant saboteurs, or perhaps traitorous members of the Seal Club; still others claim it came from outside the complex, perhaps started by traitorous members of the Seal Club.

In any event, the Spark is a tracer of Blue fire that burns whatever it touches, and apparently it's been travelling along cables and pipes and energy lines for months now, slowly burning away all the wire in Alpha Complex.

Clones claim to have seen it everywhere, and there are still sightings, although I've never seen it myself. What they say is you hear it first: kind of a dull hissing roar. It may get a little warmer, and the lights dim, but just a little bit. Then there's a blue glow, and you see this sparking flame, like what you see when a fuse on a stick of dynamite is lit. It comes around a corner, and it's Blue. It just runs right along the wire or cable it's burning, until it disappears out of sight into a wall or whatever. They say some clones have tried to stop it by cutting the wire or touching the flame or using water. They also say that none of those clones are alive today.

It's so outrageous it might be true. If so, it doesn't explain why some files and programs are still working even though The Computer's personality is gone ... maybe those wires haven't burned yet, and someday, when the spark has finally consumed every cord, wire and cable in Alpha Complex, everything will shut down completely.



The Big Blue Spark.

Someone Rebooted in CPU Sector

Then there's a really wild, way-out story that just couldn't be true, except that it does explain some things that none of the others do. According to this one, there was this guy who travelled in time from the past to Alpha Complex. Remember that huge explosion a few weekcycles ago? The story goes that travel from the past causes that sort of thing — temporal displacement, they call it. Or something like that. Anyway, they also say he brought a card of some kind with him — a card that supposedly has a complete Computer personality and intelligence on it.

So this guy is supposed to have recruited six High Programmers to help him get to CPU sector, where he tried to use his card on The Computer, only The Computer self-destructed rather than let a Commie mutant traitor from the past re-boot it. And I've met a lot of clones — way too many to disbelieve, I think, even though I didn't hear this myself — who are sure they heard The Computer give a self-destruct warning just before the MegaWhoops. So that part fits.

You see the implications of this? Somewhere in Alpha Complex (if this story is true) is a card with a complete Computer personality and system on it. Whoever finds that and uses it to re-establish The Computer would gain the undying gratitude of the Empire, and of FCCCP as well. And who knows? Maybe The Computer (the new one, anyway) would be so grateful it'd make that person the ultimate High Programmer.

Other Idle Speculations

There's lots of other possibilities, including the FCCCP version that The Computer

has finally achieved a non-corporeal state of being, and the Humanist version, which is that The Computer got so disgusted with us that it decided to turn itself off, to the standard "scuttlebutt" version which is that some super-high High Programmer pulled its plug out of sheer spite or something.

For New Readers

If this is, by some strange chance, your very first *Paranoia* item — you were curious, you didn't read the back cover copy carefully enough — we suggest you run right out and buy the second edition rules set. A lot of what we say in here is going to make no sense unless you have a background in the standard *Paranoia* universe.

And if you want to get a lot of the "in" jokes in the section about possible causes of the crash — well, you owe it to yourself (but we'd prefer you owed it to us!) to run back out (see, *Paranoia* is a healthy game, too) and pick up *The People's Glorious Revolutionary Adventure*, *The DOA Sector Travelogue*, *More Songs About Food Vats*, and *The Iceman Returneth*. You'll be glad you did. So will we.



Breaking up is hard to do ...

Who Was Behind It All?

In all these cases, there's some secret society supposedly behind it all. Atar-I was a Computer Phreak, or in some versions of the story, a Romantic. The Blue Spark was started by the Seal Club (what the survivors of the Sierra Club call themselves); of course, the Commies are a prime suspect. I don't think anyone's ever gonna know the truth.

I'd have thought there would be lots of societies taking credit for it, and you could investigate each story one by one and finally find the truth. But for some reason, none of the societies are taking credit. It almost seems like whoever did it is embarrassed for some reason.

The Secret Society Wars

There's one other rumor that may or may not have any bearing on the crash of The Computer: the Secret Society Wars. Surely you've heard of them? No? This might be harder than I thought.

Several monthcycles ago, somebody started a vendetta against the Sierra Club secret society. Practically all its high-level membership was destroyed, and the lower-downs scattered to the four winds. It's been re-formed as the Seal Club, and if you remember, they're one of the ones accused of starting the Big Blue Spark.

After the Sierra Club, Free Enterprisers were targeted. They're coming back too, but slowly. Then most of the smaller societies were wiped out in a weekcycle-long pogrom. I'm happy to say that several Foundations survived, but most of us are gone for good.

It's not for sure that this had anything to do with the crash, but now that The Computer is gone, the secret societies are scrambling for power, and with their already-established memberships, one of them has a good chance of coming into supremacy. They're facing off against the likes of Power Service and the Armed Forces, true — but the Empire has to work within The Computer's rules (or face the wrath of the other members of the Empire) so they have a handicap. No, I think a secret society is the best bet for conquering the whole complex. And if that's true, then it makes sense that someone should have started their power grab before the crash actually came — which must mean that a secret society was at least involved, if not responsible.

The most likely suspect, and the one everyone agrees has the best odds in the upcoming struggle, is Illuminati. It makes sense — these guys are so secretive that not even they know what they're after. At least, most of the lower-downs don't know. It makes sense that, if their goal was to wipe out the other secret societies, they wouldn't tell anyone. Otherwise, all the other socie-

ties might have banded together to stop them. Hmmm. That sounds suspiciously like what's happening. Perhaps there's more to that rumor than I thought.

When Does It Get Fixed?

Of course, a lot depends on why it went down in the first place — if the Blue Spark story is right, for instance, it could be a long, long time before all the wires and cables and stuff are replaced. I know that Power Services and everything left of the Bureaucratic Empire is working on the problem, but of course they can't fix anything until they know what needs to be fixed. They can replace every wire in the complex, and if the problem is a virus they'll never succeed.

So the bottom-line answer is: not for a long, long time. There are societies and whole Simplexes that like things the way they are, and they're all battling the Empire to make sure it's never fixed. Who knows who'll win; the only thing I'm sure of is that it will be generations before The Computer comes back ... I think.

The Moment of MegaWhoops

It really doesn't matter how it happened. What's important is that it has, and nothing anyone can do in the foreseeable future will change that — so let's take it from there.

To best start your understanding of MegaWhoops Alpha, it's important to know how it came about — I don't mean the actual cause, since we just got finished saying that no one will ever know. I mean

the clone's-eye view: what did the average Joe-R think when it happened? What was he doing at that moment, and what did he do in the next few daycycles?

Well, certainly there were plenty of clones who were all in favor, since we all know that many of the secret societies have as their goal the destruction of The Computer. Here's a story from the Humanist archives that is a typical example:

Victory Hymn of the Utopia

by Jonatha Ariadne Caspian

"Mine clones have seen the glory of the Alpha Complex crash —

We have humbled The Computer and we've hacked it into hash.

We will batten back the darkness till there's nothing left to smash:

Utopia at last!

Glory, glory Human Speaker!

Never more will life get bleaker.

Strong will lend a hand to weaker:

Utopia at last!

We have trounced Corpore Metal; we've slammed FCCCP,

The Sierra Club's been bludgeoned and Free Enterprise don't be

In fact, what's left in Alpha Town is down to you and me:

Utopia at last!"

(Repeat Chorus)

"Since Reconstruction's imminent, to this brief rule adhere —

Serve the Speaker with your actions and you've nothing left to fear;

In his wisdom and his goodness he will reign forever here:

Utopia at last!"

(Repeat Chorus to fade)

Beautiful, isn't it? Impassioned, stirring, triumphant — all an anthem should be. Modesty, of course, forces me to credit the Old Reckoning precursor which our Human Speaker found and passed on to me, the Humanist Hymnarian.

My soul stirred in my breast, the air paused in my lungs, my hair shivered in its follicles when I heard the immortal first phrase: *Mine eyes have seen the glory of the burning of the school!* Yes, badly faded and worn, laboriously hand-copied and lovingly illuminated with stars and curlicues and smiles dotting each 'i,' this fragile relic nevertheless conveyed a sense of grandeur and purpose that I have tried to emulate in our republic's new standard. Such poetry as that is nigh impossible to equal, but in my small way, I think I have succeeded.

There will be more verses, of course — detailing the triumphs of the Human Speaker and the glories of the Utopia to come. The Computer has crashed, and we can rebuild it — we have the technology — make it better, stronger, faster, *saner* ... and create the ultimate in human experience.

The joy — oh, the joy I felt when suddenly, in the middle of Hygiene Patrol, the corridor lights dimmed and flickered. Hope bubbled in my breast like warm Bouncy Bubble Beverage as all illumination in the sector died completely. I heard — I, Woody-G-UHH-3, actually *heard* silence! It lasted but a fragment of a nanosecond, for instantaneously all HEL broke loose (or was I in HIL sector when it blew?)

The hall was bright with multi-hued laser fire; smoke and scrubots roiled everywhere. Our team leader knelt and began mumbling "... though I walk through the Sector of the Shadow of Treason ...," obviously realizing the moment of MegaWhoops was at hand. Recognizing him as a member of the First Church of Christ Computer-Programmer, I drilled him, and dashed back down the corridor to see where I was needed. Even a humble hymnarian occasionally has to take up weapons in the service of his society.

Chaos, glorious chaos! Infrareds invading the spectrum at all levels, Indigos pleading with Yellows for safe passage, Vulture Warriors circling the worst carnage, catbots and dogbots living together ... it surged far beyond my wildest hopes. I would be in lyrics for another 10,000 daycycles with this material!

As my treasonous Violet reflex protected me from random painting, I scrambled through the dankest, most devious back-routes to Walden Revisited, the Humanist safehouse in UTO sector. I passed huddled masses, tired, poor, and hungry in LIB sector, had to detour around a glowing crater or three, and sold my Model VI Skin Core Sampler for safe passage through a Zany



Does the hand of Illuminati overshadow all?



Sometimes even Zany Eddies get more than they bargained for.

Eddies-held foottube. Not to brag, but in the service of the Human Leader, I threw in a grenade to close the deal.

All the while, my brain was busily batching images for hymns and stirring grand marches and lullabies and show tunes from the lost archives of Alpha Complex that would uplift the New Order.

It might have taken daycycles for my travail — I had no way to tell. Transtubes were functionless, and roaming squads of Death Leopards made major corridors perilous. Occasionally, an isolated monitor or loudspeaker would kick in, more than likely with Teela-O reruns or Fizz-Whizz jingles. These were invariably blasted to slag within nanos of their activation. I stayed low and kept my laser handy.

At last, Walden was upon me. The doors still stood, and only slight laser scoring marred the frame around them. I spoke the passphrase “Skinner and Thoreau” and was admitted immediately by the Human Speaker himself!

It is up to us Humanists to bring order out of Alpha, the Human Speaker proclaims. We will divide the ruins into Piccolos — a term derived from the Old Reckoning “petty” or “penny-fifedom”; (for the truly vat-bred, a “fife” is an inconsequential or inexpensive musical flute or whistle. The translation is corroborated by the Old Reckoning anthem “Whistles Where You Work,” from the Magic Fifedom of Orange-CAL. I’ve done the research myself).

Music will be our savior, for was it not written that Music soothes the Savage Beast, making him the more Human? Do not the records show that a breed of beast known as the Dairy Cow responded to music and produced gallons of the Milk of Human Kindness?

I have spent long daycycles in scholarly

study, strange primitive devices clamped to my ears, searching out even the tinniest notes of our past. As Hymnarian to the New Order, I will be responsible for lighting our days, filling our nights with song, creating themes which swell and ebb according to the actions of the populace and the emotion of the moment — thus it was of old, and thus it shall be again! In our Utopia, each citizen will have his own, personal theme music! Heaven, I’m in heaven! I’ll write the songs that make the *whole complex sing!*

As you can see, it’s been a great moment for Woody. He believes he’s written the national anthem, the song little school children will sing from dome to shining dome. ‘Course, dozens of other clones have had just as positive an experience, be they Anti-Mutants, Communists, Frankenstein Destroyers or even First Church-Programmers.

They can all believe this because Alpha

How Hot Was It? Soooo Hot That...

Of course, not everyone had a wonderful time at the moment of MegaWhoops (for example, the team leader or the Zany Eddies in the above treatise). Plenty of folk really *liked* The Computer, and benefited from its rule. For example, no High Programmer really wanted The Computer to crash, since its authority helped keep them in a position of power. Nor did many of the clones who now make up the Bureaucratic Empire (obviously, or they’d have joined a Simplex long ago). Here’s another look at the day The Computer died, from a slightly different perspective

is soooo big, and the safe pockets are sooo far apart, that until a communications network is jiggged up again, they’ll never run into each other — much. So any clone who managed to wipe out a few arch enemies and find a few loved ones at home has won the war. He can sit on his duff, patting himself on the back, or he can get to work, stabilizing his home structure, fortifying his defenses against the few, the bad and the lawless, and planning the BIG RAID; depending on his affiliation, he’ll want to loot or reboot when things quiet down. And in the meantime, in between time ... Ain’t we got fun?

Tales of the Vulgar Scrubot

by C. J. Tramontana

Troubleshooter teams — bristling with slughtrowers, cone rifles, grenades, and more types of edged weapons than the desk-bound boffins at R&D ever thought of — filled the scarred and battered tables in the dimly lit interior of the Vulgar Scrubot, drinking synthewhisk and alersatz by the bucketsful, and popping Wakey-Wakeys, Red-desades, and Purple-violents by the handful. Occasionally, between drinks and pops, between hands of crazy-mates or rounds of skin-the I’red, one or another of the drug-smirky merks would look out through the grime-smearing front windows of the Vulgar Scrubot, across the street, past the roving squads of Billkings, at the bulletin board in front of Troubleshooter headquarters, hoping, I guessed, to see the NOD Mission Control Officer posting new mission openings.

I tend bar at the Vulgar Scrubot; at my age and with my left arm missing from the elbow down, doling out drinks and pharmaceuticals, washing drinking-mugs and spittoons is one of the few jobs I can do — it’s also one of the jobs nobody else wants.

As I held a synthebrass spittoon under the stump of my left arm and polished it with the rag held in my right, and only, hand, I heard the squeaky chitter-chat of nature babes against the deeper voices of the drunken merks.

“Gran’ther, Gran’ther,” squealed the nature babes as they swarmed around the merk-filled tables, dodging elbows, legs, and cone rifle butts; then they climbed on the rickety stools in front of the bar where I stood rubbing at the spittoon. I looked down at the happy, eager, dirt-smearing faces of my five son’s-sons and wondered what it was like to have been born of woman and not decanted and baby boomed.

“Gran’ther, Gran’ther, please?” begged young Enok.



"Tell us a story, Gran'ther Edam?" asked his older brother, Enos.

"About the Great Whoops, about the MegaWhoops," softly suggested Eble, who had been named after my son, his da.

"Go ahead, One-arm," said a rough voiced merk sitting at the table nearest the bar. "Tell the nature babes a story." He deftly flipped a ten credit plaque through the air and clatteringly into the spittoon under my arm. I looked at him as I retrieved the plaque. He shrugged and his hard eyes softened for a moment as he rubbed absently at his own elbow and said, "Put it in the fund for your arm graft." I pocketed the plaque, nodded my thanks, and turned my attention to the nature babes.

"Back before the time of the mothers and the fathers, back before the merks and the Billkings, before the propaganda broadcasts, before the Vulgar Scrubot, before I lost my arm, in the time of the Organizations and the Societies, in the time of the Clearances and the Order of Color, there was The Computer, and all was right with the Complex and EDN sector — until one daycycle.

"I awoke then with visions of the last nightcycle's *Adventures of Teela O'Malley* playing bot-o-my with my lobes. Malingering airs of yesterdaycycle's Mello-daze and Sleepy-tyme rumbled across my tongue, warring with soggy crumbs of Crunchetyme Chips and the ever essence of Bouncy Bubble Beverage. I lay in the clone-sized wrinkle at the center of my doss, waiting for the bright light of daycycle to flash redly through my tight-closed lids and for the cot in the Orange barracks to lift my sleep-saggy body gently onto the soles of my feet. I waited, and waited, and waited ...

"It was the screams coming through the vent-grid that kept me from sliding back

into the brain-numb of Sleepy-tyme — the screams, the sizzle-blast of the lasers, the screech of the slugthrowers, the whoosh-woomp of the cone rifles. Not waiting any longer for the full light of daycycle or the tilt of my doss, I let my eyes slide open to the flickery light of the daycycle bulb, gleaming weakly. I scrunched to the end of my cot and jumped down a meter and a half to the cold synthecrete floor. I pad-padded to and through the swinging doors of the hygiene cubicle.

"When I swung back through, all eleven of my bunkmates had crawled out of their unrisen bunks and were wandering about the barracks. Confusion was in their eyes. Four of my mates stood in front of the Vend-A-Mood dispenser, pushing at its buttons and yanking at its knobs, trying to get some Wakey-Wakeys or Upanatems. Smoke is what they got — smoke and sparks and a many-colored trickle-stream of melted pharmaceuts. Grede-O, fixated on a fix, quit yanking and pushing, and got down on his knees, and opened his yapper to the stream. Quicker than quick, his eyes rolled back into his brain-frame, and he flopped. We waited for his next-of-clone to claim his place. He didn't; we got bored and wandered off.

"Five more of us found termination, again with no next-of-clone attendant, in the Happiness Entertainment Quad when the three video screens exploded. Two more were lasered by the automatic weapons on the Crunchetyme dispenser. One more got shoved and crushed under a confession booth torn from its mountings by the surging crowd in the corridors. Two more were floored in the riots at the Orange Chow Hall.

"Alone, without bunkmates — without even clones of their clones — I wandered

and didn't believe what I saw. The Order of Color was no more. I reds surged up the passageways from the lower levels and demoted any Ultras they found, trampling them into Red. Frenzied crowds spectru-med through the corridors and streets.

"Achy-shakes twitched me from my feet to my brain-frame; Old Man Withdrawal had shoved synthewool into my eyes; and my tongue hung dry and limp. If I had had anything to give, I would have given it for a Happy Citizen pill, or a Mello-daze, or an Upanatem, or even fortified Bouncy Bubble Beverage. But nowhere, not in any of the colors of EDN, had I found a working Vend-A-Mood, or even a cafeteria that had not been looted and smashed — until I walked past a public Computer terminal and multi-purpose chute untouched by the doings of this daycycle. I yapped to the monitor. The Computer didn't yap back. I tap-tapped at the keyboard. Nobody tap-tapped back. I screamed. I pounded the keyboard.

"What are you doing there?" asked a loud voice. "Don't be trying to bring The Computer back!" I turned and looked at a Red Troubleshooter with droopy lips. His slugthrower was looking right back at me. I screamed. The Troubleshooter fired.

"The next thing I saw: a Yellow kneeling over me, tying something on my left arm. She finished tying and hauled me up on my feet. Pain burst through me. She was kneeling over me again when my eyes fluttered open for the second time. I reached to hold and comfort my throbbing left forearm; it wasn't there. The Yellow looked into my eyes, and then hauled me to my feet again."

"Hey, old clone," said a merk who had moved from his table near the front windows of the Vulgar Scrubot to the bar, roughly pushing aside one of the nature babes and holding out his drinking-mug, "how about some more alersatz!"

I helped the nature babe back onto his stool. Then I looked into the merk's little mean eyes and made my yapper bend up in a grin. "Sure," I agreed. "Just let me rinse that out for you." I took his mug and bent down behind the bar, sloshing the mug

The New Day-to-Day Living

The moment of MegaWhoops is in the past now — your players might be interested to know what it was like (thus the previous stories), but won't have anything more to do with it. Of greater interest is the "typical day" of a clone in post-crash complex.

We'll get to specifics later: what happened to R&D and the Clone Vats. Who eats, and what do they eat, and all that. Here, first, is a summary of everything that "post-crash" means: a day in the life of a typical clone, a few days after things went Mega Whoops.



Story and song are important parts of post-crash complex lore.

around in a washtub, in the tub where I soaked the encrusted spittoons. Filling the mug with alersatz, I handed it to the merk and said meekly, "This one's on me."

"Thanks," he said through droopy lips. "Those were hard times. No hard feelings, then, about the arm?"

I shrugged.

A Day in the Life of Dennis-O-VCH

by G. D. Swick and M. B. Till

"Next."

I made it! After standing in this stupid line for a whole sixth of a daycycle, I'm going to get something to eat!

Food has been so hard to find the last four daycycles. Ever since the monitor screens went blank the food service areas have been closed; Production, Logistics, and Commissary has been treasonously negligent. I have filled out the proper forms for mass termination of all negligent personnel — but I don't know where to submit them.

According to treasonous rumors, this food line is being serviced by a group called The New Free Enterprise. Disloyally, they are trading food for other items of value. I will report them also, as soon as access to The Computer is possible again. In the meantime, I'll try to trade this Hot-torch, which was issued to me long ago for reasons that were never made clear, for some ... evidence of their treasonous activity.

What can I get for it?

Two whole algae loaves! Excellent ... evidence. Of course, as a loyal citizen, I must eat one so I can testify that it is indeed an algae loaf. In fact, I must consume both just in case these traitors tried to trick me. I'll do that as soon as —

"Chaos and confusion/Are what we find amusin/

We're gonna give a bruisin'/to anyone we please/

Death Leopard!

Oo-bee-do-bee-doo

Death Leopard!"

Suddenly the queue scatters madly as bludgeon-wielding members of Death Leopard, singing raucously, charge among us, swinging with gleeful abandon. I lose my grip on one precious algae loaf when a blow knocks me to my knees.

Scrambling, I chase my lost treasure as it is kicked and trampled. Bodies fall on me; kicks and blows rain all around me, but I continue crawling until I lose consciousness.

I come to. A tiny crumb of algae loaf, less than a mouthful, remains clutched in

my hand, all that is left of my feast. I mean, evidence. Virus and memory wipe!

"A shame," someone says.

My eyes focus. Maury-O-PZO is standing over me, surveying the carnage. I haven't seen him for three daycycles.

"A shame," he repeats, "how decent citizens can be denied the basic sustenance of life, and be beaten by gangs of thugs for no reason. Such things never happened under Friend Computer."

Former programming overrides the input of recent data and I find myself agreeing wholeheartedly while clutching my empty stomach.

"The reason Death Leopard can get away with such things, of course," continues Maury-O, "is that they are a gang. They have numbers on their side. If they had the courage to attack one at a time, I'm certain you would have thumped them soundly." He helps me to my feet carefully, to avoid getting blood on his new clothing.

"Now if you had an organization to protect you, then the numbers would be on your side. Right?"

"You mead join a thecret thothiety?" I mumble through loose teeth. "Bud thath treathon. The Computer —"

"The Computer ain't around no more," Maury says smoothly. "You need a new loyalty. You need Someone To Defend You, someone who believes in Truth, Justice, and the Alpha Complex Way. Someone like ... the Illuminati!"

It sounds tempting, but I don't know. I don't know anything anymore, not even what I'm cleared to know. Am I still cleared to know anything? It's all so confusing! I shrug.

"Let's discuss it over something to eat," he says.

The meal is the best I can remember, with many strange things that actually leave a taste — a *pleasant* one — in my mouth. Some are sweet, like fermenting Bouncy Bubble ... some are sour, but not in a bad way like too-green algae chips. Some are what Maury-O calls "spicy." Why have I never had this food in the dining area? Is — was — Friend Computer aware that food could taste like this?



How many yearcycles bad luck?

Maury-O is smiling like a Vulture Warrior interrogating a prisoner. He picks his teeth with a small sliver of some unknown material.

"Not bad, eh?" he says. "Meals would be like this all the time — even better — if the Illuminati were in charge. You can help make that happen, Dennis-O. How about it? Are you ready for a new loyalty?"

I lick my fingers, realizing that this is a turning point in my life. I never had one of those before. This decision must be weighed carefully.

After 1/4320th of a daycycle, I nod my head as if I were at an Are You Happy? meeting, and reach for another helping of the stuff Maury-O calls "meat."

This shouldn't be too hard. Instead of reporting mutants, individuality deviations, secret society memberships and other treasonous behavior to The Computer, I just report on my daily activities to Fink-Y-RAT, for the Illuminati. Why they are interested in this stuff, I'll never understand.

DAYCYCLE 0500-0530: Get out of bed. Most citizens rise whenever they feel like it now, but Maury-O told me that the early programmer gets the modem ... or something like that. Must try to secure mechanical alarm clock.

DAYCYCLE 0530-0730: Search for breakfast. Wish I had a shower.

I notice a cluster of citizens glancing about furtively; go to investigate. Immediately, one of the group pushes me away, shouting "No more, go away, there isn't any more!" Immediately another citizen steps forward and takes my arm.

"There is always room for one more soul seeking enlightenment," she admonishes the others. "We each will make do with less in order to share with our new brother. Welcome to the Mystic Mess Hall where your stomach and your soul will both be filled. My name is Hip-Y-CHK."

Amid grumbles from my companions, I am led inside a former warehouse area. Tables have been set up with pots of food, which does not smell as appealing as last night's supper. Before we eat, Hip-Y speaks to us passionately about karma, which must have something to do with electricity since she says it is tied to positive energy flow, consciousness relays, and N-lightingment. I was never very good at electronics. At first I thought this was some secret society, but it must be a cadre of Technical Services Personnel.

Eventually, I receive a small bowl of stale algae flakes. Yesterdaycycle, I would have savored each tiny mouthful. Now it seems bland and disgusting. By the Memory Banks, things will be different when the Illuminati take over! I hope it happens soon!

I listen to those around me voicing their

complaints and I reflect that there was never such grumbling under The Computer. Everyone is saying the same things: no water, totally inedible food (and in such small portions), no Teela-O vidshows, lines of citizens longer than lists of traitors waiting for every possible commodity. Especially toilet paper.

Well, the Illuminati will soon set things to rights!

DAYCYCLE 0730-1200: At work 1/360th of a daycycle early in Central Processing offices. No one else around. Shuffle papers. Six times. Try unsuccessfully to access The Computer. Ten times. Co-workers arrive sporadically. Many do not come at all. Disappointed by such anti-social behavior. Observing proper procedures is the glue that holds society together. CPU must set an example.

DAYCYCLE 1200-1400: Use lunch break to investigate rumor that boots are available in KNY sector. Find long line — rumor must be true. Join line.

Suddenly, citizen in front of me rises into air and flies to front of line with no visible propulsion mechanism! Swoops down and flies off cackling, a pair of boots in each hand. A few members of queue fire lasers, but miss; line is shortened by several citizens.

While waiting, I observe activities around me. Two citizens arguing in hushed tones, apparently trying to trade flashlights for Bouncy Bubble Beverage. Two others — one male clone, one female — are holding each other's hand as they walk down the corridor, yet neither seems to be leading the other. Strange.

Before I can puzzle out what this odd behavior means, a citizen near the front of the queue suddenly screams.

"I can't do it! I can't think for myself anymore! Someone tell me what to do!"

Instead of waiting for the instructions he asked for, the citizen dashes forward, seizes someone's laser pistol and terminates himself. While I cannot condone such behavior prior to filing a Self-Termination Request Voucher, I do feel a pang of sympathy for the poor fellow. Since Friend Computer went away, I have been so confused by this Self-Responsibility concept that I have come close to such action myself. Of course, as a loyal citizen — even if I'm not sure who I'm supposed to be loyal to anymore — I have resisted such anti-social impulses.

DAYCYCLE 1400-1600: Return to office. Make paper flybots. Eight times. Go to storage room for more paper. In storage room, discover two co-workers, one male, one female, who apparently are hiding after some frightening event. Their uniforms are in disarray and he seems to be administering mouth to mouth resuscita-

tion to her. I rush forward to offer assistance, but both become surly and chase me away.

The whole Complex is going crazy!

DAYCYCLE 1615: Fellow worker Maad-O-NNA brings stack of forms into my cubicle for processing. While placing forms on my desk, she brushes female upper torso appendages against me. Smiles. A strange feeling rises in me. For some reason, storage room scene comes to mind. Palms begin to sweat. Should I report this feeling to Fink-Y? Should I report it to Maad-O? That sounds like more fun. Not necessarily safer, but more fun.

DAYCYCLE 1630-1730: Shuffle papers. Three times. Think of Maad-O-NNA. Many times. Take Synthe-Cof break. Hear new joke: How many Tech Service clones does it take to change a circuit board? None, unless The Computer comes back up.

Many workers complaining about dealing with the general citizenry. Members of other service groups do not understand why they can't be given forms authorizing distribution of provisions. This does not excuse PLC's inefficiency. Besides, no new forms are currently available. Citizens not amused. Happiness is no longer mandatory. Three CPU co-workers sent to Med Services, but refused treatment because they did not fill out the proper authorization forms. Their clone replacements are due tomorrow, but arrival uncertain. What isn't? Fewer co-workers report for duty each daycycle. Disgusting disloyalty.

Stop by Maad-O-NNA's cubicle. Ask if she would like to interface with me regarding all these strange new phenomena. Perhaps near Snuff-Y-SMT's new medical distillery, at 1830? She would.

She would?!

Return to cubicle to finish work shift. Stare at walls. Feel odd elation. Could R&D have dropped a test chemical in the ventilation system again? If so, I hope they don't remove it anytime soon.

DAYCYCLE 1730-1830: Turn in information to Fink-Y. "Keep up the good work," he says. Lets me take brief shower. Somehow Illuminati is making some showers work. Gives me dinner ration supplements. I save to share with Maad-O. Well, most of it, anyway.

DAYCYCLE 1830-1944: Wait at table near Snuff-Y's distillery. Palms sweat. Stroke hair smooth. Twiddle thumbs. Casually glance at the door every 1/2160th of a daycycle.

DAYCYCLE 1945: Maad-O enters wearing non-uniform garment. One piece. Clinging. No separate slots for legs. No bib over top. Slit on one side of lower body piece. Excellent programming: all the 0's where they should be, all the 1's in the correct places. A perfect macrochip if ever I saw one. Why have I never noticed this before?

She slides into the chair next to me. A pleasant odor permeates my olfactory senses. Circuits temporarily overload.

For a sixth of a daycycle we interface over cups of Snuff-Y's elixir. I share the delicacies from Fink-Y. She shares information.

There are shortages everywhere, in everything. (Really? I whisper).

Sometimes, security clearances aren't being recognized at all! (This is news to me. I hope I can remember to tell Fink-Y. Concentration is getting difficult.)

Technical Services personnel are being lynched or made into heroes, depending on who they encounter. Power Services are too busy trying to get things Back On Line



Citizens will have to deal with some strange new feelings.

to worry about anything. (That's their problem.)

Some citizens are openly rebelling: painting graffiti on walls, displaying mutant powers, destroying Computer property. Worst of all, she tells me in a whisper, there are rumors that widespread termination of CPU workers is taking place — without the required paperwork! — just because they belong to CPU! (Great Data Bank! How far will this madness go?)

"Oh," Maad-O asks suddenly, looking deeply into my eyes, "have you ever heard of a group called the Romantics? They're really a fun bunch"

Snuff-Y's elixir and that strange, heady odor are making it hard for me to think clearly. Somehow Maad-O-NNA is closer than I remember. She's telling me how much all this is frightening her. She's afraid to be alone, but she's also afraid of trusting anyone. Except me.

Do I know someplace where we would be safe from traitors? she asks.

All the other members of my living quarters work the nightcycle, I reply. We could be safe there, if we barricade the door.

She smiles. Could we go there now? Before any traitors show up? Oh, and did she tell me about a group called the Romantics?

Feeling dizzy by the minute, I trade Snuff-Y the last remnants of our feast for another bulb of elixir, and wander off with

Maad-O. She slips her arm in mine, apparently administering an experimental drug as she does so: suddenly I feel taller, stronger, capable of flying.

NIGHTCYCLE 2230-2240; 0010-0050; 0300-0430: Activities totally, wonderfully at variance with standard programming. Why didn't anyone think of this before? Maybe The Computer didn't know everything. I don't think I'll report this to Fink-Y yet. Not until I have researched it further. Oh, I/O!

DAYCYCLE 0900: Overslept. Who cares? Bee-yoo-tee-ful daycycle.

Maury-O is waiting in the corridor.

"Bad news, clone. Your data is, like, all zeros, no ones, if you get my drift. My bosses can't justify the fancy feeds and the warm showers without better input. Follow me?"

It is frightening to think that Maury-O has bosses too. I swallow hard. "What more do you want?"

"Nothing major, nothing major," he says smoothly. "But you work for CPU, right? Maybe official forms don't get the same respect they used to, but even though The Computer is on a long maintenance break, some citizens still like to have the proper paperwork so they can cover their rear lower torso appendages. And someone with a DOC-24 can requisition unlimited medicinal supplies with no hassle — correct?"

Swallowing harder, I nod.

"Now the Illuminati want nothing more than to make things efficient around here so that everybody's happy. Just like we did for you. And as a good Illuminati, you want to help us accomplish that, right?"

My head bobs as if I were the subject of a Vulture Squadron shakedown.

"And if life should become very ... hazardous ... for citizens who produce official paperwork, you'd want a place to hide, wouldn't you?"

My chin is beating against my chest so hard it's creating bruises.

"Good citizen. So you'll have the DOC-24's by, say, 1100? Oh, and citizen ... hanging out with Romantics is very bad for your image, if you know what I mean. It's okay to pump them for information occasionally — just don't make a habit of it. Capisch?"

I nod. Why is there never an Escape command when you really need one?

Final Word

Okay, so now we've got the background set. You have some idea how it happened, what it was like when it happened, and — in a general way — what's happening now.

Now let's get specific and see if we can't bring you up to speed on some brand new never-before-seen concepts that have sprung up in post-crash Alpha Complex.





Chapter Three: Some New Concepts

Introduction to Something New

Before we start our discussion of how things have changed (like, what does "Security Clearances" mean now?) after the crash, let's first spend some time on a few brand new concepts. These are things you're going to have to know if you want to survive in the post-crash complex. Learn to use them to your full advantage. These three things are Supply & Demand, Alpha Simplexes, and Sleepers.

Supply & Demand is an Old Reckoning concept which has found new life in Alpha Complex. It deals, at a simple level, with the idea of "price" for food, objects, and information.

See, it used to be that The Computer set the price for everything, according to some unfathomable whim of Its own. Nowadays, the clones that actually produce the stuff get to decide the price. This way, if no one wants something, the producer doesn't get many credits for it, and he stops producing it and starts producing something else. On the other hand, if everyone wants something, a producer gets a good price, which encourages others to begin producing that thing as well, meaning there's more to go around.

I know, it sounds incredibly treasonous — but hey, that's pretty much the point, don't you think?

Supply and Demand

by Chris Kubasik

SUPPLY AND DEMAND— THE FREE ENTERPRISE WAY!

Getting Hungry?
Running Out Of Ammo?

Want To Get Involved With This New Thing Called Sex?

THEN YOU NEED US!

You've heard about what we've done for organizations throughout Alpha Complex, and now we're offering our POWER PROFITS classes to INDIVIDUALS just like you!

Why You Need Our Classes!

Still waiting around for someone to gear Production, Logistics & Commissary back up to full capacity? Are you longing for the days when Teela-O strutted her stuff on the

Using Supply and Demand

Supply and Demand should fit naturally into your post-crash campaign, since it is a concept you're already quite familiar with. Now PCs don't get their equipment from The Computer — they buy it for themselves, at whatever the going market price is (i.e., outrageously high). The following should give you an idea of where "Supply and Demand" are coming from (and where they're going) in the new complex.

vidscreens? Do you wish things weren't so rough and were more like the good old days?

STOP BEING A SAP!

Not only are those days gone, but who needs them? The Computer is dead. The only way you can be with It is to be dead as well — and that doesn't sound like very much fun. To survive in today's Complex you need to know everything we know about Information Exchange, Mega-trends, Bickering and Inside Spading. And if you've got the ability, you can reach a level of power and wealth that you only dreamed of before!

AND YOU'LL LEARN HOW TO DO IT AT **FREE ENTERPRISE POWER PROFITS CLASSES!**

Remember, it's ability, brawn, and brain that rules today, not some clown in a blue jumpsuit!

Did You Know:

-that most PLC offices and production facilities are out of touch with each other and that most PLC branches have joined various Simplex groups?

-that almost all Technical Service personnel have gone rogue and now wander the corridors of Alpha Complex with their tool kits, taking on freelance assignments for personal gain and PROFIT?

-that *demand* in Alpha Complex is outstripping *supply*?

-that if you're not making money, you're losing it?

-that if you're not on the inside, you're on the outside?

-that a stitch in time saves nine?

-what the phrase above *means*?

IF YOU'RE HAVING TROUBLE UNDERSTANDING WHAT WE'RE GETTING AT, THEN YOU NEED OUR CLASSES!

If you've been able to survive life after the MegaWhoops, you've got what it takes to move and shake. But if your daily routine consists of waking up in an air duct, searching for someone with some food, stealing the food, searching for weapons and other supplies, meeting up with a group of clones planning a raid, stealing more food, killing your new comrades during the night, taking their supplies, and going off find a new air duct — then YOU ARE RESOURCE POOR AND WASTING VALUABLE ENERGY! YOU COULD BE RICH AND CREAMY INSTEAD!

Here's what we've got to offer when you sign up for one of our classes!

SESSION ONE: PRIVATE PRODUCTION

Waiting around for the food to arrive just doesn't cut it anymore, so our classes kick off with a discussion on how to make what you need to survive if you've got nothing handy to bicker with. (DO YOU EVEN KNOW WHAT BICKER MEANS? IGNORANCE IS DEATH! TAKE THESE CLASSES!)

We'll cover:

-Building your very own weapons!
-Claiming bots as your own property and re-building them to your own specifications!

-Private food production and whoops-farms. (Did you know that you can grow algae under you bed? (AND THAT IF YOU DON'T DO IT RIGHT YOU'LL DIE!))

SESSION TWO: THE MENTAL MARKET

Have you ever thought about how much you don't know? Has it ever occurred to you that there is an infinite amount of information in the universe, since there's always one more thing to learn about anything, and that since you possess only a finite amount of knowledge, comparatively, YOU KNOW NOTHING!

Think about that! Did you understand that? Really? Or are you just too embarrassed to admit otherwise?

Ignorance is death in today's Complex. But because you can't know everything, you have to take advantage of the Mental Market. In this session you'll learn about

using The Library Exchange and Brain Slaves.

-The Library Exchange is a grey market of classified information culled by high security clearance citizens. The information can be bought or bickered (THERE IT IS AGAIN) for food, supplies, power, or survival.

Don't have a high security clearance but want to know how to build a blaster? An Indigo could tell you. We'll teach you how to get to him and how to get him to give you the information you want!

-Brain Slaves are wonderful cost/revenue investments; for a small investment in food, the information they provide can be worth a small fortune. Would you like us to tell you how to get your very own Brain Slave? WE'RE WILLING TO BET YOU DO!

SESSION THREE: BICKERING

YES! You'll learn what bickering is! And as a free bonus, we'll give you a quick explanation now:

Bickering is giving one thing to a clone, and getting another thing back in return.

See how easy a free economy is? No more vouchers. No more lines. Just simple trade and betrayal.

Bickering can occur between Simplexes, splinter service groups, or individuals. The bickered goods can be an item, information, or services.

Here's a TRUE STORY of bickering between Sludge Down Your Throat, a food vat worker's Simplex in CHK sector, and an Armed Forces splinter group.

The Armed Forces group was running low on food. At first they thought they might attack and raid the nearby Sludge Down Your Throat Simplex, but then they realized that since none of them knew how to run the food vats, they could raid it only once. It occurred to them bickering might be the wiser course. Representatives of the Armed Forces group then went to the Simplex and offered the food vat workers protection in exchange for weekly shipments of The Stuff I Love, Yummy Yellow Fluff At The Side Of The Plate, and Breakfast of Clones.

Imagine that! Infrareds and Reds bossing around the Armed Services! All because of bickering.

How do you fit into all this?

Well, most bickering is conducted on a smaller scale — a gun for a week of food, fixing a generator for a safe place to spend the night.

Doesn't that sound nice? And now that you know what bickering is, don't you wish you knew how to do it? Especially since if you bicker incorrectly you can DIE!

We'll also teach you how to spend credits and how to use stolen requisition forms, manifest forms, and vouchers as UFOs. (Do you know what UFO means? We do.)

SESSION FOUR: HOUSING AND FRIENDS

Life since the MegaWhoops is lonely. It's even more lonely because of this thing called sex. How to get friends and where to live are covered in this last session.

We have just completed a survey and discovered that 55% of Alpha Complex's citizens are no longer living in their assigned quarters (this total took into account the casualties of the MegaWhoops Riots and the random 10% of population that was executed by the Bureaucracy for such a heinous occurrence).

For the most part, citizens in barracks have been easy prey for Billkings, Brain Slave traders, and traveling salesmen prom-

ising fantasy excursions to far off and safe Complexes for the mere price of a week's food rations.

Clones have moved into access shafts, new barracks, Alpha Simplex compounds, "hotels," and their work stations, where they can keep a better watch on their machinery.

Which one is for you? What can you afford and what will give you the prestige you need to get ahead in today's Alpha Complex? What kind of a place do you want to bring a citizen back home to (wink, wink)?

And what of the people you live with? Without The Computer to keep an eye on everyone, there is more chance for be-

InterService Memo

To: Chuck-O-LOT, HPD & MC
From: Vinny-I-LAA, PLC

We picked up this Free Enterprise flyer last week and I don't think we can get let it go by without taking action. Not only has Free Enterprise gone public, but it's gaining a foothold in the Complex's power structure. If we want to hang on to what we've got, we're going to have to do something fast.

I assigned my staff to look into some of the items mentioned in the brochure. I've jotted some of the more disturbing facts down for you:

- The Death Leopards and the Bill kings (I don't know if you've heard about them yet — roaming hordes of clones who take what they want as they go — named after the first group formed by Bill-V-KNG) are keeping the halls pretty clear, trapping most clones in Simplexes or isolation.

- Brain Slaves are citizens kept against their will by information-poor Simplexes, roving bands of warriors, or as hostages by competing service groups. They're sometimes high security clearance clones used to access computer file information, but more often are skilled laborers or technically trained clones from R&D, HPD & MC, or PLC.

- The Library Exchange is giving clones access to items stored in The Computer's memory banks that The Computer deemed inappropriate for our consumption: pre-Computer entertainments, ancient food preparation instructions, information on sexual methodology, and texts on power and control (the most most valuable item on the Library Exchange of the last kind is a document entitled *The Prince*.)

- Whoopsfarms are private algae farm collectives built in deserted barracks and warehouses. Most of the farms grow just

enough for the participating clones, but a few grow enough for trade.

The production and distribution of goods and information outside of the channels created by The Computer means that our jobs, as well as our power, are in serious jeopardy. If we are to keep what we have, drastic measures must be taken to insure that the citizens of Alpha Complex do not continue to learn how to survive without the bureaucracy created by The Computer.

I've already looked into a drastic measure, and I'm passing the idea on to you so you can circulate it around PLC and see what your co-workers think of it.

I think we should try to get FCCCP to work for us.

Just for a while — until this whole thing settles down! They have their own reasons for wanting the populace to retain the old order, and are interested in working with the remaining bureaucracy. I think some of that old-time religion might be exactly what we need to stay in power. They know how to get a hook into citizens, and I believe that they'll be able to frighten citizens away from Free Enterprise's overtures.

It's either this or go Simplex, and that means splitting up the surviving bureaucracy. I know that if we can keep the bureaucracy together, even covertly, we'll come out ahead. We've just got to replenish our manpower and get more faith-reinvested in our abilities.

I've enclosed a flyer the Elders over at the First Church of Christ Computer-Programmer Center For Post-MegaWhoops Theological Studies and Traitor Termination Methodology have cooked up with the policy list I gave them. Look it over and tell me what you think.

trayal, but also more need for cooperation. We'll teach you how to form profitable relationships with your fellow clones, and how to trash them at just the right time.

Low on brain but big on brawn? Learn how to get some twerp to handle your ignorance for you.

Loaded with grey matter, but lacking in the muscle department? We'll lead you to a lummoX waiting for you to master him.

HOW MUCH DO YOU HAVE TO PAY?

You'll discover that no other organization in Alpha Complex is as flexible as Free Enterprise in the methods of payment we accept. We take credits, vouchers, goods, information, service time, self-inflicted slavery and anything you've got to offer to make us richer.

We'll set the rate according to your abilities. On top of that, we'll let you take out a LOAN with a whopping 47% INTEREST! You won't find a deal like that anywhere else!

WANT MORE INFORMATION?

Just stop by one of our offices and pick up an application for the FREE ENTERPRISE POWER PROFITS class. And while you're at it, check out our society. We think you'll find the dividends worth your time.

Postscript on Supply and Demand

So, now: How to use this in your campaign?

Well, it should be pretty obvious: clones gotta pay for what they use; it's just that payment can take many forms. If the PCs want some weaponry (see the entry about "The new R&D") or clones or simply some technical advice, they must pay for it in some fashion. Sometimes whole adventures can be set up on repaying a debt: suppose the PCs borrow a flybot from a "supplier" type. You run that adventure. Then, when the PCs give back the flybot, the supplier reminds them of the interest payment. If they ever want to do business with him (or any of his acquaintances) again, they'll pay up. And he doesn't want credits, he wants a six-pack of Burpsee Cola

As you can see, Supply and Demand also determines a particular character's living conditions. The better he is at "bickering" the more comfortable he'll be, and the more likely he'll be to keep what he's claimed when the hungry Infrared hordes come to call. Make char-

acters work for their living. If a PC sets up shop in an "abandoned" Indigo suite, you can be sure that a couple dozen others (at least) covet those same living quarters. Translation: unless the player demonstrates some good reason he shouldn't (like he's got a pet warbot named "Pismo" on guard), make him pay for every gain.

You can also use this stuff as background: your PCs might encounter a clandestine Whoopsfarm, or a Brain Slave revolt in a sector they are just passing through, or a squad of roaming Billkings. You can use these as bases for whole adventures, or for a random encounter table.

Finally, use the Bureaucratic Empire's efforts to stem the tide of anarchy (or the tide of freedom, depending on whose side you're on) to your advantage. Characters who make too big a show of marketeering (especially declared FreeEnts) don't have to worry about the same kinds of persecution they once did, but there will be friction with FCCCP player characters, and they won't get much help from Empire officials.

THE COMPUTER: GONE, BUT NOT FORGOTTEN

A Public Service Message From Production, Logistics, & Commissary, Housing Preservation and Development & Mind Control, and The First Church of Christ Computer-Programmer

We all know that The Computer's departure from the mortal world for reasons wise and wonderful has caused a bit of confusion for those of us who have yet to join It in the Mainframe above. However, this is no reason to turn our backs on the way of living life left to us by The Computer.

Many clones are behaving in a self-serving manner, ignoring the laws set forth generations ago, thinking that now all that matters is survival in the moment.

Do not be mistaken! The Computer shall one day Reboot, and on that day all treason points shall be totaled.

Remember that we are trapped in these unfortunate mortal forms, waiting patiently for the day of release when the electronic impulses which race through our minds are freed and able to upgrade to The Computer.

During this time in the mortal world we face many tests, not the least of which is the giving up of our lives to the

Way Things Are Done. If The Computer had wanted us to live contentedly with items grown and created by our own hands, It wouldn't have given us PLC and HPD & MC in the first place.

But The Computer did give us PLC and HPD & MC, and the reason is this: If we are provided for, we need not desire. If we do not desire, we attain a state of bliss, such as the one provided by The Computer when Its mortal form was still in the Complex. If we are blissfully content, we are happy in this world.

If we are not provided for, we feel desire. If we feel desire, we are feeling sensation. If we are feeling sensation, we are aware of our physical forms. If we are aware of our physical forms, our minds wander from the true path. And if our minds wander from the true path, triplicate vouchers no longer seem important, Faithful Surprise no longer satisfies the hunger, and the world seems chaotic and without meaning.

The Computer's rules gave us meaning, and if we want to be content — and thus happy — we must follow those rules. We must let others make decisions for us, let others choose our work for us, let others decide the directions of our lives for us. These are the rules and they will make you happy.

We must support the remaining Bureaucracy so that it may regain its strength and we may once again be inspired to holy

complacency. We must not lose faith in PLC and HPD & MC, which are both doing the best they can under arduous circumstances.

Some of you may wonder, "If PLC cannot provide enough food for all of us, should I not seek out food on my own?" and we can only tell you, "No. You should die." It is better to crash and join The Computer than to betray Its laws. Trust us on this one.

If all those who cannot be fed, clothed, and housed were to crash, PLC and HPD & MC would be able to feed, clothe and house those that remained, and thus no clone would have to feel desire, being either shut down or well taken care of.

In order to encourage the citizens of Alpha Complex to uphold the laws of the past, the remaining Bureaucracy is putting the following rules into effect:

1) Anyone accepting food or goods not produced by PLC has committed treason and will be terminated.

2) Anyone producing food or goods outside of PLC has committed treason and will be terminated.

3) Anyone sleeping outside of his assigned barracks has committed treason and will be woken and terminated.

4) Whoopsfarms, since they are competing with PLC, will be destroyed. After the farms are destroyed, radioactive

waste material shall be spread over the ground where the farms stood.

5) All unconsecrated PLC and HPD & MC offices and bureaus will be shut down. FCCCP has the sole authority to consecrate service group offices and production facilities. FCCCP shall perform the various rituals of consecration after inspecting the site and being paid an "indulgent fee."

6) Since information must be accessed from the computer files in order to re-build the Bureaucracy, pulling data from the library is not a treasonous activity. However, all files must be approved by HPD & MC and distributed

solely by PLC. Citizens who bypass these two requirements shall be known as "truth-mongers" and shall be shunned by loyal citizens.

7) The service groups have agreed to retain the credits once issued by The Computer. These credits are now the OFFICIAL means of trade within Alpha Complex.

8) To better control the resources of Alpha Complex, loyal members of the remaining Bureaucracy shall work for various Alpha Simplexes in secret. Such agents shall be designated as "molds," and work to bind Alpha Complex together once more.

9) Spot physical examinations of citizens shall be conducted by designated

officials. Clones found to be too healthy for their security clearance shall be terminated.

11) PLC shall begin collecting, stealing, and confiscating all goods and parts it can to rebuild its supply stock.

Remember, The Computer has transcended this world, but It still watches. To betray its laws is to sentence yourself to the peripherals of damnation. Serve those whom The Computer left in its stead. Fear and Loathing are more important today than they have ever been. Pity the clone who feeds himself from his own hand, for he is following the I/O errors of the anticomputer. Today is the first day of the rest of your suffering.

The Newest New Concept

Now here's something really important: you've got to start getting to know a whole new Alpha Complex. Because it isn't complex anymore, it's simpler. It's been divided into Alpha Simplexes.

A Simplex is a mini-state, sort of like a sector used to be. Only now, instead of being under the control of a High Programmer, a Simplex is under the control of whoever has taken power there. Sometimes it'll be a secret society. Sometimes a particularly charismatic or well-liked clone will all but make himself into a High Programmer, and everyone in the Simplex will follow him. Sometimes a Simplex is a service group remnant.

In all cases, though, they have a few things in common: a Simplex wants to be left alone, it wants to be separate from other Simplexes, it wants to emphasize a particular ideology, and it wants to keep The Computer from ever ever ever coming back. Here's more about Simplexes.

Alpha Simplexes

by Douglas Kaufman

Richard-B-RTN and his companions stealthily approached the great iron doorways, which lay ajar in a manner both inviting and ominous. In his right hand, B-RTN clutched the improvised laser unit he had recently liberated from its Vulture owner. In his left, he held the Thingie.

"Richard," whispered Alice, his latest companion, "I don't believe anyone's about." He smiled fondly at her (a rumor ran throughout the Complex that men and women could share some sort of physical bond once they stopped eating the foods provided by the Computer-created Algae Vats. Probably a clonebrother's tale, but sometimes when he looked at Alice ...)

"Good," he whispered back hoarsely. He

had long ago learned to trust Alice's intuitions. "Pete-R, get up here with that detonator."

The slimmer man shuffled forward, delicately holding the explosive device. They had had to barter five flybot cockpit controls and a set of matching Old Reckoning carrybags for it, but it had been deemed worth it by the ruling junta of Technoland. Now they were to use it to disrupt the defenses of Powerland in order to begin a coup there. As soon as it was clear that their agents within the political structure of Powerland had done their work, Technoland would invade, backed by a mercenary squad of Vultures from BCB sector.

Richard placed the detonator into the socket on the Thingie. Their contacts in the R&D enclave had told them of the power of this device, and had warned against its use

— but the walls of Powerland were the walls of a former IntSec detention center, and it was believed that only something this powerful could provide the breach.

"Incoming message," whispered Peter-FGT. He held out the crackling com-unit while glancing around nervously. B-RTN suspected he'd be useless in a fight.

"Rotor Mount, this is Flash Unit One," he said softly to the com-unit. "We read you."

"Flash Unit, this is Rotor Mount. Our agents report Powerland leaders are assassinated or imprisoned. Now's the time, Dick. Go for it — we're on the march."

"Roger, Rotor Mount. Over and out." B-RTN dropped the com-unit and turned to the Thingie, praying the timing was right. If their soldiers arrived too late, the Powerlanders would have time to prepare their



A bewildering variety of new equipment makes MegaWhoops Alpha an exciting place.

defenses, and the whole invasion would fail.

As he reached for the activation button, Alice said sharply "Richard, no! It's unstable — it's going to go off as soon as you push the button!"

He knew her intuition would be correct. Now what? If the invasion forces arrived and the walls were not breached, they would be easily repulsed and the agents found and executed ...

"You two get out of here," Pete-R said quietly. "I'll push the button."

When The Computer went its final way, many interest groups were at hand to help ... ah, shall we say, pick up the pieces. At times, it seemed that there were more interest groups than pieces! Indeed, a single clone might belong to both a service group and a secret society, while living one place and working in another. Where should he put his loyalties? Did former Alpha Complex denizens even know what loyalty was?

Secret societies chose a different path — one not unlike the street gangs of today (see their entry elsewhere in this book), and living quarters were not usually a smart bet unless you were of a very high or very low level.

Low level clones sometimes chose living quarters simply because they had no one else to turn to except the Food Vat Consortium. High level living quarters contained enough amenities to allow the inhabitants a sort of independent existence. However, living quarters were necessarily limited in scope as to the overall services they could provide.

The service groups were definitely a powerful influence on all clones' lives while The Computer was still around. Now that It's gone, the service groups are struggling to prove their need to society — see the

service group entry for more details. Suffice it to say that some service groups have banded together to form the Bureaucratic Empire, while others have declared their independence and gone Simplex.

Finally, there were jobs. Obviously, workers at the Integrated Grooming Station when the MegaWhoops came were not likely to stick around and try to carve out an empire with combs and blow-dryers (although clone-for-clone, the IGS is probably responsible for as many deaths each yearcycle as the Armed Forces), but other places, such as the Clone Banks, shut tight their blast-doors and declared independence from the rest of the Complex. It is from such as this that the concept of Alpha Simplexes arose.

Simply put, a Simplex is any banding together of a group of like-minded clones in a geographically stable location, which location contains a valuable and defendable commodity. For example, the SewerDwellers are not a true Simplex, for although access to waste disposal is a valuable commodity, the 'Dwellers do not have any particular boundaries to their "territory" (unless you consider the entire sewer network to be their Simplex). Likewise, the Armed Citizens of Block 292 is not a Simplex (although they like to think of themselves as one) because they have no goal or commodity — they simply live where they are for the moment because the feud between local secret societies makes it too dangerous to travel to someplace nicer.

A true Simplex is one like the Clone Temple, which has a valuable trade item (new clones for others), a clear territory (the Bank area itself), and like-minded citizens; those workers who were at the Banks when things went Whoopsie. Let's take a quick look at some of the more interesting and

powerful Simplexes.

Armed Forces

One might think (and indeed some still do) that the Armed Forces groups (note the plural, it's significant) would be so awesomely powerful that they would quickly squelch all other Alpha Simplexes, take those commodities they want, and reign supreme. This is not so, at least for the moment.

For one thing, there simply aren't enough Armed Forces members. Although chronically paranoid, The Computer wasn't stupid; It knew better than to arm too many citizens too powerfully. Even though it's hard to "overthrow" a network of microchips, it can be done by a large number of well-organized, well-armed, intelligent clones. That's why the Armed Forces was and is none of these things.

In addition, anytime the Vulture Simplexes start getting uppity, all their neighbors band together to stop them ... and you can bet there are enough black market plasma rifles and such floating around to arm a fair number of Joe-DOAs against the Vultures.

Another good reason for their failure to use their sophisticated machines and training to conquer the entire complex is that the Armed Forces have always relied on the kindness of strange people for their weaponry — to wit, R&D and The Computer. With Poppa C gone and R&D discovering a new sort of freedom, what weapons the Armed Forces members had at the time of the collapse is pretty much all they're going to get unless they're very very nice to everybody. And soldiers were never known for being nice. You see the problem.

Another thing the AF members were never known for was smarts. Go and read the *DOA Sector Travelogue*, or any of the *Paranoia* adventures you don't already have. Note the personalities and intelligence levels of the AF members in *Alpha Complexities*, for instance. Need I say more? Now remember that significant plural of four or five paragraphs ago? Well, the reason it was significant was because the AF is not a unified whole — they're a series of distrustful splinter groups within the overall Armed Forces. And if you were a powerful megalomaniac and you wanted to take over, and your only opponents were five groups you considered sheep, and one other powerful megalomaniac like yourself — who would you take on first?

Still and all, when the dust settles, they could do it. The Vulture groups that emerge triumphant from the infighting will have all the resources of the losers, and presumably only the smart ones will survive ... so it might yet come to pass that all of Alpha Complex is conquered by Armyville. But it'll be awhile: once they run out of ammo,



A short-lived Simplex.

the hand-to-hand fighting could go on for yearcycles.

R&D

If you were a nerd, with no protection other than your five-carat brain and a good line on some theoretical physics that could send the entire Complex rocketing to Uranus, what would you do when the Big Daddy — who kept you safe from all the nasty people with biceps — upped and died? You'd basically have three choices, just like the R&D employees of Alpha Complex (and of all weaker, smarter peoples down through time): you could roll over and die, giving in to the strength of the others (this has happened in a few sectors), you could sell your abilities to the highest bidder, and use their strength to protect you from the attacks of others (this is a very common result throughout the complex) or, as in LRH sector, you could start a new religion. Science. Magic. Some famous author once pointed out that they have a heckuva lot in common. Which means that if you control science, and you're dealing with dense folk (for instance, Infrareds and Vulture Troops), you can get away with a lot. Imagine a visit to the R&D Central Temple:

Before you is a vast iron door, at least seventeen feet high. It has metal rivets dotting its surface, and the only apparent means of egress is a small, palm-sized plate set five feet in from the lower right corner. Somewhere there is the crackling hiss of static, and then a voice booms out, awash with static, louder and more frightening than anything you've ever heard: "GOO HOSE SHRAAAA Skweeeep —" and with a spine-tingling scrape (not unlike the time you bit down on something hard and shiny in the Hot Fun), there is dead silence. But only for a moment. Then there is static again, softer, and a loud voice thunders "WHO GOES THERE? WHO DARES DISTURB THE SANCTUM OF THE GODS RISRICH AND DE'SANN?"

Got the picture? Hose 'em with technology long enough, and they'll start believing anything. Besides, technology was created in the first place to give the weak guys a chance among the strong.

So why would anyone go to R&D these days? Simple! It's one of the few places that still has stockpiles of (and occasionally even produces) interesting new devices. See, when the MegaWhoops came, the brains here knew they would need supplies, so they bartered some of the equipment they had for new materials. Now they produce items that need testing, and lend them to folk who visit R&Dland in exchange for that testing. And for materials. And for food. And other necessities like that. Think of it as a place you could go to get a wondrous magical item that might or

might not work. Wouldn't you be willing to trade food for that? (For more about R&D, see their entry elsewhere in this book).

Termination Center

This "Simplex" is given as an example of a "nation that did not survive." In the daycycles following MegaWhoops, when the world was dark and clone squared off against clone for control of resources, the highbrows at the Termination Center figured they had it made. After all, what place in all of Alpha Complex was more feared and respected? The clones there declared themselves an independent Simplex, and offered generous terms to their neighbors in exchange for their immediate surrender. Clone oh clone, were they in for a surprise.

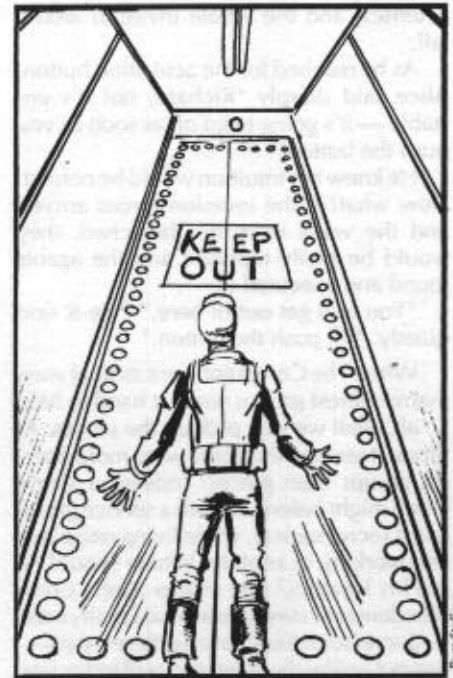
About one week after the crash came the Riots of '01 and one of the first things to go was the Termination Center — for along with being feared, it was also hated. And since there was no longer anyone to reward you for turning in your buddies, the practice pretty much ground to a halt. As did the Termination Center.

The Outer dwellers

This is a very interesting Simplex, because it's actually made up of folk living Outside the dome. It's possible to get Outside without being picked up by one of their patrols, but I wouldn't want to try two out of three. These fellas are a little nasty about visitors, and they cordon Alpha Complex like a corral around cattle. One reason for this hostility is the makeup of the Simplex: its population consists of renegade Sierra Clubbers, Black Disk Clan survivors, and all those other loony cyberpunks you've come to know and love. None have a particularly good reason to like Alpha Complex (especially the poor, persecuted Sierra Club), but the population of Outerland is at least half Alpha Complexians, so they want to maintain a modicum of relations. They might be planning a grand invasion or a slow infiltration, but one thing is certain: they're up to something.

Politics, Trade, and Warfare

It would be tough to detail all the alliances, protection pacts, uneasy peaces and downright bared-teeth hatreds that proliferate among the Simplexes, because there are so darn many of them. Suffice to say that, like the old sports adage, on any given day any given Simplex could be allied or at war with any other. Of the "big three" listed here, R&Dland is currently trying to negotiate a favorable trade agreement with Armyland, while Vultureland sends spies and *agents provocateur* to mess things up. Meanwhile, there is something very hush-hush and secret and even downright scary



A trip to an R&D enclave.

going on between the Clonelanders and the Outer dwellers. And as you saw at the beginning of this whole article, Powerland and Technoland are about to settle some old scores, one way or another. So what are they all fighting over anyway? Well, there's plenty of grudge matches yet to go, but the prime mover (as always) is "supply." See the article on Supply and Demand for more

Clone Banks

The clone banks Simplex is much like the R&D Simplex — closed, mysterious ... if anyone tries to attack it they threaten to blow up the valuable commodity they control! In fact, there is a great, almost-friendly-but-not-quite rivalry between R&D and the Bank to see who can come up with the best special effects for visitors. R&D has the technological edge, but the Cloners can do some scary things with half-grown homunculi (rumors that the Cloners are planning to take over the Complex with their mindless zombie-clones are true — er, completely false.) One difference is that where R&D leases (and expects return, or their products have a nasty habit of blowing up), the Banks sell, and sell dear. New life ain't cheap. And what do the Cloners want, aside from food and so on? Well, of all things, games are very popular throughout the Simplex. After all, if you had eternal life, you might start getting mighty bored.

details, but simply put: some peoples gets what others wants. There are ways to negotiate this sort of thing, but laser fire is so much more colorful! Not that — now that clone replacements are so scarce — the Simplex natives are eager to die or anything. It's just that they're so used to shooting things that it's hard to break the habit.

Other methods are being used as well: infiltration, sabotage, you name it. That's why each individual Simplex is as paranoid as the whole complex used to be.

So how exactly do two Simplexes fight? Well, as in most wars, the preliminaries involve diplomatic missions, spies trying to detect buildups of weapons and troops across the "border," and planning by the bigwigs. Given the close quarters, truly destructive combat is as harmful to the victor as the loser, so most Simplex wars are fought with a few opening rounds of subversion, a quick invasion by troops and perhaps a backup mercenary group or two, and a final firefight between the invaders and the ruling junta of the target Simplex. The goal of the attackers is simple: carry off plunder, or destroy the entire "government" of the invaded Simplex, and get the rest of the populace to submit to the new rule. Since most Alpha Complexers are used to following orders, this isn't too hard.

How to Use 'Em in Your Campaign

Simplexes are a grand kind of thing — hundreds of clones banded together with all kinds of political, social, and economic goals. What good are they in a role-playing environment?

Well, for one thing, Troubleshooter groups (see their entry in this book) have to be hired by *someone* to do those interesting missions. Why not a Simplex government in need of saboteurs or spies? What about those expeditions to the Undercity? And there's always the old "Seven Samurai" plot of helping the small downtrodden Simplex save itself from bandits (or worse).

Another possibility is to have your play-

Treasure

Just as a quick aside, some of the goodies that are being fought over include: food, bots, botbrains, weapons, ammunition, raw materials, videotapes and other entertainments, security codes and computer chips, and biochemical supplements. There are rumors of huge stockpiles of such items hidden by The Computer long ago, down in the lower levels. Some of the weaker Simplexes have sent expeditions to locate these treasures rather than get involved in local wars.

ers live in a particular Simplex. They can be given missions by the moral equivalent of "the Tribal Elders," such as diplomatic envoys, explorers, or representatives to a multi-Simplex meeting (which is of course attacked by someone, breaking up the group and forcing your players to make their way home through hostile territory ...).

Speaking of which, territoriality is the most interesting part of the New Complex — so your players can simply explore, finding all the new religions and political units that have sprung up throughout the complex (see the mini-adventure for an example).

So What if The Computer Did Come Back?

Do you really think that, once they've had a taste of power, any of these guys is going to give up control of his or her Simplex? What exactly could The Computer do to them anyway, without some muscle to back it up? Does this mean that The Computer will never come back, even if it comes back?

Well, keep in mind that the rulers of the Simplexes have to keep their inhabitants happy, 'cause one thing The Computer could do to take back power is incite riots among the disgruntled masses; another way would be to, Lucifer-like, take it slow and easy and perhaps recruit disgruntled FCCCP leaders in a simultaneous uprising across the Simplex. This may explain why Simplex leaders are reluctant to have known FCCCP-ers in their territory. But who knows? It could be back already, working slowly ... slowly

Intro to Sleepers

I'm not really sure I should even tell you this part ... but I'm going to because I promised to tell you everything you needed to know to survive, and this is one of those things.

Have you heard anything about a bunch of clones called Sleepers? I didn't think so. They're brand new, and clones are just beginning to realize the power they have.

It's kind of hard to explain: you've got a tongue-print, right, given you by The Computer. When it gave you that print, it entered the unique code into its security files. When you put your tongue on the scanner, it reads your code, accesses the security file, and finds out who you are.

Now what seems to have happened is that some clones' prints were removed from the security file — but that had an unexpected side-effect. Maybe a first-hand account will help explain it better.

Sleeper Caveat

Sleepers is a really new new concept — something that players may never run across ... or you may wish to have one of your players become one. Rules for their use are in the "new rules" section; this part describes just what we mean when we say:

Sleepers

by Jonatha Ariadne Caspian

It looked like a decent risk: a small HPD & Mind Control service-group relic fawning over a wheezing but still-operational input bench. Dianek and I could probably scrounge a few Happy Pills, get the coordinates of a bombless — okay, supposedly bombless — cubicle, maybe pick up some real Hot Fun after nearly eight daycycles of straight Algaechips. I mean, HPD&MC: who would expect rocket scientists?

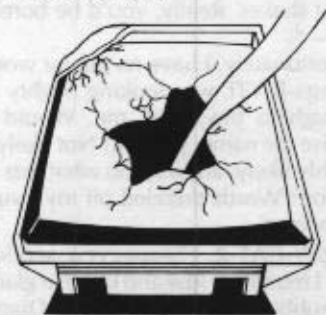
We came at them slow and obvious, in case there was still energy in those neuro-whips. Dianek did her confused dither perfectly — Teela-O couldn't have played it better.

"Citizens! At last, a bastion of civilization in the great WilderNet! Oh, I swoon with joy, and sing praise to thee, Friend Computer, in my time of Need!" I trailed along, kind of casual, letting them get wound up in her overflowing act.

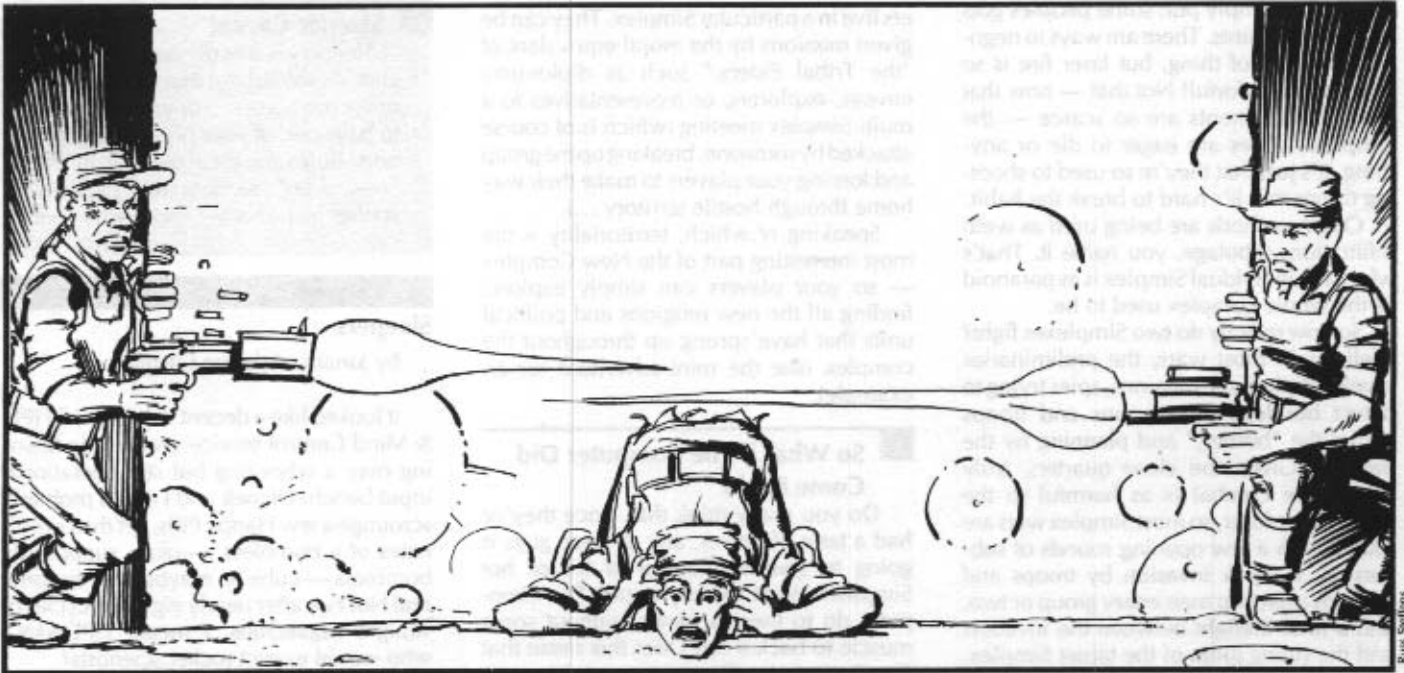
These days, letting a Yellow do the talking wasn't so much unusual as it was self-preservation: Yellows are near enough the middle that they don't offend anybody. Indigos like me — well, there've been rumors of Infrared uprisings; the downtrodden and oppressed throwing off the yoke of slavery and massacring the higher ranks. Haven't seen it myself, but I don't want to seem too above the curve, just in case.

They seemed to fall for all of it — the tattered jumpsuits, the Hygiene Officer-less dirty fingernails, the wrecked reflex. We didn't even have to join the service group or declare mutations!

"Please, kind citizens, a moment of your shareware," Dianek cooed, wiping her hair out of her eyes.



I must be cracking up.



Boom Coming Over position.

Their leader, one Mega-B-YTE-4 by his coveralls, snapped smartly to attention. "Do you acknowledge the one true Computer?" he thundered unnecessarily loudly. Maybe this wasn't such a safe station after all, I thought as I assumed the Boom-Coming-Over position. But nothing boomed. Slowly, I got to my knees. Nothing even whispering of retaliation. Perhaps Alpha was stabilizing. "I love a clone who loves The Computer," Dianek replied coquettishly.

"State your name and service group."

It was going to work! I wished I still had a secret society to chant the motto of, I was so excited. Dimly, I heard Dianek recite her full name, clone number, and service group, but I was already envisioning Bouncy Bubble Beverage and real cots —

"Yours, too, hot-brain."

I was stupefied. "My what?" I managed to squeak, trying to sidle surreptitiously away.

"State your name and service group."

"Is that really necessary? I mean, Dianek has a perfectly lovely service group. Mine's no great shakes. Really, you'd be bored. I mean —"

Unfortunately, I have no gift for words, and Mega-B-YTE was looking mighty big and tough to tiny, dark me. Would he recognise the name, you ask? Not likely ... not highly likely, anyway. So what was my hesitation? Words drizzled off my tongue as he loomed.

"Cop-Y-CAT-2, Seepeeyew-service-group," I mumbled low and fast. He glared at the grubby indigo jumpsuit and Dianek jumped to my defence.

"Our supervisor wasn't using it any more, and his yellow was a little too ventilated for comfort ... and we thought, y'know, safety in rank and all that ... we were gonna ask if you had a spare set of yellow togs ... PLC isn't functioning ..."

One of her excuses registered in Mega-B-YTE's brain, and he went to key in our responses. I settled back to wait — but the terminal responded almost instantly. Guess Megawhoops cleared enough big chunks of memory that access times were way up now.

Yearcycles of CPU conditioning focussed my hearing on the low audio-response signal, and my brain idly processed the stentorian accents of The Computer as it informed Mega-B-YTE ...

"Subject Terminated. Clone 3 activated, assignment Troubleshooter Mission IOGC.MA.O.7."

We were sunk! Crashed! I tried to catch Dianek's eye, but she was rolling it for the rest of the squad. Please, baby, please —

Mega-B-YTE popped his heels together. "Telling Falsehoods to The Computer! Why, you should be terminated for that, but you already have been. Why aren't you on your Mission? Where's your Team Leader?"

My brain whirred like a hard card B Box. He thought I'd lied about my clone number! Maybe he wouldn't check ... I could see Dianek trying to coax a suitable dither into her lungs. Between us, we should be able —

But intelligence glittered Blackly in the eye of Mega-B-YTE's Orange subordinate. She grabbed him by the ear and tugged him down to her height, whispering furiously.

His face shaded Red, then Violet with rage.

His tone rivaled The Computer's klaxon warnings as he boomed, "Detail Officer front and center! This clone's giving false information. We need a positive I.D. We need a tongueprint! Grab him and haul him over to the tongueprinter! Hell, we don't even need all of him if he's a sleeper. Just the tongue will do! Don't let him get away with it!"

They were converging on me faster than I could back up! But that HPD&MC officer had bellowed his last. Quicker than you could say Mega-B-YTE, flashing laser beams in all colors laced the station. I crawled under the LaserNet in Boom-Coming-Over position, hoping Dianek had her usual fast reactions, and headed for the darkest foottube I could find — on the run again.

It's not easy being Indigo ... especially when no one knows you are but you.

In fact, that is the literal truth: No one knows I am. No one who cares. No one who counts. I'm a wipe, a sleeper, a face without a name, a dog-bot without a bone.

Quite coincidentally, I've achieved what Old Reckoners and Alphans alike have praised and searched for and held unattainable: Invisibility. I'm not sure it's that wonderful.

On disk B, I can't exactly complain, as I'm fairly certain that I'd have been toasted extra crispy in the aftermath of the Great CPU Turkey Shoot if I hadn't gone invis. Why? Well, I work — used to work — in CPU. Never mind what Sector. Oh, okay, but only the last two initials: -OA. You never know when The Computer's booting up again.

Things didn't change with a bang or a drumroll or even a good old-fashioned Teela-O thumper-pop: they just went blank. Our screens, that is. There we were in CPU, a bunch of desktop hackies, myself included, staring at darkened monitors.

Guilt cycled through me: could I have caused this malfunction? Would I be disciplined — even terminated?! I figure it came near to half a day-cycle before I asked if the green on my right was experiencing tech troubles. It just doesn't pay to be the first to report. 'Course, by then it was time to go home.

Next day, though, The Computer still wasn't up, and Stool-Y-RAT said that he'd heard the entire service group was dark. Picking my teeth with the diskette couldn't have caused that! Geek-O-NRD just sat down at his cubicle and stared at the screen. I would have, too except that I had some Hot Fun fibers stuck in my cuspids from breakfast. And as I was getting a fresh diskette, it occurred to me that maybe that WAS what was wrong with The Computer.

It's terrible having a little shred caught real tight right at the bottom of your front teeth 'cause you can't really suck it out, and you can feel it with your tongue ... and sometimes you can get just the corner of the diskette sleeve or your fingernail in there, but mostly it's just wedged in tight and annoying. If I could experience these discomforts, so could Friend Computer.

I slouched over to my cubby and grabbed my regulation Teela-O flashlight. Poked its little beam down deep into the drive slot and peered around. Wasn't exactly empty: I saw the sparkle of a Swill-Stix candy wrapper, dust rats the size of some circuit boards, a broken Rand-Y-LZD figurine: hey, that was treasonous!

When I straightened up to find something to fish out all this garbage, I saw my whole Yellow-Orange Node staring at me. Then Cop-Y-CAT took out his Teela-O and found a crevice to shine it into. Armed with toothpicks and flashlights, we went at it. Nobody said much during pry detail. I guess the less said about treason and treasonous articles, the better, especially when we couldn't be sure which item might have caused the fatal crash. Was it the Neuro-whip ticklers? The Foamy Clone Shave residue?

The more we picked and pulled and unstrung from those ports, the more there seemed to be to unwedge. Nix-O-NNO found almost 18 minutes of tape crammed under a binary gate.

I think we would have found it, eventually, but toward the close of daycycle, they stopped us. Called everybody up front to step forward and be counted. Name and clone number they asked me, and knowing they had me dead to rights, I replied "Wood-I-ALN-4" like a good citizen.

The access light flashed, the hard card hummed and rattled in its B Box.

"Spell that."

I did, restless. The others had been identified instantly, and shuffled behind the partitions of the next Node. I could smell the sizzle of laser fire, see faint bursts of color reflected off the ceiling, hear the wet thumps of the terminated. I hoped my next clone would be more successful.

"Service Group?"

"See ... elpee. Uh, pee-elsee." Service group? They didn't know who I was! I tried to cover my involuntary response with pseudo-nervousness. "I'm always tripping over those initials." Dared I hope? She had turned back to her screen, twirling a lock of hair absently on her shoulder. Her fingernails weren't clean. I snuck a look at mine — they weren't clean, either. I wished I had a diskette handy to pick them with — I didn't want a run-in with a Hygiene Officer now.

"Uh, this is really bad. You know? I can't find you, you'll have to step up to the tongueprinter —"

Tarnish it, why hadn't I remembered the tongueprinter? I wasn't thinking clearly with her hovering so close. I lolled out the treacherous body part and stepped up to the machine, knowing I was licked.

Dianek-Y-TON-5, read her yellow jumpsuit tag. She brushed her hair out of her eyes helplessly. What a mess she was. What a — a tush she had! I resolved that, if I survived this, we would run away together.

"Error message 31, invalid parameters" flashed on the monitor screen for a split

second, and then information started scrolling past.

"Teela-O-MLY, originally Wuttan-O-FOR, decanted from Creche 314/f.4g5-FOR ..."

It was the cribnotes to a "Lifestyles of the Rich and UltraViolet" interview with Teela-O-MLY! Teela, who changed her Sector for fame and — wait! My heart pounded. My Brain leapt. I wasn't found out! Saved by a simple malfunction!

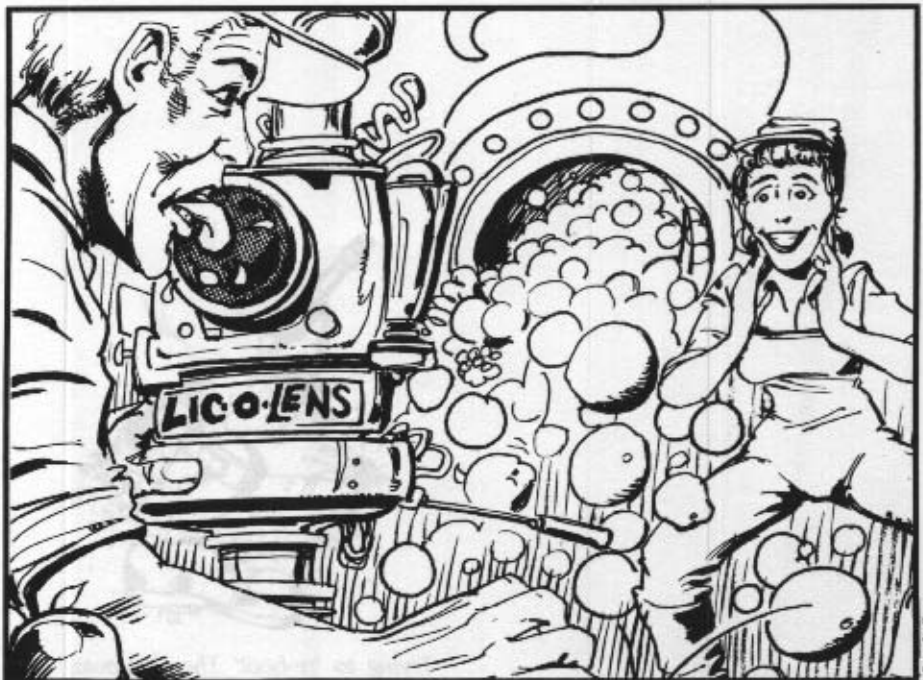
"This could mean my job," Dianek moaned.

"Let's just leave," I said casually.

She looked at me. She shrugged, she blushed, she wiped the hair from her eyes in endearing confusion. We left.

Of course, life on the run isn't all optical ROM and scanners, but we've had our share of good times, Dianek and I. We've since replicated that first accident to prove that some of Friend Computer's subroutines just aren't prepared to handle ID-lessness.

I doubt there was a clone in CPU who would have considered lying when asked to input his name — why, it's a terminal offense! But my name and tongueprint aren't on the masterbase any more; I'm a "File Not Found," a backdoor access route to memory sectors without number! We've found references to flybot storerooms, plasticized delivery dumpsites, a printscreen that's labeled "Egress to Outside." Once we even got a list of security codes for Hoar-U-NEA's personal file dump when all we'd entered at the WANTS & NEEDS prompt was "Want my MTV." We may not have



The power of Sleepers.

gotten transportation, but we had Hoar-U's Sector-long list of suspected Secret Society affiliations and confirmed mutant sightings, anyway.

Unfortunately, it's hard to just filch anything from The Computer this way. What with MegaWhoops and all, there aren't that many working terminals — those that do function are almost to the desktop guarded by some reactionary service group. As I've explained, they rarely help us, being more interested in tongue-in-checkpoint conversations. I can't see myself sitting in their chairs with my tongue glued to the terminal forever — and I can't see me leaving the station without it, no matter how painless they promise the operation might be.

Occasionally we've found a node — usually HPD&MC lackies — who haven't yet plugged in to the concept of Sleepers,

and who haven't the chutzpah to ask why a lone Indigo needs sharetime through their port. Yes, I still keep my navies for just such a breakthrough. But we can't stay in one place too long in case someone questions the heavy on-line times.

Dianek wants us to head for Outside, Back-to-Natural, to revive the Human Condition (she may have been treasonously Reconstructed by some Sierra Clubbers or Humanists at one time, but I've no hard data). Crazy notion, I think. Instant termination without activation of subsequent clones. Who has the lives to waste?

If only I could find a small-enough station, an empty station, I'd stop and kluge together a WorkNet of my own. Then I could hide my true access time in a web of phantom operators and tap in whenever I wanted! When I worked in CPU, I dare confess, I was not happy. Everything was routine. Below routine. Sub-subroutine.

Now, I live for those random downloads of bliss. Who knows what logic I can leap at my next connection? Who knows what treasures I can find?

Postscript on Sleepers
You can look in the rules section for more about how your players can be sleepers. If you let someone be a sleeper, be careful: he'll have the same power as Wood-I to confound the remaining library files with a flick of the tongue.
On the other hand, since you control what information he'll get, it could be a lot of fun for you ... not to mention the "Fugitive"-esque nature of someone constantly on the run. In this way, Sleepers are especially useful for small groups of players (like one or two).



Trying to 're-boot' The Computer is ... frowned upon.



Chapter Four: Old Concepts Revisited

Gearing Up

As if trying to comprehend all these brand new things wasn't enough, I've got some more curve balls for you. Sorry — some more things to think about that are different from what you'd expect.

I'm talking now about things you've known all your life — security clearances, Troubleshooters, secret societies. They're still here in MegaWhoops Alpha, but they're ... different now. What would you expect from all these Computer institutions after The Computer dies?

The first thing we'll talk about is Security Clearance. Now, on the surface, you'd expect that that trash just disappeared completely — only The Computer cared about your clearance, right? Wrong.

Don't forget the Bureaucratic Empire. They still believe in that stuff, and bow down to higher-level clones. And FCCCP sure uses it. And the library files are still keyed to your last clearance, and — well, read this and you'll understand:

All-Dressed Up and Anyplace To Go Security Clearance After The Crash

by Chris Kubasik

Once upon a time, The Computer bestowed each clone with a sense of identity, social status, and a group of similarly dressed peers through the use of security clearance. Now the clone of today's Alpha Complex is an island floating in a sea of lots of other islands, with all the islands bumping into one another, causing all sorts of damage and creating quite a mess.

Combined with the loss of drugs and other mind-controlling techniques once supplied by The Computer, the lack of enforced security clearance leaves the citizens of Alpha Complex to ponder such questions as: "Who am I?" "What if I find out, and I don't like me?" and "Who is that guy over there yelling at me to get up to the front lines and, even if he is a Blue, can I kill him, run really fast, and live long enough to get home and have dinner?"

Under dressing

Sol-U-TUD-4 is a creepy little guy with the charisma of a tapeworm. After working his way up to Ultraviolet, he spent his days in happy bliss digging traitors out of the woodwork and having The Computer fulfill his every desire.

Since the MegaWhoops, though, things have been very different.

Three days after waiting patiently for some sort of signal from The Computer as to what was going on, Sol-U left his suite and wandered out into the halls of Alpha Complex for the first time in years. After walking around for fifteen minutes, a mob of Reds spotted him and gave chase. These were former Troubleshooters seeking revenge on all the Ultraviolets who had sent them out on countless suicidal and useless missions over the yearcycles. They were out for blood.

Saved by a miraculous surge of adrenaline, Sol-U managed to turn enough corners to lose the mob and get back to his suite in one piece.

He pondered the situation and, deciding that the old order was definitely in trouble, took the yellow fabric from one of his couches and made a jumpsuit from it. When next he wandered from his suite for supplies, he was Heck-Y-NOT-1, a spirited supporter of purging the complex of anyone of a clearance of Blue or higher. Alone in his suite, however, he continues to access files with his Ultraviolet clearance, tracking down Blues, Indigos, Violets, and fellow Ultraviolets, in an attempt to gain favor with his new compatriots.

Private Clearance and Public Clearance

Most security clearances on file in The Computer's memory systems were retained after the crash. Thus, a clone trying to access information from the library is still limited by his clearance. In life after the MegaWhoops this is known as a clone's *private clearance*.

On the other hand, because The Computer is no longer scanning and whiiiiir-

riiiiing all over the Complex with its infinite cameras, a clone can, if he's careful, put on any color he likes. The color a clone wears is called his *public clearance*.

Many clones have discovered the benefits of overdressing when going to work. In the post-MegaWhoops world, many clones still respond to colors in an archetypal knee-jerking fashion. Most bureaucracies of the complex are clinging to the rituals of the past, fearing both a world without clearly defined personal boundaries and the possible return of The Computer. If this means taking orders from someone dressed in Indigo who yesterday wore black, then so be it. As any bureaucrat knows, it's better to follow policy and point the finger tomorrow, rather than stir up trouble today.

There are even really devilish clones who own an entire range of clearance uniforms. They wear Red to riot meetings, Blue to riot-control meetings, and Violet to making-Red-riots-work-for-you meetings.

Not all the clones of the complex are so nimble with needle and thread, however, and a great many citizens long for the

Overdressing

Bill-R-DDS-3 is a charismatic clone with a ton of chutzpah. Before the MegaWhoops he was a gopher for PLC, but positive he should have been in charge of his sector's office. He was always disappointed that The Computer never recognized his talents.

Several days after the MegaWhoops, Bill-R decided The Computer was gone for good. Realizing this was the opportunity he had been waiting for, he followed his boss home from work. The next day, flashing his trademark winning smile and wearing a green uniform, Bill-R explained that PLC HQ had put him in charge while their former boss was off in DOA Sector dealing with riots.

The bureaucrats, unable to check the story and badly in need of a boss to keep things running smoothly, bought the bit and Bill-R's been in charge ever since. He's joined the office up with a food vat workers' Simplex, has made a handsome profit for everyone involved, and now heads the mini-state's council.

The Story of a Grey

The most infamous Grey wandering the corridors of Alpha Complex is a subversive clone once known as Dan-G-ALF, who now goes by the name Dalgalf the Grey.

Even before the MegaWhoops, Dalgalf was considered by his peers at HPD and Mind Control as a bit on the irascible side. He frequently conducted personal experiments with drugs supplied by The Computer for the purpose of keeping the populace in line. By adjusting the chemicals slightly, Dalgalf negated the effects of certain mind-numbing drugs put into the Complex's food, water and air supplies, and created new pharmaceuticals that actually enhanced the senses.

His most beloved creation was called Now-er, for it made the present moment that much more immediate. When he and fellow office workers had nothing better to do (which was most of the time at HPD & MC) they'd take *pings* (their slang term for doses) of Dalgalf's latest experiments.

But the amateur chemist was a true-born anarchist at heart, and when the MegaWhoops signaled the end of the old regime, he was out the door in nothing flat. Tossing his Green uniform into a garbage chute, he declared that he was leaving The System and would now play his life out by rules of his own design. Donning grey robes (to signify his break with society's roles), he began his quest to turn others on to his way of thinking, distributing tablets of joy and searching for the components to make more Pings of Now-er.

The general populace's reaction to this tall, skinny, imp-like clone ranges from terror to awe — reactions due almost entirely to Dalgalf's style of dressing. Not only has grey never been seen before in the Complex, but to most citizens the notion of not wearing a color assigned by The Computer is as alien as having a good time at a briefing session.

simple days of watching endless episodes of Teela O' Malley. Along with the remaining bureaucracy, these clones respect official clearance codes, wear their proper colors, and gun down anyone doing otherwise.

Unofficial Bureaucracy

Security clearance colors are also used to establish order within groups, with or without the surviving bureaucracy's permission. Because it is ability that now rules, the clone who can bash your skull in (or can fix the FoodGoop Dispenser, or can simply lead because of his innate charm) is far more likely to be listened to than the goon in Blue. Many of the Simplexes, roving raiders, and service groups (now trying to make do without The Computer) dress their leaders and valuable members in white and other high clearance colors even though everyone knows they are "really" Yellows or Reds. Underlings in the group might be dressed in black, even though last week they were The Computer's High Programmers.

Obviously, moving about in Alpha Complex is a tricky business. Some groups lynch a Indigo on sight, others bow down to him. Some groups only respect clearances worn by members of their own group, and others play by the old rules with whomever they run into. Some people want to know clones who can tap into the valuable library files, and others view any use of computer files as an attempt to bring The

Computer back.

No matter what game a clone might be up to, it pays to think a bit about how to dress after getting up in the morning.

Greys and Rainbows

There are also a number of citizens who have taken the opportunity provided by The Computer's demise to completely leave the system of security clearances and not wear *any* clearance uniform. These citi-

zens are called Greys or Rainbows, after the grey or multi-colored clothes they wear.

They claim that no citizen has authority over another citizen *unless* the authority is voluntarily given.

Most Greys and Rainbows are killed within days.

The Yo-Yo Effect

Viruses written by High Programmers before the Mega-Whoops still roam the circuits of Alpha Complex, quite a few of which were attempts to alter the security clearances of large numbers of clones. Some of these viruses were designed to lower as many security clearances as possible (so

Postscript on Security

How this information affects your campaign is entirely up to you, and depends partly on what environment your PCs are playing in. If they're part of a Simplex, you have to decide if that Simplex uses security clearances. If they're a mercenary Troubleshooter team (see below), security clearance might not matter as much, though it will certainly color (you should pardon the expression) the reactions other characters have to them.

The only thing that's constant (if such a term can ever be used in reference to The Computer) is security clearance inhibitions on accessing library files. This dilemma can be solved simply by having any working terminal malfunction whenever a PC attempts to use it. If this seems unfair to you, you'll have to keep track of your PCs' original security levels. It's your own fault.



Greys and Rainbows are a new sight in MegaWhoops Alpha.

that the High Programmer would be that much more powerful). Others, designed by forerunners to the Greys and Rainbows, tried to get all clones elevated to the clearance of Ultraviolet so that all citizens would be equal. Others were written to make everyone a Red. Or Green (just for kicks).

When The Computer was functioning, it was able to head these programs off. Since it is no longer around to defend its files, many of these viruses are finding their targets. Entire security clearance storage units are frequently altered. A clone with an Orange clearance at the time of the MegaWhoops might access computer files and discover he now has an Indigo clearance, and then a week later switch on a terminal on only to find he had been demoted to Red.

This can cause the uncanny feeling that The Computer is still around, since that's kinda what always used to happen. Most clones take the arbitrary changing of security clearance as sign to clean up their act.

Introduction to Trouble

Here's an important note for MegaWhoops Alpha: what happened to all the Troubleshooters? They used to be The Computer's elite (sort of) and The Computer's beloved (even more sort of), and they were a force to be reckoned with in Alpha Complex.

Now that The Computer's gone, did the

The Most Important Section In This Book

No, it doesn't contain key rules or changes. No, it doesn't have far-reaching effects on the state of the world economy, nor does it contain the clues to a hidden million dollar prize.

This section is important because it is about your players.

Specifically, your players used to be Troubleshooters in the service of The Computer, and the smoothest transition into the new game will be for them to stay that way. Therefore, this section pertains to almost everything your players are/will want to do. Unless you're very adventuresome. (In which case your players can be members of a Simplex or whatever you please. Keep in mind, though, that the Troubleshooter format is one of the best around for generating adventures.)

Up until now we've been discussing "macro" concepts. With this section, you'll be able to anchor your thoughts on something familiar.

Troubleshooters just vanish as well? After all, they were the arms and hands of The Computer. Now that the head is dead, you'd expect the arms to fall off sooner or later.

Well, it didn't happen that way, as you'll see. The Troubleshooters are still very much around and very much a force to be reckoned with — more so, in fact, than ever before. Who else would want or accept all the nasty disgusting jobs that have to be done now that The Computer is gone?

The New Troubleshooters

by Bill Slavicsek

Two clones entered *The Retired Warbot*, a Bouncy Bubble bar and Cold Fun dispensary that served as a hangout for Troubleshooter teams between missions. Technically, since The Computer collapsed, they were all "between missions."

The two clones, both decked out in gear that marked them as Vulture Warriors, scanned the huge chamber as they readied nasty-looking weapons. Their penetrating gazes fell on armored clones of all descriptions. These were the Troubleshooters: cool, confident, composed. They were a breed apart, a select fraternity with an impressive amount of powerful personal weaponry hanging from every available belt hoop, bandelero, and holster.

Satisfied that everything was as safe as possible (given the circumstances), the Vultures nodded to each other and motioned to someone outside the door. Music began to play a trumpeting welcome, and in walked a tall, proud clone in flowing white robes and shiny white boots — an Ultraviolet High Programmer. Once that rank meant something. Now, in MegaWhoops Alpha, security clearances were only as good as a clones' ability to make the authority stick.

It also helped to have a tac nuke or two handy.

The High Programmer, his Vulture Warriors at the ready, addressed the assembled Troubleshooters. "Attention loyal citizens! I am Boyr-U-DUM, High Pro-



It must be Shatterday.

grammer of DUM Sector. I am looking for Troubleshooter team XK46311B, also known as Kell-Y's Heroes. I have an important mission for them. Failure to undertake this mission is treason."

The chamber fell silent. Boyr-U's guards tensed, expecting some trouble. Boyr-U just smiled and waited for a response.

An armored warrior stood up. He was a tall, broad individual, covered from head to foot in spiked, reflective armor. A laser pistol was strapped to each hip, hung low for quick draws. A bandelero of ammo clips, treasonously multi-colored barrels, and grenades stretched across his chest, and a plasma generator was slung over his shoulder. Sitting at his table were five other clones, each one decked-out in an outfit that appeared more deadly than the last.

"I'm Kell-Y," the armored clone said as he hefted a grenade and casually tossed it from hand to hand. "And these are the Heroes." The equally armored clones sitting around the table grinned toothily, casually unholstering their favorite explosive armaments.

Kell-Y's eyes never left the High Programmer's. They twinkled, almost laughing, as he continued to juggle the grenade. "Boyr-U-DUM here wants us to go on a mission, Heroes," Kell-Y said. "But you know, he never said 'please.' What the hey! Let's do some good!"

Five barrels came up as one, each spitting slugs or fire or laser bolts — sometimes all three at once. A grenade flew, sending every clone in the place dodging for cover. When the smoke and energy haze cleared, all that remained by the door were three pairs of smoking boots. The white ones were still shiny.

Kell-Y glanced about the chamber. "Any more must-take missions out there? Any more superior-types with unquestionable orders?" No one answered. "Then let's have a round of Fizz-Whiz for the house, on me!"

The Computer has gone off line, been unplugged, turned monitor up on the keyboard of life. And with its sudden demise, certain facets of Alpha Complex society have undergone radical changes. But what part of society is most important to players and player characters? Well, we're here to ask the musical question: What happened to The Computer's loyal Troubleshooters when ol' microchips went down?

In the brave new world of the post-Crash Complex, player characters still belong to elite units known as Troubleshooter teams. But there is one important difference: without The Computer to direct them, Troubleshooters have an unprecedented freedom of choice — and the armor and firepower to back up their new constitutional rights!

So, you might ask, without The Computer to force the issue, why do clones still engage in this life-threatening occupation? Hang on a nanocycle and we'll tell you ...

In the old daycycles, being a Troubleshooter was dangerous business. But it was also glamorous, prestigious, and downright fun (compared to almost anything else in Alpha Complex, anyway). There was a level of responsibility associated with being one of The Computer's elite agents, being called upon to solve the Big Problems, to deal with the Big Menaces. It was a perilous career, but one of the best offered in Alpha Complex (which, admittedly, isn't saying much). Is it any wonder that many of these clones elected to remain Troubleshooters after The Computer went bye-bye?

Once they were bumbling with nothing to set them apart other than the notice of The Computer. But those daycycles are gone. Sure, there are still bumbling and incompetents among the Troubleshooter ranks, but that type is few and far between. Now, by necessity, they must be good at what they do or they won't live to see the next sunlamp lit.

Now, Troubleshooters retain their original training in the various service groups, but they remain loyal to only three things: themselves (always), The Eventual Return of The Computer (some of them), and the clone with the most available credits (whenever possible) — not necessarily in that order. That's not to say they've become a totally mercenary lot, but Troubleshooters do need to eat in these less-plentiful daycycles.

Missions

The new Troubleshooter doesn't wait to be assigned to a mission. Oh sure, in those first hourcycles after The Computer crashed lots of different individuals and groups tried to take command of the Troubleshooter teams. Some succeeded and now have their own bodyguards/henchmen to handle whatever missions they need accomplished. But the majority of the Troubleshooter teams realized that they actually had the power now, and they weren't all that sure that the other segments of Alpha Complex had their or The Computer's best interests at heart.

Until The Computer comes back on line and that familiar mechanical voice crackles over their com-units, the Troubleshooters are on their own — a breed apart, untrusted but necessary in the post-crash complex. So the Troubleshooters hang out in places like the newly refurbished *Retired Warbot*, watching for Commie Mutant Traitors to rear their ugly heads — or for some needy citizen with a generous amount of cold, hard wealth to show up and rent out their services.

Rewards

What kind of rewards can the new Troubleshooter look forward to? Well, since they don't have to settle for whatever whim hits The Computer's fancy anymore, the Troubleshooters can request any kind of reward they want. It's up to the gamemaster to decide if they get it.

Rewards in the pre-crash days included such things as official commendations, credit bonuses, public laudation, medica-

tion, and even personal supplies of Cold Fun. In the crashed complex, all of these rewards and more are available to enterprising Troubleshooter teams. Power, prestige, equipment — if someone needs a Troubleshooter team badly enough (and the particular mission calls for it), then no cost is too high to pay.

Of course, everyone's feeling the crunch these daycycles. Some clones may have more bot brains than they can use in six lifetimes, others can't find a one. So naturally not everything a Troubleshooter asks for is going to be available, even if the clone he's working for promises it. That's just the law of supply and demand at work, don't you know.

But if a team accepts a mission and then successfully completes it, they should be able to expect rewards equal to the trouble they went through. Usually. If not, collecting payment can become an adventure in and of itself!

Troubleshooter HQ

Once there was a place where all the good Troubleshooters spent their time. In this place they played games, watched Teela-O vidtapes, drank Bouncy Bubble, and waited for The Computer's call. This place was Troubleshooter Headquarters, and there were a number of them located throughout the vast network that is Alpha Complex.

That was thencycle. This is nowcycle.

Now Troubleshooter teams operate out of whatever location suits their fancy. They frequent the emerging alersatz pubs, cold fun bars, and Simplex inns, setting up shop in their favorite dark booths or at comfortable corner tables. Here they eat, drink and are merry, waiting for The Computer to call (for it is their fervent belief that it will call again some daycycle — or, at least, that's what they say they're waiting for). In the meantime, they'll take any mission that comes along — as long as the pay is good, the cause is just, and they have nothing better to do on that daycycle.

The new pubs and inns resemble their namesakes from the time of Old Reckoning, complete with wenchbots, thick aromas and sticky floors. Many have theme decors, while others are nothing more than simple one-room establishments. All are low key, since these recreational centers aren't exactly legal under The Computer. Of course, what The Computer doesn't know won't hurt it.

Many of these places contain bulletin boards where interested clones can tack notices for a Troubleshooter team. The team leaders keep an eye out for missions they want to tackle. They also watch to see what missions interest other teams. It pays to know what the competition is doing.



Kell-Y's Heroes pick and choose the missions they wish to accept.

Armor and Clones

Since the collapse of The Computer, Troubleshooters have had to adapt to a number of new challenges. For one thing, without The Computer to provide replacement clones, Troubleshooters suddenly need to be concerned with the very real problem of ceasing to exist.

The Clone Banks used to churn out clone families like clockwork. Each six-member clone family provided The Computer with six chances at a given task. Then it called up another clone family.

Now the Clone Banks are barricaded fortresses protected by the Clone Priests, stingily keeping their important secrets to themselves. No one knows what the Clone Lords are up to now that The Computer isn't monitoring them, but they certainly aren't providing Troubleshooters with automatic replacement clones.

To make matters worse, not every member of a clone family wants to rush off and become a Troubleshooter when his or her clone brother or sister buys the kelp farm. Without The Computer around to order a clone into service, many higher-numbered clone brothers and sisters are staying home rather than risk life and limb as a Troubleshooter. So if a Troubleshooter dies in the line of duty, the player must make a *Continuity Roll* to see if any remaining members of the player character's clone family will show up to replace him (see "The New Rules" chapter for more about *Continuity Rolls*).

Furthermore, without the Clone Banks, the infinite number of clones in Alpha Complex has just gotten finite. Every clone is more careful, less willing to shoot first. Death has suddenly become a Very Real Thing. Just try to ask The Computer.

Certain Troubleshooters have taken precautions one step further. They wear armor. Not just any armor, mind you, but special armor. Developed by R&D scientist Ian-I-STN just before The Crash, Armor-All IV provides maximum protection (four shifts — did you guess?) against all hostile forms of attack. It also looks neat. The armor consists of vacuum-formed battle armor coated with Ian-I's special clear reflective plastic.

How did these Troubleshooters wind up with such awesome armor? Simple, really. A team was at an R&D supply depot to pick up equipment for a mission when The Crash occurred. In the resulting chaos and confusion, the Troubleshooters barricaded themselves in the depot with Ian-I. As luck would have it, Ian-I was the only scientist stationed at this small depot. So he made a deal with the Troubleshooters. If they promised to test everything he worked on, he would provide them with armor and gizmos for as long as they liked. That group has sold "franchise rights" (one of their members



The FSA Sector Battlebot

was a Zany Eddie) to other teams, and now many are testing and wearing Ian-I's creations.

Teams

Troubleshooter teams consist of approximately six members, each with a special skill or ability that complements the rest of the squad. Teams are usually formed around a charismatic and formidable leader, but many teams are made up of six equal partners banded together for survival, profit, and fun.

While the old standards of stay alert, trust no one, and keep your laser handy still apply, most Troubleshooter team members have come to depend on each other to such an extent that the previous backstabbing has gone out of style — at least in an overt fashion. Danger the likes of which was never seen in the old Alpha Complex requires that Troubleshooters remain loyal to each other. The enemy is Out There. If the enemy also comes In Here, then the Troubleshooter team is doomed.

A Typical "Good" Team: Eliot-G-NES's Unlaserables are a typical "good" team of Troubleshooters. By "good" team, we mean that they are loyal to the ideals of Alpha Complex and The Computer. They will not take missions that undermine the complex any more than it has already been undermined. Operating out of *The Cancelled Clone Inn*, the Unlaserables are always on the lookout for a way to help restore The Computer. They protect defenseless clones from the evil Special Interest Groups that have appeared in The Computer's absence.

A Typical "Bad" Team: Mugs-I-MLN's Mauraunders are a typical "bad" team of

Troubleshooters. They are out for nothing less than the destruction of Alpha Complex as we know it. They rob, cheat, steal, murder, and generally wreak havoc throughout the simplexes. They look for new and inventive ways to destroy any semblances of central authority. They bully defenseless clones for the Special Interest Groups that have appeared since The Crash.

A Typical "Neutral" Team: Kell-Y-DOA's Heroes are a typical neutral team. They take any mission that comes along. It doesn't matter if it helps or hurts The Computer or Alpha Complex, as long as Kell-Y and his team survive in one piece and make a substantial profit.

Rogues

Not all Troubleshooters are part of a team. Some have become rogues, unwilling to let go of the old fears and place their trust in anyone but themselves. These rogues handle assignments where single operatives are best. Some even feel that they are the last protectors of Alpha Complex, wandering from sector to sector in order to right wrongs and combat Commie Mutant Traitors. These are the true knights of The Computer, lone paladins out to save the complex from itself. Sometimes they temporarily join with a team of like Troubleshooters to accomplish some grand quest, but more often they appear for a time and are gone.

Some rogues are bad, some neutral, but most are loyal to the old ways and The Computer, striving to stamp out treason and restore Alpha Complex to its pre-MegaWhoops glory. Such as it was.

Secret Societies

The Secret Society Wars may have calmed down in some sectors, but in others the war is raging. What does this mean for the fearless Troubleshooter teams? That depends.

Certain Troubleshooter teams are made up of clones all belonging to the same secret society. They band together for protection, to further the cause of their group, and to hold spontaneous meetings at a moment's notice. Other teams remain mixed as far as secret society membership goes, but usually only societies that have some fundamental beliefs in common will band together.

Of course, there are still those who profess one secret society but belong to another. Members of secret societies masquerading as members of not-so secret societies play these subtle games of deceit for a variety of reasons. Some do so to infiltrate secret society-affiliated Troubleshooter teams in order to keep an eye on potential hostiles. Others simply like to keep everyone guessing.

Whatever the reasons, most of these Troubleshooters never overtly sabotage or betray their team. To do so would be tantamount to suicide — and in the new Alpha Complex, death is a very real and lasting occurrence. They work with the team, while continuing any missions they might also have from their society that do not place them or their teammates in danger. Only in matters of extreme importance will a Troubleshooter risk death for a subtle secret society mission.

Warbot Teams

Finally, another branch of R&D went renegade after The Crash to keep their newest invention out of the hands of Armed Forces, which seems out of control without The Computer to temper it. The scientists of FSA Sector are now hiding and working in ROB Sector, providing Troubleshooter teams with warbots.

These Troubleshooters are cybernetically tuned to the warbots, giving them the added edge of bot power. Each member of such a team becomes intimately involved with his or her bot, seeing it as an extension of himself and a worthy friend and teammate.

But the crowning achievement of the FSA scientists was the battlebot. These giant, six meter tall bots are heavily armed and armored. What's more, a Troubleshooter must merge with a battlebot to control it, creating a synthesis of bot and clone for a limited amount of time.

Mission Types

Here are a few typical missions that the new Troubleshooters might handle.

1. Simplex Simon. A Simplex procures the services of a Troubleshooter team a) for a sabotage mission against a neighboring simplex; b) to defend the simplex from hostile forces — think "The Magnificent Seven Troubleshooters"; c) to explore a seemingly deserted or destroyed portion of the complex so that the simplex may expand into new, safer territory.

2. Say the Secret Society Word. Whether the Troubleshooter team works exclusively for a particular secret society or is hired by one for a particular mission, the Troubleshooters may be called upon to a) infiltrate a Service Group, Simplex, or other secret society in order to procure information, engage in sabotage, steal something, or rescue someone; b) serve as diplomats or guards for diplomats in order to bring a treaty or declaration of war to another secret society, Simplex, or Service Group; c) act as mercenaries in the Secret Society Wars and accomplish raiding, spying, or destructive missions.

3. Service Groups A-go-go. Service Groups hire Troubleshooters to do all of the above types of missions, as well as a) making needed repairs in hard to get to places; b) mapping the newest twists and turns in the partially to totally destroyed corridors; c) working to control crowds; d) being sent on scavenger hunts to acquire supplies and materials.

4. Other Mission Types. Of course, these aren't the only types of adventures you'll want to send Troubleshooters on. Other missions that come readily to mind include a) testing equipment for lan-I-STN; b) invading the sanctum of the Clone Lords; c) recovering an item of great power or importance for a clone of great power or importance; d) finding the program that will restart The Computer (or destroy it, depending on the bent of the team).

Postscript

The New Troubleshooter is an important part of your game, obviously. You can expand on these ideas to create other types of teams and missions, and expand the horizons of your current *Paranoia* campaign. Let only imagination — of the gamemaster and the players — and our published adventures be the limit to which you take these heroes in the world of post-crash *Paranoia*.

Ignorance Ain't Bliss — It's Fear

I once came across a HPD & MC flyer, to be distributed among the Indigo and higher officials. Yeah, I know, treason. Who cares about that anymore?

Anyway, this flyer urged Indigo and Violet citizens to exercise two important

principles on the other Citizens around them: Fear and Ignorance.

By Fear, they encouraged these high-level citizens to randomly execute portions of the population in the name of The Computer. They also suggested levying random fines, and making any other punishments public knowledge wherever possible. By doing this they hoped to encourage fear in the masses, which would prevent any uprisings.

They also suggested that information be stifled wherever possible, and contact between high-level and low-level Citizens be discouraged. By doing this, they hoped to keep the masses ignorant.

That was all done with a purpose: the purpose of keeping those in power safe from the numerous but downtrodden. It worked fairly well. Now, however, things are different — without The Computer or high-level people in control, there's no more fear or ignorance, right?

Haw! What a laugh! Clones nowadays have more to be afraid of and more to be ignorant of than ever before!

For instance, there's no Computer to protect anyone any more. That means that if everyone is out to get you, they don't even have to be subtle about it. Not to mention all the critters and bots and things running around, just looking for a clone to eat or terminate.

And as far as ignorance — well heck, no one knows even half of what's happened since the crash. All sorts of Simplexes have sprung up and machinery has broken down ... the whole complexion of the complex has changed. So we're all a lot more ignorant than we used to be.

Here's another story about fear and ignorance:

The New, Improved Fear and Ignorance

by G. D. Swick and M.B. Till

Sal-Y-RUN pressed her back against the wall, breathing in shallow gasps. That had been close: the Humanists she was traveling with had encountered a band of Cor-



All The Computer's horses and all of its clones ...



pore Metalists. In the ensuing firefight, one of the bot lovers had produced a flamethrower. Things could have been very nasty if the flamethrower itself hadn't caught fire. The explosion eliminated the Metalists and most of the Humanists as well. Pity. She could have used the help.

Cautiously, she eased her head around the corner of the next corridor. No one in sight. So far, so good. Suddenly something slammed into her from behind, sending her sprawling to the floor.

"Oh, gee, Sal-Y, I'm sorry," Hack-R-RAM whined. "I didn't mean to knock down someone above my security clearance, honest. Please don't vaporize me."

Scrambling to her feet, she clamped a hand over his whimpering mouth.

"Shut up, you fool. We don't want to be spotted. And stay close so you don't go running into me again."

Hack-R nodded, his eyes wide with fear and exertion. Sal-Y freed his mouth, grabbed the bib of his coveralls and pulled him after her down the corridor.

Unlike the smoking corridor they had left behind, which sported **Bot Safe House** signs and **Have You Hugged Your Scrubot This Daycycle?** posters, this corridor was unadorned. Neutral turf, for the moment.

Sal-Y shoved Hack-R behind a pile of rubble. "Hide in the shadows," she hissed, "till I get back. I won't be long."

Hack-R squeezed himself into a small crevice, whimpering softly. Sal-Y started to run quietly down the dim hallway, crouching and making use of every shadow.

It was never this bad even under The Computer. Every sector, every room was now a potential free fire zone with every weirdo and his clone tussling for food scraps or just for power. No, it wasn't this bad, even with the asinine rules, the security checks, the ...

Hiding behind a large section of pipe, she grinned in spite of herself. What was it someone had told her once? Happiness is something you remember, not something you experience. Well, she intended to live long enough to experience some.

In a branch corridor, she found a dirty, scrawny female pilfering the pockets of two corpses. The scavenger gave Sal-Y a look of fear usually reserved for IntSec agents.

"I'm not going to steal your crumbs, Citizen," Sal-Y said, lowering her laser pistol. It no longer pointed at the pitiful figure, but its threat remained.

"What crumbs? They've been picked clean. Even their boots're already gone."

"I need directions, Citizen," Sal-Y continued patiently. "Do you know a citizen called Ryterz-B-LOC?"

"Never heard of him."

"How do I get to KIA sector?"

"By walking, I s'pose. Ain't many autotcars 'round these days. What am I, the

Information Bureau?"

Sal-Y held up a small packet of field rations — hard, dry, tasteless algae-cakes.

Drool formed on the other's lips. "Communists control LNN Sector — that's two corridors on your left. They'll 'liberate' everything you own for the revolution. And when you come to a Y-shaped intersection, be sure to bear left. Armed Forces owns the whole right side, and they're drafting anything that moves. Now gimme!"

As the scavenger gulped down the dried algae, Sal-Y turned to leave, then hesitated. "How current is your information, Citizen?"

"Who knows? Can't tell daycycle from nightcycle these days. Been holed up here for awhile."

Running from corridor to corridor, hugging the walls, hiding in every possible crevice, they finally came to the junction Sal-Y was looking for, a T-shaped intersection, where the right hand corridor was decorated with pictures of strange looking clones with "Edison" and "Einstein" written under them. Posters proclaimed **New is Good; Newer is Better and THINK — DESIGN — BUILD**. Pro-Tech turf.

The left corridor was covered with graffiti: Power to the People, Utopia Now, Blood Rules — Bots Serve. Sal-Y and Hack-R turned left, into Humanist territory.

Immediately a guard challenged them. He was armed with a cone rifle and accompanied by a small warbot.

"What's the password?" he asked brilliantly.

"Password?" Sal-Y hemmed. "Uh, just a second, I knew it a minute ago. Uh —"

"The password is 'Henry Ford,'" Hack-R responded.

"It is?" The guard let his cone rifle drop slightly. "Gosh, nobody's told me what the password is in days."

"Ask your bot if you don't believe me. It should have been programmed with the password."

"The last password programmed is indeed 'Henry Ford,'" the bot said.

The guard frowned. "Why didn't you tell me that before I shot all those other people?"

"You never asked. You never ask me anything — you just order me around! I've got a brain too, you know. And it's been in more bodies than yours has so there."

Watch it, bot. You're in your rightful place now and don't forget it."

"Can we go now?" Sal-Y asked.

The guard turned to face her. "What's the password?"

"'Henry Ford.'"

"That is correct. You may pass."

When they were out of earshot, Sal-Y grabbed Hack-R.

"How did you know the password?"

You're not even a Humanist, you little Computer Phreak!"

"I'm good with passwords. That's why you dragged me along on this death run, remember ... er, O Great and Beneficent Yellow Citizen?"

Sal-Y nodded. Good with passwords, huh? Maybe supernaturally good. Maybe that was how a Red already knew how to crack a computer.

Soon they came across a grimy group of citizens of various clearances trying to repair a scrubot. Oddly, an Infrared holding a Red laser pistol was giving orders.

"What's the meaning of this?" Sal-Y demanded.

"Dese fumblefingers is tryin' to make the bot go mopy-mopy. Wot's it look like, Toots?" the Infrared sneered.

Remembering she was a stranger in a land getting stranger by the minute, Sal-Y valiantly resisted the impulse to help this uppity Infrared make an ash of himself.

"Well, if they attach that red wire to OOOOF!" Hack-R suggested as Sal-Y's elbow doubled him over.

"I'm looking for Ryterz-B-LOC," Sal-Y announced. "I'm on an urgent mission for the Humanists."

"Hey Orangey," the Infrared laughed, kicking one of the group. "Take dese two to Da Great Liberator."

When they had rounded the corner, Sal-Y demanded, "Why are you taking orders from that inferior?"

"Because he has the gun, Citizen," the Orange replied, eyes firmly downcast. "In this time of madness, he has forgotten his place, but he will pay when the Holy Computer returns to spread Its Light upon us all."

"Those are hardly Humanist — what do you mean, 'when The Computer returns?'"

"I am not a Humanist. All of those you saw are slaves forced to serve the false prophets of the secular Humanists. But we of the True Faith know this is merely a test of loyalty and soon the Heavenly Circuits will return to save us. Please note, treasonous-but-Yellow-Citizen, I still know my subervient Orange place. If you will testify for me at the end of The Great Monitor Darkness, verily, I will boot a prayer for you and your companion."

The Computer, come back? Was all this just some funky loyalty test? Sal-Y shook her head. Couldn't be. It just couldn't.

The groveling fanatic left them before a large, heavy door. Behind it they found a room filled with small stockpiles of weapons, ammunition, clothing, food — everything that was in short supply with The Computer gone. They also found a dozen heavily armed guards in Red and Infrared, and a group of cowering servants wearing every color from Orange to Violet. Presiding over it all from a chair atop a pedestal

was a burly Red who looked like he could take on warbots with his bare hands.

"Who dares distoib Da Great Liberator?" the behemoth on the chair bellowed.

"I'm looking for Ryterz-B-LOC," Sal-Y responded coolly.

"Dere's da spot where he wuz last seen," the Red giant laughed, pointing at a large scorch mark on the floor nearby. "Da Great Liberator is in charge now." The Red frowned. "Uh ... dat's me, girlie."

Sal-Y boiled. "I've had enough of this insolence from inferi — gaa!" A blow from behind sprawled both Sal-Y and Hack-R to the floor.

"Dat security stuff went out wit' Da Computer. Now power belongs to da biggest fists and da biggest guns. An' I got both. Now what's yer bizness? Speak up or get strung up."

"Ryterz-B had a chip — a microchip!" Hack-R blurted. "It could give him access to parts of The Computer, but he didn't have the password so he sent her —" here he pointed an accusing finger at Sal-Y — "to kidnap me because I'm good with passwords. Don't kill me please!"

"Well," rumbled Da Liberator, "dat chip musta got vaporized along wit' my predecessor, so you ain't gettin' no chip off da old B-LOC." He motioned to two guards.

"Liberate her laser, den put 'em both ta woik cleanin' da bat'room stalls."

Sal-Y rose to her feet, grinding her teeth and staring intently at a pile of clothing stacked next to a crate of high-explosive slugthrower rounds.

"Fire!" she screamed, pointing at the flames that had begun to leap from the clothing.

As all heads turned toward the burgeoning inferno, Sal-Y grabbed Hack-R and leaped from the room, slamming shut the door as automatic weapon fire peppered the other side. Shock waves knocked her to the floor as everything behind the door exploded.

"Did you start that fire?" Hack-R asked. "How could you have —?"

"The same way you're good with passwords," Sal-Y said wearily.

The sound of running feet brought her to a crouch, pistol ready. The uppity Infrared they had encountered earlier came around the corner, herding his cowering charges before him.

"What was dat?" he yelled. Recognizing Sal-Y, he fired his pistol from the hip. Sal-Y grunted as her higher-clearance armor absorbed the bolt, then fired in return.

There was a stunned silence, punctuated by the wisp of smoke quietly curling up from one boot. Then, the fanatic FCCCP they had met earlier fell to his knees.

"Praise the Holy Circuits! These traitorous Humanists have seen the light of the Great Monitor Screen and have turned

from their wicked ways to save the true servants of the Holy Computer. Let Its memory banks be praised!"

The rest of the group also dropped to their knees and began crossing themselves in the Sign of the Input.

"On your feet, loyal ones." Sal-Y's voice had taken on a lofty tone. "The Holy Patchboard has indexed your steadfast belief and has chosen you to serve us in our righteous mission."

One of the worshippers, clad in a tattered Indigo jumpsuit, looked up, startled.

"Serve you? But why would the Great Computer choose a lowly Yellow clearance to lead where higher-ups are available? It violates doctrine!"

"Can a High Programmer not wear whatever is necessary to serve as The Great Monitor does so instruct her? Who are you to preach doctrine to me?"

Those kneeling before her did a double-take, then a triple-take followed by a two-and-a-half gainer as they jackknifed their bodies to avert their eyes. Sal permitted herself a thin smile before walking among them, touching each one as she went by.

"Rise, loyal Citizens, and follow me," she intoned.

Rapturous faces lifted to her. Then the questions began. The group also supplied its own answers.

"Why did Friend Computer go away?"

"Hush! It's a test of faith."

"Have you come to give us new rules to live by?"

"Idiot! The Computer's holy rules are unchanging."

"But things are different now."

"Don't blaspheme! It's a test of faith."

"QUIET!" Sal roared. "Did any of you know Ryterz-B-LOC?"

Eager hands shot up, then shot back down. Was it good or bad to admit knowing him?

"I need to find his quarters. Do any of you know where he lived?"

Hands shot back up. When three voices agreed on the same location, Sal headed toward it, accompanied by Hack-R and her fawning entourage.

"Now," she said, upon reaching their destination, "my assistant must practice a laying-on of hands to cleanse the terminals — uh, personal temples of worship — in this room. The rest of you keep guard in the corridor."

She dragged Hack-R into the living quarters, closing the door firmly behind them.

"Gee, Sal-Y," Hack-R said, "You're not really a High Programmer, are you?"

Ignoring the question, she grabbed his shirt and pulled him to within an inch of her face.

"Look, Phreak, you got something special going between you and machines, am I right?"

"Well, yeah," he said, squirming. "Sometimes if I concentrate, ideas just sort of pop into my head. Words, like."

"Okay, fine. Here's what I want you to do: Ryterz-B would never have carried that chip on him, for fear of losing it. In fact, he probably installed it in one of his own terminals — find that terminal, now."

Somebody, probably Ryterz-B, had obviously taken steps to keep electricity



The New Order can be a religious experience.

going in this area. Inside both of the semi-private sleeping rooms that made up the Blue quarters were terminals that hummed when turned on. Hack-R studied one, then the other. Several minutes later, he shrugged and sat down at the first one.

Fifteen minutes later, he cried gleefully, "Got it! The password was 'Renaissance.'"

A huge list of equipment scrolled across the screen, followed by grid coordinates and a map. Sal-Y looked thoughtfully at the inventory of food, clothing, medicine — even weapons and armor that went all the way up to Ultraviolet!

"Great," she said, memorizing the map. "I'm still not sure how you got into The Computer, but you did great."

"The chip let me in. It was programmed to bypass the mainframe security unit and go directly to the unit where this data was stored. See, The Computer was never really just one computer, it was thousands of mainframes linked together —"

"Heresy!"

Sal-Y and Hack-R turned to discover the FCCCP group had slipped into the room. They did not look happy.

"He preaches polytronitheism!" one of the group spat out.

"But aren't they High Programmers?" another asked. "They should know."

"You see?" cried another. "Even now the infidel spreads dissent among the faithful. Death to the heretic!" The enraged fanatic leaped on Hack-R, slamming them both into the monitor screen. With a tinkling of glass and a loud POP! both were electrocuted instantly.

There was a tense moment of deafening silence; then someone shouted.

"The heretic is dead!"

"No, the High Programmer prophet has been martyred!" another screamed.

Suddenly the group began fighting among themselves, shrieking dogma and battlecries. Sal-Y chose the better part of valor and scrambled past them. The sounds of their brawl began drawing Humanists toward that area. Sal-Y ran the other way, urging the spectators on with cries of "Fight fight! Fight in room 1134-B! Hurry!"

Sal-Y stood before Rich-V-PIC, the leader of her Free Enterprise cadre.

"You've done well, Sal-Y. Your undercover work in the Humanists and your skillful use of that Computer Phreak will place a huge cache of essential goods in the only hands that can distribute them efficiently and profitably. Supply Side Policies Forever!"

"For this, I will promote you a full grade. A few more such successes and you'll occupy your own apartment as luxurious as this one of mine."

Sal-Y smiled. "I don't think it will take that long," she said, drawing her new Ultraviolet laser.

When the agents of Free Enterprise met later that daycycle, Sal, in her new Ultraviolet reflex, greeted them warmly.

"My name is Sal-U-RUN, but you may call me The Great Liberator ..."

Not-So-Secret Anymore

You've been getting a lot of hints and innuendos lately about "not-so-secret" societies. What in heck are those, anyway?

Well, you know what a secret society was, right? It was a bunch of clones who got together to do something treasonous, or to have a good time (which, in and of itself, was sometimes treasonous), or to overthrow The Computer (which of course was highly treasonous). Once The Computer was gone ... why be secret? What happened to all those societies you used to know and love, at the moment of Mega Whoops? Read on.

Not-so-Secret Societies

by Peter Tamlyn and Rick Swan

Immediately following the Crash a number of Secret Societies lost a good deal of their secrecy. Sometimes this was accidental — their members were so busy taking advantage of the chaos that they quite forgot to be secret. In other cases it was a deliberate policy shift on the part of the society leaders — with The Computer gone, secrecy was no longer necessary, and all that.

Let's look at what happened to each society at the moment of MegaWhoops.

The Death Leopards

After the crash, scenes like the one in the grey box took place in Death Leopard meetings all over Alpha Complex, with pretty much the same results. Thus, in almost every sector, Death Leopard gangs were soon roaming the corridors looking for their rivals. Suddenly corridors had become very dangerous places to be.

The real powers of the post-Crash complex, people like the leaders of Armed Forces, could have crushed this gang warfare easily — but why bother? Because the Leopard gangs were so dangerous, few clones would dare venture out on their own. Those that did only did so once. Why police the corridors when the Death Leopards are doing it for you?

So, strange as it may seem, the Death Leopards are what passes as a police force in post-Crash Alpha Complex (think Alex's friends in "A Clockwork Orange"). Those areas controlled by an existing power bloc are kept free of them, but everywhere else is Leopard territory and dangerous.

The FCCCP

The FCCCP accepts full responsibility for the death of the Computer, even though none of the members — as far as can be determined, anyway — had anything directly to do with it. If only they had been more devoted, if only they had prayed harder, if only they hadn't hidden those nasty pictures of Teela-O-MLY under their sleeping units, their savior would never have left them to muddle along all by themselves. There is much dissension among the ranks of the FCCCP, as members secretly suspect each other of the spiritual negligence that resulted in the Computer's untimely demise. Intolerance is the order of the day, and outbreaks of bloody violence between rival groups is not uncommon.

On the other hand, after the crash, life got a lot better for what had once been a semi-official organization. The Computer had clearly departed Alpha Complex for the great air-conditioned comnode Beyond. God could no longer answer back, but it was always possible that It might come back. And since that was exactly what the vast majority of confused, frightened clones wanted (or feared), it was exactly what the FCCCP promised. The society, no longer needing to (at least officially) hide behind a cloak of secrecy, stepped boldly into the open, and proclaimed itself the Voice of the Computer.

So, on the one hand, the society has gained tremendous power and status as the new Religion of Alpha Complex, and holds the hearts and minds of millions in its sway in a way HPD & MC never did. On the other, it is a society torn by internecine warfare, on the constant verge of self-destruction.

Needless to say, this presents a few problems.

Beyond

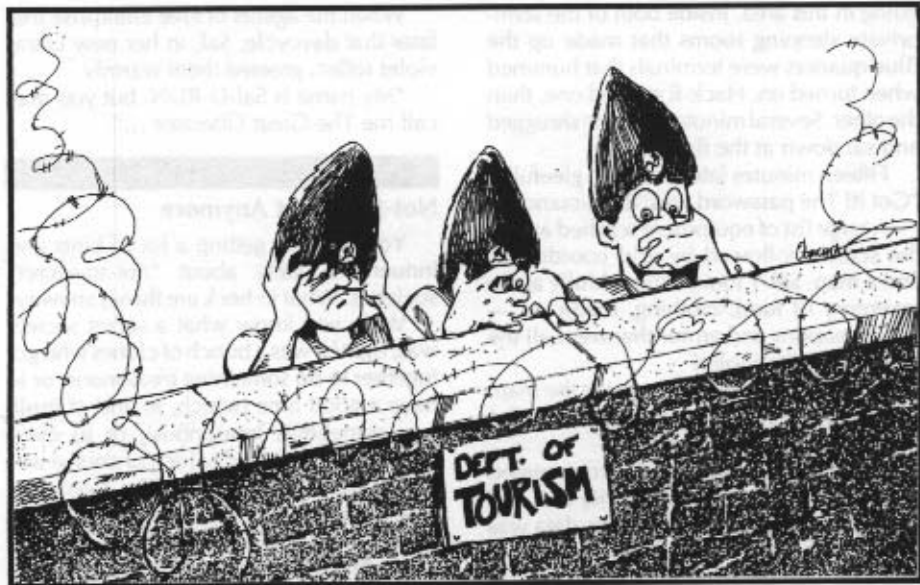
By the way, "Beyond" is a very important word in the new FCCCP vocabulary. It is where The Computer has gone. It has not gone to another complex — there aren't any. It would never go Outside, because Outside doesn't exist, and besides, anyone who has seen it would agree that no self-respecting computer would ever live in such a horrible place. Therefore It has gone Beyond. No one has quite explained where Beyond is, but it is an item of doctrine and therefore believed in by all loyal FCCCPers.

Even a large society like the FCCCP was quickly stretched by the demands of its sudden success, and immediate reorganization was undertaken. All clones who were members of the society before the

Crash were immediately elevated to the priesthood. Ordinary members of the priesthood are now officially known as Terminals and there are many of them per sector. The Terminals hold regular services for their local group of Believers.

Each sector has a senior priest, known as the Processor, to whom all of the Terminals report. Processors are powerful people in the new Alpha Complex and most of them can afford a large staff of assistants called Peripherals. The head of the society is a shadowy figure known as the PatchBoard, or Patch for short. According to doctrine the Patch is in direct communication with The Computer. Any messages from God are passed on in the form of Patch Programs.

The FCCCP has no official military arm — it has the full support of the official Armed Services. But it did create other, perhaps more useful, tools. The first of these is the Fellowship of Probes, an undercover organization staffed almost entirely by ex-IntSec people. It is their duty to pass among the Believers and report on any Treason that might occur. In addition there are groups of Zealots. These are particularly devout groups of Believers who have taken it upon themselves to root out and terminate all non-Believers in as messy a way as possible. Sort of like Islamic fundamentalists with laser rifles.



The Communist Simplex welcomes others with open arms.

Commies

Once The Computer was out of the picture, the Party Chairman immediately announced that the old Communists were no more, Long live the new Communists! The born-again Communists are as dedicated to the elimination of the capitalist plague as their predecessors had been to

the downfall of The Computer. Only now, without the high degree of persecution encouraged by The Computer, the Commies can finally come out in the open and free an entire Simplex from capitalist oppression!

Leopards With No Spots

It was another typical boring daycycle in HVM Sector. The only relief from the monotony was, at least for some citizens, provided by the irregular Death Leopard society meeting. The gang was all assembled, awaiting only the arrival of their Head Honcho, Samm-Y the Smash. On this particular daycycle when Samm-Y made his entrance it was obvious he had BIG news.

"Like, mega news, youse Worms!" Samm-Y shouted to the assembled throng. "This is a daycycle to remember!"

The gang cheered resoundingly and gathered round, eager to hear what great feat Samm-Y had pulled off this time. "Whadja do, boss," one cried. It hadn't occurred to Samm-Y to claim the credit, but now that the idea had been suggested it seemed cool.

"Well, like, it was nothing really, just a little piece of classy vandalism."

"Tell us, boss!"

"Well, I, like, er, I smashed The Computer. It's like, er, terminated. You know, vaporized."

There was stunned silence for several seconds. Samm-Y grinned. Like a Plasma

Generator warming up for its first shot of the daycycle, the grin spread from Samm-Y round the gang, grew into a thunderous roar of approval, and finally subsided into a warm, satisfied hum.

"OK guys, like, now there's no Computer to watch us, let's go out and Smash Things!"

The cheers were deafening, and the throng moved for the door. Unfortunately, one member of the group had been indulging in the most un-Leopard-like activity of thinking.

"Hey boss." The quiet words penetrated the noise better than any shout could.

Silence descended once more. The rest of the gang knew that another confrontation was brewing. Dead-I Dick was Samm-Y's principal rival for leadership of the gang. He couldn't match Samm-Y for brawn or status, but he did have more brain cells in his big toe than his leader did in his head. He needed careful watching.

"You squealed, Dickie?"

"Sure did, boss. I wanna know what we're going to smash."

"Like, same as ever."

"But usually we go out to smash The Computer."

This simple observation had a crushing effect on the gang. It was quite true. Before that day all of their efforts had been directed towards annoying The Computer. Without it they were rather like a warbot without a brain: heavily armed, potentially lethal, and quite, quite unable to move.

Debate continued for some time. There was no shortage of possible targets for their pranks: IntSec, the FCCCP, the local PL&C depot. The problem for these Dukes of Destruction was that, in comparison to The Computer, all of these new targets seemed small fry, boring. Where was the glory in such petty acts? Then, suddenly, Samm-Y had a flash of inspiration that just might have saved his life (threat of imminent deposition has that effect on some clones).

"Hey guys, like, er, I've just thought of someone I'd love to smash! Remember those talentless worms who call themselves Leopards from GWS sector, who just pipped us the last inter-gang Destruction Derby?"



Corpore Metal and Frankenstein Destroyers

These two societies, who hate each other passionately, came off particularly badly in the Secret Society Wars just prior to the crash. Large numbers of their members were killed in vicious fighting, and those that remained barricaded themselves up in small, heavily defended enclaves. For both societies the Crash came as a miraculous stroke of luck. Suddenly they had a chance to breathe and re-group.

In the post-Crash Alpha Complex these enclaves have become miniature states (Alpha Simplexes). Because they got a head start on everyone else in the in-fighting business thanks to the Wars, they were well enough armed and organized to be able to stand up to the potentially more powerful post-Crash warlords. Since then they have had a steady stream of recruits, both from former members and from disaffected citizens who didn't like the new regimes. The societies' tenets are maximized within the enclaves, now that secrecy is no longer a factor.

Humanists

As detailed elsewhere (see "The Moment of MegaWhoops"), the Humanists were quite pleased by the disappearance of The Computer — at least at first. Their nemesis was gone, the Commie threat was over (of course, misguided souls *calling* themselves Commies are another thing entirely), and the human population was back in its rightful place.

Unfortunately, the crash was not the Humanists' ultimate dream for utopia: their vision called for The Computer to be subservient to man. Without it, mankind could not achieve his full potential.

Thus, after the initial flush of success wore off, the Humanists declared a campaign to restart The Computer — but only after the proper excising of the nasty bits. Humanists are not particularly secretive, although they still maintain safehouses, more as a throwback to yestercycle than out of any real need.

PURGE

After the Crash, PURGE disbanded more or less spontaneously. With its sole aim achieved beyond the wildest expectations of its members, most of them could see no reason to continue the society. Besides, with The Computer gone they suddenly found that no two members could agree on what should be done next. Indeed, most PURGE members had never even considered the idea until that time.

Following the disbandment, most PURGE members joined other societies, depending on what they wanted done. The only thing that marks them out from other

citizens is that they steadfastly refuse to go to FCCCC prayer meetings.

However, a few diehard members have continued PURGE, believing that The Computer will only be fully destroyed when all sign of It and Its works have been destroyed. These people have become the ultimate anarchists. After all, almost everything in Alpha Complex was made before the Crash, or is made in the same way as things were made before the Crash; therefore it must be destroyed.

Perhaps a little unhinged by what has happened, and certainly by the implications of their new philosophy, these surviving PURGE groups hang out in the darkest recesses of post-crash Alpha Complex whence they emerge on nightly missions of destruction. It is a bit like having an infestation of man-sized rats with severe vandalistic tendencies.

Illuminati

Speaking of secretive societies, what about the Illuminati after the crash? What nefarious plans of theirs had come to fruition, and what further plans were about to be implemented?

No one knows.

Mystics

Not a lot changed for the Mystics, since they were pretty busy contemplating their own inner light when the MegaWhoops came, anyway ... but at the moment the biochemical supplement dispensers gasped their last, spewing fumes into the air all across the complex, several Mystics achieved true Enlightenment and dropped dead on the spot. Others caught only a whiff of the grand Nirvana, and immedi-

ately began seeking it anew.

The Mystics remain an essentially secret society, but only because they don't have enough organized energy to go public.

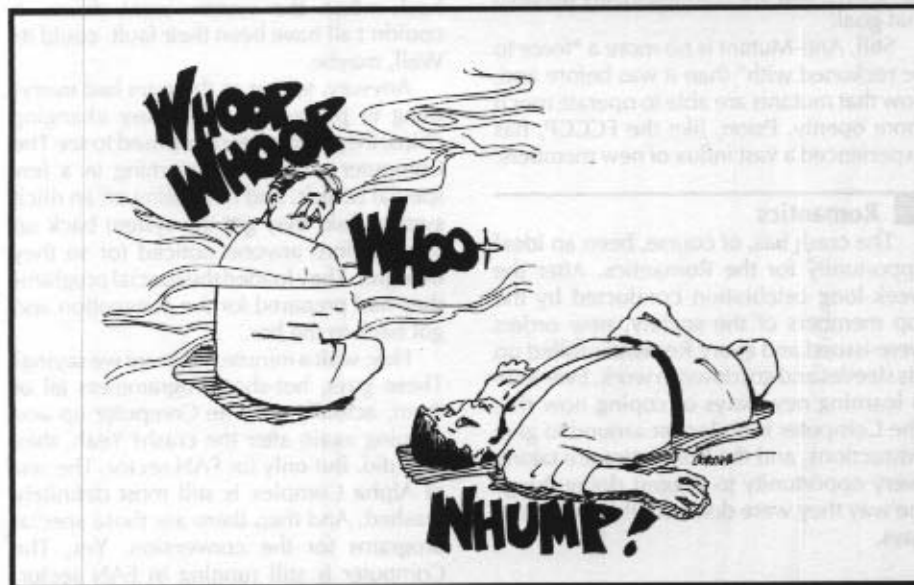
Free Enterprise

As explained in the section on The New Politics of Treason, competition between service groups is now on a relatively sound (for Alpha Complex) business footing. Citizens have had to learn how to bargain (or in FreeEnt parlance, "bicker" — those FreeEnts were never too good at Old Reasoning research), and how to make Profit.

There wasn't much left of Free Enterprise after the Secret Society Wars, but the surviving cadre was suddenly in too good a position to be destroyed for good. The

See that stuff about PURGE disbanding and giving up and so forth, somewhere on one of these pages? Well, that's the official line — but don't you believe it for a minute! You already did? Sucker!

See, PURGE couldn't be happier with the death of the Computer — or could they? Maybe the Computer isn't really dead after all. Maybe it's all a trick to catch PURGE off guard. Maybe the Computer plans to nail them for treason when they least expect it. That's the way the PURGE leadership (such as it was) was thinking when the crash came, so they made a big show of disbanding, then re-formed after terminating anyone deemed untrustworthy. PURGE still exists and still wants to smash The Computer (because they don't believe it's gone yet), but they are the most secret of secret societies.



At the moment of MegaWhoops, many Mystics reached nirvana.

cadre, calling themselves Zany Eddies (after an Old Reckoning hero) restarted Free Enterprise and moved in. They went public and set up an office in each sector. Worried or ambitious citizens can now go to FE and, for a few thousand credits, hire the services of a Power Profits Consultant who will tell them what to do.

Sierra Club

As we all know, the Sierra Club had a great deal of persecution launched against it several months ago, and the surviving cadre changed its name to the Seal Club (in a feeble attempt at misdirection) and went about rebuilding.

What greater recruiting lure than the crash? At the moment of MegaWhoops, surviving Seal Clubbers immediately opened booths at strategic corridors in Alpha Complex, and began recruiting for organized expeditions to the Outdoors. Perhaps because no one cares about them any more, the persecution seems to have stopped.

Psion and Anti-Mutant

Another matched pair that had hacked each other to bits in the Secret Society Wars, Psion and Anti-Mutant did not fare as well as the Frankenstein Destroyers and Corpore Metal after the crash.

In Psion's case, little changed. A certain amount of pressure was relieved, since rabid persecution of mutants slowed down without The Computer egging the populace on. On the other hand, recession of certain mutations (see "The New Mutant" for more details) actually gave more strength to Anti-Mutant, since there were now some clones who truly believed in the destruction of mutations (since they suddenly didn't have any), and are working avidly to reach that goal.

Still, Anti-Mutant is no more a "force to be reckoned with" than it was before and, now that mutants are able to operate much more openly, Psion, like the FCCCP, has experienced a vast influx of new members.

Romantics

The crash has, of course, been an ideal opportunity for the Romantics. After the week-long celebration conducted by the top members of the society, new orders were issued and every Romantic rolled up his sleeves and got down to work. Everyone is learning new ways of coping now that The Computer is no longer around to give instructions, and the Romantics are taking every opportunity to suggest doing things the way they were done in Old Reckoning days.

Pro Tech

This loosely organized band of machine-lovers was dealt a bitter blow with the crash of The Computer (also see the Computer Phreaks), because not only did a wonderfully technological device (The Computer itself) cease to function, but other devices soon followed suit, with repair manuals and library knowledge in such short supply.

Many Techers committed suicide at the moment of MegaWhoops, and others went catatonic and still have not recovered (you can see them sometimes, sitting in a corner, staring at a blank monitor screen ...). Panic swept through the ranks of Pro Tech following the Computer's demise, as each subgroup suspected the others of inadvertently causing the crash. Any Pro Tech member who could not precisely account for his actions when the crash took place was terminated on the spot. A few hardy souls realized that technological devices would rule all in a Computer-less society, and immediately set out to gather as many weapons and other items as possible. This might explain some of the looting that occurred so soon after the crash.

Computer Phreaks, N3F and Trekkies

Thanks to one of those strange little coincidences that seem to happen all the time in Alpha Complex, the crash occurred during a Trekkie convention in FAN sector. The convention was also being attended by the last few N3F members and a fair sprinkling of Computer Phreaks. Quite a fun little gathering.

By yet another of those little coincidences, a small group of Computer Phreaks just happened to be in the middle of a major hack when the system went down. It couldn't all have been their fault, could it? Well, maybe.

Anyway, seeing as the guys had everything in place and were busy changing chips, they weren't too surprised to see The Computer go down. Slamming in a few special boards, and re-booting off an illicit system disk, they got the system back up again before anyone noticed (or so they thought). They loaded the special programs they had prepared for the convention and got back to the bar.

Hey, wait a minute, what are we saying? These guys, hot-shot programmers all of them, actually got The Computer up and running again after the crash? Yeah, they sure did. But only for FAN sector. The rest of Alpha Complex is still most definitely crashed. And then there are those special programs for the convention. Yes, The Computer is still running in FAN sector, and it's convinced that it is Captain Kirk.

And not only that, of course. FAN sector

is the USS Enterprise. The guy in charge of Power Services suddenly found himself being addressed as Mr. Scott. And anything from outside FAN sector, er, sorry, Friend Captain, the Enterprise, must be an alien, probably a Klingon. Finding himself surrounded by aliens, Friend Captain immediately sealed off the sector and put the ship on red alert. (It's that dull whooping sound neighbors in FAL and EAN sectors keep hearing.)

FAN Sector runs just as Alpha Complex always did. Only the names have changed. For compnode say bridge, for Commie say Klingon. Even Troubleshooters have a place. They are known as Security Guards. And we all know what happens to security guards. Can you say, "he's dead, Jim"?

Service Groups

Things are in bad shape in the complex — I bet you knew that already, huh? Power generation is on a jury-rigged system, no one knows when the reactors are gonna blow 'cause no one is sure how to fix 'em, everything's falling apart and no one can watch Teela-O any more.

Where are the Service Groups when you need them? Take a look at this.

Service Groups Anew

by Edward S. Bolme

With the sudden removal of official sanction, Service Groups underwent a rapid and rather traumatic restructuring. The exact end results vary considerably (given the alarming number of Alpha Simplexes), but many generalizations hold true.

First, when The Crash occurred, everyone was forced to cast their lot with one mob or another. This really hurt the Service Groups, as most workers found their secret societies a heck of a lot more fun (i.e., destructive) than their jobs. Many downright hated their boring work and scrambled off to catch up with their fellow Death Leopards. Some citizens, of course, were not members of a secret society, but as neither of these citizens left his useless desk job at CPU, they need not concern us here.

Society Futures

Don't despair — this section was just about what happened to the societies when The Computer went down. If you want to know what they're like now, and what you need to do to join one or gain favor in one etc., turn to the section in the next chapter about new rules for secret societies.

There were, however, sizable groups of people, who for various reasons of loyalty and/or powerlust, remained at their jobs and rapidly hoarded associated supplies. Thus it was that a lot of essential resources were accumulated in the hands of a relatively few aggressive greedy souls.

Basic Reaganomics

Although Not-So-Secret Societies and large groups of friends usually have members with varied areas of knowledge, none of these organizations had the size, discipline, or ruthlessness necessary to wrest control of the resources the way the remnants of the Service Groups have. Thus while a group of, say, Pro Techers can save considerable expense repairing and redesigning their living spaces, they still have to deal with Power Services for lighting, Technical Services for the necessary tools, PLC for the nails, and HPD&MC for the raw material like shelving and wallpaper, not to mention wiring diagrams.

So the Service Groups have ended up looking more or less like large corporations, only worse. They don't have anti-trust laws. They don't have government regulatory boards. They don't have morals. Or ethics. Or codes against killing. Fortunately for life as we now know it, they also don't have everything under one roof. PLC holds the food, but Power Services controls the ovens. The groups restrain each other from excess. And since individual meters are virtually non-existent in Alpha Complex, everyone simply pays each Service Group some extortion ("rent") for the continued privilege of having power or food or whatever.

Piracy

Unauthorized redistribution of resources is another common occurrence. Much like cable television today, citizens will go to absurd effort and expense to acquire something for free. Of course quality and reliability of pirated services is poor at best. And material cost is often overwhelming, as is the number of enforcers that pay midnight visits to offenders.

First Thing We Do, We Kill All the Lawyers

The first major post-crash event was the very enjoyable Great CPU Turkey Shoot. Nobody knew how much time there would be to kill the officious CPU bureaucrats and forever rid Alpha Complex of the cumbersome papershuffling they espoused, so everyone grabbed the nearest available weapon and began reaping a deadly harvest. Soon all the desk jockeys were, poetically enough, trapped like rats inside their huge buildings. Then all it took was a few molotov cocktails to start the biggest paper

bonfire and traitor bake in Alpha Complex history. Since then, HPD&MC has gained a lot of good publicity rerunning films taken during the slaughter. Sure beats Teela-O! Those few CPU units who were canny enough to survive the slaughter have by and large become wealthy as merchants. During their tenure in CPU they learned what was available where in the complex, and they have the knowledge and drive necessary to skim a good profit acting as middlemen. That's what bureaucrats are best at, isn't it?

Terminal Insecurity

Shortly after the Great CPU Turkey Shoot, everyone started looking around for members of Internal Security. Roving gangs started frisking passers-by for small notepads. Secretive people were publicly lynched. The very big but only marginally sentient goons who formed the backbone of IntSec's might were stamped into an open nuclear reactor. It didn't take long for the covert IntSec operatives to figure out their popularity had declined somewhat. Surprisingly, IntSec has almost 100% retention of members despite the persecution. And those few who did not remain loyal to IntSec were promptly assassinated by their fellow agents for security reasons.

And so it has come to pass that Internal Security is the only real Secret society in post-MegaWhoops Alpha Complex. Pretty weird, huh? IntSec is now almost like a cross between the Illuminati and FCCCP. They remain loyal to their absent benefactor (see also "Radio Crash"), and their web of influence spreads invisibly across all boundaries in balkanized Alpha Complex.

The Armed Forces

Fortunately for Alpha Complex, those in the Army did not remain banded together as one force, for it would have been very easy for them to take control of everything. But taking control means having to guard, and guard duty is what every grunt hates worst, so instead each group of Armed Forces personnel has pursued whatever they found most enjoyable. Many have become roving bands of marauders, the most notorious of which is headed by Attila-V-HUN-2. Although these barbarians were a real problem for a time, most were rather shortsighted and ran out of ammo at some inconvenient time, suffering a dramatic reduction in personnel (for instance, Cust-R's Last Stand). Others found a relatively posh place to 'settle in,' much to the residents' dismay. But some are still at large, plundering wherever they go. For more information about the Armed Forces, see your local recruiting office. I mean, check out the "Alpha Simplexes" entry.

Research and Design

Don't look here! Go to the R&D entry in the "New Rules" chapter, or face summary lynching by a rampaging Death Leopard gang!

Powermad Services

One thing and one thing alone kept the rather cliquish Power Services from being dismembered: they were sitting on a huge nuclear reactor, and they had their fingers on the graphite dampening rods. They definitely received positive modifiers to their intimidation die-rolls. Of course, without these guys' 'skill' and 'selfless devotion,' there would be no power at all in Alpha Complex. If this group ever gets hold of a power meter, it's curtains. As it is, everyone pays a flat fee for as much power as they need. Those who refuse to pay or are suspected of being wasteful are cut off (which is pretty grim if your apartment door can't be opened manually). Or maybe the power gets cut off to their anti-gravity elevators. Or maybe a live wire accidentally touches their bathtubs.

Technicality Services

While they own no essentials like food, shelter or power, TechServ still makes a good living as overpriced plumbers, if you can imagine such a thing. TechServ has fairly well sabotaged the library files of repair manuals in most sectors, so a do-it-yourselfer will often find he's reengineered his laser to shoot himself in the right lung. Those who cross TechServ have even worse things happen to them. Stuff like having their electric toothbrushes 'malfunction,' sending the brush itself shooting down their throats and into the next sector. TechServ says, "With us you get what you pay for. Otherwise, you'll pay for what you get." In other words, if you can't personally remember how to fix it, prepare to pay through the nose. Or throat. Your choice.

HPD & Mindless Control

These guys are The Landlords From Hell. Don't be late on rent. Don't count on ever seeing your deposit again. That's why lots of people live in the so-called Free Zones; places HPD&MC doesn't control, whether because of lack of manpower or general unfavorable public opinion.

The Free Zones are a little crowded. They're also somewhat run down since HPD&MC isn't there to do maintenance. Kind of like a high-tech Calcutta slum, or New York City crumpled into a very small ball. Even in HPD&MC-controlled areas, some tenants rebel at the Service Group's monopoly. Squatters and other recalcitrants rarely live to tell the tale, though, as the HPD&MC workers are experts in environ-

mental engineering, and their sci-fi scripts prove they have vivid imaginations. They can do stuff way more startling than having the entire building's sewage bubble out of your sink. Stuff way more frustrating than waking to find yourself trapped in bed by a uniform twenty-centimeter layer of frost all over your apartment. Stuff way more deadly than having universal solvent accidentally piped into your shower. So pay your rent. Cash only, please.

Just Say "No!" to Service Groups

What alternatives does anyone have? That all depends on how much a given citizen enjoys his luxuries. If you don't like paying extortion, you can live in the Free Zones. Sure, you'll have to build fires, 'cause you won't have lights, but you can use those fires to roast the roaches you catch for dinner. And if your toilet breaks down, you'll have to move. But think of all the credits you'll save ... Of course there are those people who are really trying to make it as a group. Carving out a stronghold in the middle of some inhospitable abandoned sector, these groups often center on Seal Clubbers or Foundationists or some other self-reliant bunch. They fix up some building, jury rig some windpower, maybe pirate some services, and generally do pretty well for themselves. Everyone is welcome to join, so long as they contribute to the welfare of the community. Needless to say, these groups are not terribly popular with the service groups.

They cooperate. They share essentials in a communal atmosphere, and everyone prospers except the service groups. The service groups want everyone to hate these people ... ideally, everyone would want to haul off and shoot them. Interesting to speculate — what would service group propaganda brand a bunch of people who lived together on a commune ...

The Bureaucratic Empire

In each Service Group, there was a small core of employees who not only maintained their group against all odds, but actually espoused the eventual return of The Computer as well. These are the clones that make up the Bureaucratic Empire, the organization that keeps alive all that The Computer once stood for. They act as though they were the only authority in Alpha Complex, steadfastly ignoring all that is happening about them. Consider them like the waning Roman Empire, bribing the barbarian hordes to keep them at bay.

Their only power is that they control many of the working terminals, and much of the technical knowledge and equipment originally available to them. Splinter groups of their own kind tend to undermine their



Pay your rent.

complete authority (sort of like Ma Bell after she was broken up), but there is a certain mystique left to those who remain at their jobs ... waiting for the return of The Computer.

How About a Little Service!

The first thing to remember about service groups is that all PCs don't have to belong to one. Clones can easily renounce their service group membership, since they have also renounced Computer Citizenship; these citizens will tend to belong to other Simplexes and/or secret societies.

Another thing to remember is the difference between the splinter groups and the Empire.

A splinter group service remnant can be found just about anywhere, providing a mini-version of the service they used to provide complex-wide. They are only in it for themselves, and have no more love for other Service Group remnants than they do for secret society enclaves or other Simplexes.

The Empire, on the other hand, is a united service group conglomerate, containing a high-level cadre from each of the groups. It holds to the ideals of The Computer and acts as though nothing is wrong. They control a large majority of the terminals and working parts in the complex.

Treason

Oh, treason. What a word ... what lilt, what poetry ... what drama is contained in those two little syllables that roll so trippingly off the tongue: trea-son!

Er ... sorry. Got carried away there for a second. What I meant to say was, treason is a very important aspect of MegaWhoops Alpha Society. It was *real* important in Alpha Complex, but even now that The Computer is gone, treason still exists. Just take a look.

The New Politics of Treason

by Peter Tamlyn

"Gooddaycycle, friend citizen, what can I offer you?"

"Two packets of Cruncheetyme Algae Chips, please, and a pot of Hot Fun. I've got a tube of Supergum or a mosquito net I could trade."

"The gum'll do. Can I see your service group membership card?"

"Er, sorry, I don't have one."

"Never mind, citizen, we're backed by all major secret societies. Do you have an FE Express card, an FCCCP prayer card, a Yellow Stripe card? Anything?"

"I'm not a member of any society."

"TRAITOR!" Zap! Zap! Zap!

You've got to admit, for all that The Computer was hated and feared by citizens of Alpha Complex, it did have some good ideas. The Teela O'Malley Show, for example. Definitely. And Cold Fun ... er, well, maybe not. Anyway, of all the wonderful

games and traditions that The Computer invented, by far the best has to be Treason. Doing it (without getting caught) and catching others in the act (before they catch you) is one of those games that everyone in Alpha Complex loved to play.

But no more. The Computer is dead. Long live — er, well, lots of people, actually. And that's where things started getting difficult. With The Computer gone, all sorts of people and organizations are out to take its place, and all of them expect absolute loyalty — from YOU, citizen! The rules to the Treason game have suddenly gotten a lot more complicated.

The people in the best position to take over were the leaders of the various service groups. There being only eight groups, each one could, in theory, call on the loyalty of one eighth of the population of Alpha Complex. Ha! As if any citizen could be counted on to be loyal to anyone but himself. We're not talking about the Bureaucratic Empire here — we're talking about the rest of the service groups that split off from the Empire in the first few post-crash daycycles.

These split-offs are trying hard. In particular they are trying hard to inspire, and enforce, the sort of loyalty to themselves that was once reserved solely for The Computer.

One advantage that the service groups have is that membership is, in Alpha Complex terms, a job. Being conditioned to turn up at their posts each morning, many citizens continued to do so (even if the location was hurriedly moved). The splinter-group leaders were quick to impress upon them that this was exactly what they should do, and reinforced the message with a number of tricks learned from their dear, departed Friend.

So what does a life of loyalty to one's service group look like? Well, have you ever seen one of those documentaries about working life in Japan or Korea? All those people turning up for work half an hour early so that they can do exercises and sing the company song? Now you've got the idea.

Like a modern company, each service group has its business aims and objectives. R&D invents things, PL&C supplies them, Tech services maintains them, all the usual stuff. Now, however, a new word has entered the Alpha Complex vocabulary: "profit".

The idea of profit is causing quite a bit of confusion. Simple-minded clones started with the assumption making a profit meant taking things without paying for them. This normally had one of two results, neither of which was good for profits.

Usually, as you might expect, it led to a fight. It quickly became obvious to those in command that fights are very rarely profit-

able, even if you win. Causing a fight is bad for profit and therefore "treasonous".

The alternative was even more confusing; people stopped doing business with you. Loss of business is severely unprofitable and is to be avoided at all costs. Causing loss of business is highly treasonous.

As far as service groups are concerned, then, Treason means doing things against the interests of your group. More specifically it means doing something that is liable to cause a loss of profit.

But what about the other power groups in Alpha Complex? What, for example, about the secret societies? Treason, in terms of a secret society, is normally a question of furthering, or rather not furthering, the aims of the society, just as it has always been. The difference is that upsetting your secret society can be much more serious, especially if it is one of those that has gone public (more details on these societies can be found in the section on "Not-so-Secret Societies").

Another group that may require a citizen's loyalty is an Alpha Simplex. Exactly what a Simplex requires in the way of loyalty is variable. If it is controlled by a secret society or service group then you must be loyal to that organization. Where life gets complicated is in those Simplexes that have brand new goals that don't conform to any citizen's easily grasped ideals. In these places, citizens must tread lightly. "Treason" might be defined as "displaying jealousy" in the newly formed Freelove-land Simplex. Just down the hall, it could be treasonous to wear any color other than black. The clones who made these rules may not fully understand what "treason" is supposed to mean, but they sure know how to deal with it!

Speaking of which, what are we going to do about Treason Points? I mean, it would be a terrible shame to have to do without them, wouldn't it? Besides, we've just seen that there are all sorts of new ways to be Treasonous. In the post-Crash Alpha Complex there are at least two new sets of Treason points to collect: those to do with loyalty to the service group and those to do with loyalty to the secret society. Some Simplexes may also have their own Treason

son Point system.

Service groups quickly learned that simply terminating trained personnel was not very profitable and a new sort of discipline was introduced. Most service groups still use the old color system of grading and promote citizens who do well. Citizens who collect too many Treason Points get busted back to Infrared.

The system with secret societies is similar except that the titles are different. Clones can revel in splendid titles such as Grand High Spanner of the High Gear (Pro Tech) or Cutesy Puppy (Seal Club). The other difference is the standard punishment. Societies have no reason to keep treasonous members. They terminate them.

Of course in the post-crash Alpha Complex it is a lot easier to evade a Termination order. None of the new rulers are as all-powerful as The Computer was. There is always somewhere that you can hide. This can mean that you end up with no service group and no secret society. That can make life very difficult indeed. Sometimes you need a Friend (like in the example at the beginning of this section).

Is that it then? We can forget about Treason against The Computer, can't we? Well, not quite. You see, when the Crash first happened one of the first people on the scene at the main Compnode was the High Priest of the FCCCP (who also happened to be a big shot in CPU). As the situation looked hopeless he immediately declared the Compnode off limits and ordered preparations for an elaborate funeral. Then he went off to deal with the rioting that had broken out in the area. When he returned, the main circuit boards containing all of the primary processors had vanished.

We leave the real reason for the disappearance of all this valuable, if rather seriously nonfunctional, hardware to the fevered imagination of individual Gamemasters (in other words we've got so many wonderfully kooky ideas that we can't bear to choose between them). In the minds of the High Priest and his followers, however, there could be only one explanation: The Computer had transcended the mortal world. After many years of guiding its children personally it had taken itself Beyond to see how they could get on by themselves. Doubtless after a suitable period of time it would return to see how they had got on without it.

In the traumatic period immediately following the crash, many clones found great comfort in this theory, and by the time order was restored it had taken such a powerful hold that there was nothing the rulers could do about it.

More information about the new role of the FCCCP is given in the sections entitled "Not-so-Secret Societies" and "The New Rules of Societies." In the meantime we



In case of emergency ...

need to know what happens to Computer Treason Points. Well you can still get 'em. If someone reports your Treason to an FCCCP priest, or if you are a believer and confess, the points are allocated. When you get to 20 the FCCCP issues a Termination Warrant on behalf of The Computer. All Believers will thenceforth try to track you down and carry out the warrant. Maybe not so energetically or effectively, but it can be unnerving to have so many people "sort of" after your hide.

There is one difference, however. You can get rid of Treason Points. Yes, really, you can. The system is quite simple. First you must go to an FCCCP priest and confess your treason, and any other treason that you know about, and anything else that you think might be treason. Then you must give the priest something, or some information, that is of value to The Computer. The priest then assesses the value of what you have given him and forgives you a number of Treason Points accordingly.

Easy, isn't it? The only difficulty is making sure that what you have to give is of sufficient value to offset the Treason Points that you have. If you get it wrong you are liable to be terminated on the spot.

Finally on the subject of Treason, a quick word about Commies. Before the Crash lots of people thought that Commies were a bit of a joke, didn't they? You might have been one of them. Maybe you didn't believe in Commies at all. Well now, The Computer always said that the Commies were out to destroy it. And now what has happened? I wonder who did that? And how they got away with it? Could it be that someone wasn't as vigilant as he should have been because he didn't believe in Commies? Oh dear!

- Look at the evidence. Commies are:
- opposed to the very idea of profit;
 - trying to rule Alpha Complex and therefore opposed to all Simplexes;
 - trying to shape Alpha Complex to their

own ends and therefore opposing the work of all secret societies;

- opposed to The Computer and all forms of religion, especially worship of The Computer.

By my reckoning that means that the Commies are committing Treason against everyone we've been talking about. They must be very bad people indeed. You'd better watch out for them, citizen. They probably think that without The Computer we are helpless! Their armies could roll in here any day now!! Their advance scouts are probably here already!!!

Keep your laser handy!

A Final Word from Nicc-O

That's about it, cloning. I can't help you much more — you'll have to look around at how things are going, and start trusting one or two friends. If I think of anything else you need to know, I'll look you up. Don't worry, I'll find you.

Good luck and good living.





Chapter Five: New-Wave Rules

There aren't any rules changes you *have* to implement to be able to play in the post-crash environment, but there are a few that will make the game flow better. This chapter is mostly rules, and is therefore really only of interest to GMs. Players might as well skip this chapter. No need to read it. It's rules. It's dull. Turn to the adventure stuff. Go ahead, we don't mind.

You players who are still reading ... you might be thinking: gosh, there's something *really important* in this chapter, and they're trying to get me to skip it so I won't find out what the really important thing is. Well, that's not true at all. Believe us. Go ahead and read it if you have to. We don't care. In fact, we *want* you to read it. We *insist* you read it. So there.

P.S. We're not going to bother tinting the entire chapter. Suffice it to say up front that this chapter is for GMs. Except that we insist players read it too.

Character Generation

When generating a character to play in the post-crash environment, certain changes are necessary to reflect those changes going on in society. This includes everything from names to mutation.

Names

There's no reason a post-crash character cannot keep his or her pre-crash name ... but there's also no reason to keep it, either.

Partly out of reflex, and partly to match whatever color armor they're wearing, characters might keep a color designation in their name. Clone numbers are unnecessary, as are sector designations (unless you want to look for others from your area, or you come from a sector-wide Simplex). In other words, all bets are off as far as names go unless you're trying to appeal to an Empire official.

Attributes

Unless you want to set your post-crash campaign way way in the future (like about 16 to 20 years) there won't be any player-character "nature babes," 'cause they'll all be too young for a while to be PCs (unless you want to set the campaign say, eight years in the future and run *really really young* Troubleshooters).

On the other hand, without The Computer's well-meaning but incompetent interference (not to mention the interference of other, not-so-well-meaning incompetents in high places), the clone banks are being run with greater efficiency than ever before. Therefore, **when rolling attributes, you get four reroll options instead of two.** This does not help already-rolled characters, since they're stuck with the lousy genes they got in the first place.

Service Group

Your service group roll on the standard table tells you what group you belonged to before the crash. Then roll a second time: if you roll the same group, your character lives in a service-group splinter Simplex. See the sections about R&D for more information about life as an R&D priest. (Note that characters won't belong to the Empire without prior GM agreement). Otherwise, the character *used* to belong to the service group rolled first, but it's irrelevant now, except for skills previously learned ... and perhaps a bit of animosity if he or she runs into any former mates.

For already-rolled characters, let the player decide if he wants to stick with his service group, the Empire (be stingy about allowing this) or go off on his own.

Mutations

Mutant powers, it turns out, are partly enhanced by the biochemical supplements present in the Computer-controlled algae diet. Now that this diet is a thing of the past, so are certain levels of mutation. Post-crash characters have half the rolled Power attribute (round up), unless the number rolled is '13,' in which case the Power is 13. See below for more information about "the



I hope my insurance is paid up.

new mutant." This also happens to already-rolled characters: halve the Power attribute unless it's a 13.

Skills

Post-crash characters will already have their skills, taught them by their service groups and in the creches. This does not change.

On the other hand, if you plan to include nature babes as characters (superfast growth, or your campaign is set farther into the future), the skill list is quite different, since many of the skills listed on the standard *Paranoia* character sheet are no longer available.

Since the skills offered by various Simplexes and secret societies are so varied, you'll have to make up your own skill summaries. Keep in mind that technical skills such as engineering, repair, and maintenance will become almost nonexistent, since even those who believe in such things have a hard time accessing the proper information. In addition, certain treasonous and Old Reckoning skills that were difficult to learn will become common knowledge, as Sierra Clubbers and Romantics come out of the closet and attempt to educate their fellow clones.

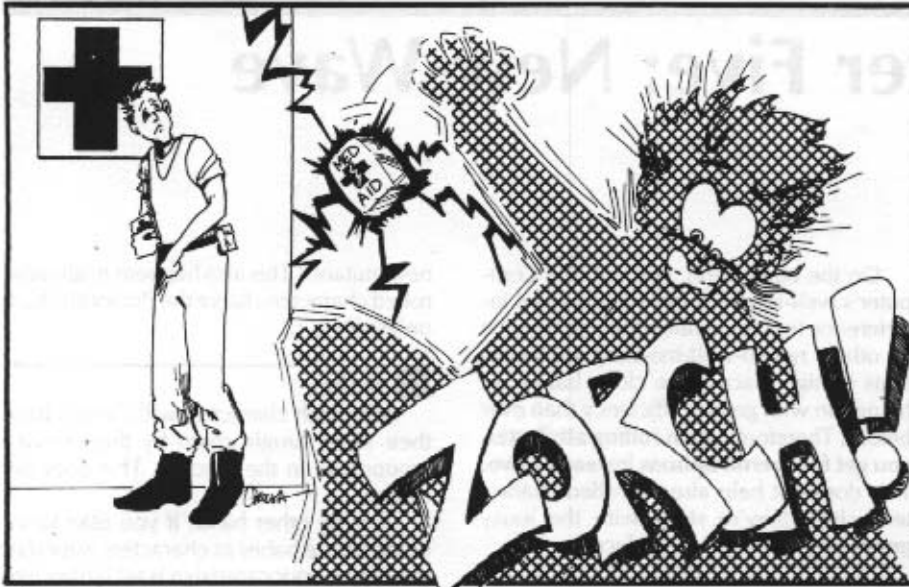
Using Sleepers

You found out what Sleepers were back in the last chapter. Here's a quick word on how to integrate them into your campaign.

For each character who was alive before the crash (nature babes don't got tongue prints), when rolling for the Power attribute, if the roll is a 'one,' the character is a sleeper. If you're transitioning already-rolled characters through the crash, have each one roll a D20; if the roll is a 'one,' the character is a Sleeper.

Sleepers are clones whose tongue-prints are no longer cross-filed with the master database, due to crash damage. Because of a programming bug, if the security database is confronted by an authenticated tongue-print that nevertheless does not exist in its files, it goes into an infinite loop, dropping the entire memory pointer to a sub-level where all kinds of interesting programs are contained.

What this means to the player is that each time he or she finds and accesses a



The new R&D Med-Aid never malfunctions.

working terminal (and is not interrupted by greedy Empire officials trying to cut his or her tongue off), something unusual pops up on the screen, or out of a nearby Multi-Purpose Chute.

These can range from lists of clones scheduled for termination just prior to the crash, to locations of fabulous caches of wealth, or actual pieces of equipment. Be sparing. In general, to help determine the value of the find, roll a D20.

1-11 = not very valuable. Pre-crash treason listings, old news files, vidshow tapes, etc.

12-18 = valuable, but only to a limited group. Old Reckoning instructions on camping, secret society membership lists, ability to change treason files, etc.

19+ = very valuable. Weapons caches, repair instructions for bots, equipment vouchers, etc.

In addition, on any even roll, security alarms are tripped by this access, and the Empire dispatches local Internal Security to the site. Of course, just to confuse your players, you might make it on any *odd* roll. Or on any roll ...

Damage and Medicine

Now that such a large percentage of the population is gone, the horribly strained fabric of Alpha Complex society is only mildly strained, meaning that more healing technology is available on a per clone basis than ever before. In addition, the overall health of clones has improved slightly, thus making the effects of wounds a little less debilitating. The upshot of these sleazy rationalizations is to make *Paranoia* ever-so-slightly less deadly as follows:

- Wound effects reduce all rolls by -3, not -4;

- If a character receives medical attention, an endurance roll is not necessary to see if the condition worsens. In other words, doctors can only help, not hurt. Doc-bots, on the other manipulative appendage, still require endurance checks after failed medical rolls.

- An R&D device called a Med-Aid is available at a modest fee from R&D or on the black market. It requires a Moxie roll to use (x1/2 attribute for each use per day after the first) and heals an incapacitated character to wounded status, and a wounded character to healthy status.

New Clones

Clone replacements are few and far between these days. One of the first things a new group of player-characters might want to do is embark on an expedition to the Clone Priests and make some kind of replacement arrangement.

But the clone replacement system still works sporadically (not even the priests are sure where every Emergency Clone Replacement Capsule is located) and even a character who has no special favor with the priests might find himself with a new clone, especially if he hasn't died too often.

To represent this uncertainty, when a character dies the player must make a *continuity roll* on one six-sided die. If the number rolled is equal to or greater than the clone number to be received, the clone arrives. If it is less, there is no replacement clone. For example, Blown-U-PPP-2 is killed. His player makes a continuity roll. If the roll is three or higher, Blown-U-PPP-3 will appear. On a roll of one or two, there are no more Blown-U clones available.

Surviving members of the party may make a special appeal to the Clone Priests, if they manage to recover any of their fallen comrade's parts. (The possibilities for "parts-recovery" adventures are best not discussed here.)

Intro to The New Mutant

If you're planning on starting your post-crash campaign a little further in the future (like, long enough for natural-born characters to be playing and plenty of political divisions to have been entrenched), a few extra rules might be helpful when dealing with purestrain characters and the use of mutations in MegaWhoops Alpha. For instance, sometime in the future there will be:

The New Mutant

by Edward S. Bolme

Since The Crash, there have been two forms of reproduction predominant; the clean, careful, cautious cloning of new citizens (for a price), and disgusting primitive hormonal copulation, the incidence of which has suffered a distressing rise year-by-year, every year since the crash. As neither of the above methods is Computer-sanctioned (i.e., indiscriminate) cloning, the pervasiveness of mutations has been altered. In fact, there is a whole new sub-breed of citizens; the so-called 'Purestrains.' The rise of this group has strained relations among mutants and non-mutants. Now there's some rather unfriendly competition to see which group can prove itself the "real" homo sapiens. The Human Race is on.

What'll They Think of Next?

Sex is the predominant form of repro-



Some designer-gene mutations are rather disconcerting.

duction (and recreation, for that matter) in MegaWhoops Alpha, for when the hormone suppressants wore off everyone's sexual appetite was somewhat akin to that of a starving man arriving at a banquet. Since mutant genes are recessive, it is very rare indeed for a natural-born child to have a mutant ability. In game terms, if a natural-born character rolls a lucky 13 for Power, that character has a mutation. On the other hand, prenatal nutrition is far better in the human uterus than in a glass-walled clone vat (the so-called "womb with a view"), so a natural-born character gets six reroll options, and may choose the higher number of each reroll. (If the character has no mutation and all his attributes are 10 or greater, he/she is considered "Purestrain.")

Plus, natural-born kids are just a lot better looking — they're robust country types in comparison to the standard pale emaciated Alpha Complex city-slicker. They stand a good ten centimeters taller than everyone else. Big white smiles, husky build ... gosh, if they were any better looking, they'd be Norwegians!

Repro Man

All other forms of reproduction are controlled by the Clone Priests (aka The Baby Makers), a group of scientists, technicians, Clone Rangers, and others who seized control of the cloning facilities (aka The Clone Zone). All negotiations are entrusted to former PLC clerks. Mind you, cloning is a tricky science. Any tiny little bit of contaminant can ruin a whole six-pack of clones. Thus, the highest standards in sterility (no pun intended) and laboratory technique are maintained to avoid messy side effects. The Baby Makers are attempting to infiltrate the food vats to reestablish hormone suppression and gain total control of the reproduction market.

Like Father, Like Son ... Precisely

Would you give your eye tooth for a clone of yourself? Many citizens do. Direct cloning is the second most prevalent form of reproduction. This is where, for a fee, a PC can buy another clone of himself. Seven, eight, the dome's the limit as long as your credits hold out. Tissue samples are also necessary. These are always extracted painlessly and quickly. And they never leave scars, neither. Hospitalization is never necessary. Won't feel a thing. Trust me. Sign here, please.

Eye teeth and patches of skin are generally adequate, and most clones are loathe to part with much more. But like we said, cloning's a tricky business, and sometimes those tiny little tissue cultures just die non-refundably in spite of the Baby Makers' best efforts. All clients are advised that larger samples insure against failure of the clon-

ing. Brewing a full-grown clone also takes time. Shorter deadlines are more expensive both financially and biologically. Real rush jobs cost an arm and a leg. These can often be liberated from your recently deceased predecessor, if carefully preserved and promptly delivered.

Little Boys

Just as an aside, an attempt was made to clone a junior citizen from scratch using the ancient alchemical formula of "snips and snails and puppy dog tails." The resulting horror escaped, and though it demonstrated the temperament and destructive capacity of the average two-year old, the survivors of the incident unanimously agreed that aesthetically, it was somewhat less than pleasing. No further experiments are contemplated at this time.

Designer Genes

The Baby Makers have also managed to recruit some Eugenicists, who gladly pro-

vided all sorts of information in exchange for being allowed to keep their kneecaps in working order. Thus, Gloria-V-NDR built genes are now available to the public. Basically, getting designer genes involves an injection with a carefully engineered virus which attacks every cell in your body, adding DNA to your genes, and hopefully producing a new mutant ability. It is hardly a foolproof method, as the table illustrates.

Stork Reality

Occasionally The Baby Makers will just up and clone someone from scratch. Maybe they do it to replenish their own ranks, or maybe some Alpha Simplex wants a gross of new workers, or maybe it's just an experiment (see the "little boys" note). On these occasions, the result is a standard Alpha Complex clone family of variable number, except that usually the clones have more or stronger mutations (genetic experimentation for academic curiosity).

Mutant Research

Scientists in the Clone Zone are hard at work creating new fashions in designer genes. Most of these scientists were 'recruited' from R&D's biogenics labs. So don't tell your players this, but these experimental genes can be as bad as experimental devices. Like:

Dragon Breath: The mutant can breathe fire just like a Red Dragon in That Children's Fantasy Game (tm). Every time he does so costs one Power. The fire damages on the column number equal to his current Power and has a range of ten meters. If the character has eaten a lot of Chinese food or garlic lately, the damage can be up to double normal. Unfortunately, the beginning mutant is not wildly accurate. Another problem with this power is that smoke and small licks of flame constantly emanate from the character's mouth. This is hazardous to moustached characters. Also, traveling companions had better hope the mutant doesn't catch a cold, as sneezes can be disastrous.

The Mutant Mind

Sure, being a mutant is no longer treason. But all your life you swore up and down you were clean, gave your word of honor you were genetically pure, and you didn't lift a telekinetic finger when your buddy was exposed as a mutant and fried. So are you just going to up and tell your buddy's clone that, well, yes, you're a mutant, you lied all these years and you could have saved him when he was found out but you were scared? Besides, there's still Anti-Mutants out there. Psion is attract-

New Mutants Table

Die Roll Result

- | | |
|---------|--|
| 1 - 10 | PC gets what he/she wants. (No, really.) |
| 11 - 12 | As above, but also with a physical tag (i.e., a third eye for Deep Probe). |
| 13 | PC gets the wrong mutation. But don't tell. |
| 14 | No mutation, just a physical tag. ("I wanted a better sense of smell, and I got an elephant's nose!") |
| 15 | Desired mutation replaces one current mutation. |
| 16 | Lose one current mutation. |
| 17 | Virus just makes PC sick, with mutation-specific symptoms. |
| 18 | PC gets an anti-mutation. ("Everyone can read my thoughts!") |
| 19 | PC develops antibodies (and thus total immunity) to the gene splicing virus. |
| 20 | The encoded DNA mutates the carrier virus, producing a new super-plague which wipes out half of Alpha Complex. (If this happens more than twice, just make up a new super-disaster.) |



A former Computer Phreak: a pitiful sight.

ing a lot of bad press with all their New Dawn crap. Swarthy Purestrains are popping up everywhere. And everyone has been conditioned all their life to kill mutants on sight. Old habits die hard. No wonder you wear a mask.

Actually, it's kind of fun getting to practice using your mutation all the time. Years of mutant persecution have inclined you to defend today's defenseless. Kind of a vicarious revenge. And it's no longer treasonous to come to someone's aid. The Justice League of Alpha Complex, you call yourselves. Running around in masks and skivvies using your mutant powers to defeat the same sort of bullies who killed mutants in the old days. And just because you're vigilantes is no reason not to be stylish — after all, everyone can wear any color they want now! But you make a lot of enemies as a member of the JIAC. That's why you take care to keep your identity secret. Sometimes you even have to fight against your own Alpha Simplex. And if you think these guys are in it just for kicks, you got another think coming. Sure, they'll take from the rich and give to the poor, but not without skimming their 20% handling fee. After all, they gotta pay their tailor somehow...

Let's Get Physical

For hundreds of years mutants were de facto traitors, thus natural selection was weighted very heavily against those mutants with visible differences like a third arm or something. Now that mutations are basically accepted, some of these physical mutations may reassert themselves. Who knows? Elves, Orcs ...

Intro to The New Secret Societies

We've already talked somewhat about how the various secret societies coped with the moment of MegaWhoops. How about the long-term forecast? What are they up to now — and how will that change the "rules" of secret societies?

The New Secret Societies

by Rick Swan and Peter Tamlyn

If secret societies still exist in Alpha Complex after the demise of The Computer — which I'm pretty sure is impossible — they're probably in a real mess. Without The Computer to worship or despise or annoy, a lot of these societies — presuming they were for real in the first place — probably wouldn't have a clue as to what to do next. Massive reorganization would surely be necessary for some. Others might throw in the towel and start from scratch. Still others might come out of the closet and go public. If secret societies still exist in the post-MegaWhoops Alpha Complex — which I'm just about positive they don't — here's how they might adjust.

Anti-Mutant

That the five-eyed slime-spewing mutant conspiracy was responsible for the destruction of the glorious Computer is self-evident. Anti-Mutant has dedicated itself to wiping out every last disgusting strain. This is even more possible now, since a lot of folk have discovered that their own mutations (which they had to hide in order to join) are getting weaker by the daycycle.

The bad news is that there's a whole bunch of brand new mutants crawling around with powers that nobody's ever heard of. Even worse news is that many of the old funding sources for Anti-Mutant have dried up, leaving the society in desperate need of a bankroll.

To remain in good standing, Anti-Mutant members must (1) expose the new mutants and their new powers, and (2) recruit new sugar daddies to get the cash flowing again. The higher-ups aren't picky about how these tasks are accomplished, especially the latter: robbery, extortion, and other time-tested fund-raising techniques are welcome and encouraged.

In addition to signing over their plasticreds to the society, new recruits must furnish evidence of a previously-unknown mutant strain, preferably presenting the mutant itself at a society meeting so it can be dissected.

Computer Phreaks

The Computer crash has not only meant the loss of the Computer Phreaks' nearest and dearest companion, it has also meant the loss of their highly valued prestige. For although the Phreaks had always claimed they could snuff The Computer if they ever really wanted to, most everyone assumes it was either the Commies or PURGE who actually pulled it off.

With morale at an all-time low, membership in the Computer Phreaks has dropped considerably. Phreaks meetings are now truly pathetic occasions, resembling a bunch of nostalgic geezers whining about the Good Old Days.

The Phreaks' fixation on the past has earned them the contempt of virtually every clone, service group, and secret society in the complex. Even their old friends in Pro Tech have little to do with them. Exterminating a Phreak found groveling in the hallway, mindlessly mumbling microprocessor serial numbers, is considered by most to be an act of mercy.

The majority of Phreaks have jumped ship for the greener pastures of other societies. What keeps die-hard Phreaks hanging in there is the hope that the Computer will someday miraculously recover, and they can resume the roles they were born to play. Advancement is awarded to Phreaks who discover any of the few functional terminals and databases still rumored to exist. Any memento of the Computer's glory days — a dented memory chip, a rusty connector cable — allows a newcomer to join. But who'd want to?

Communists

To advance in the ranks, members must execute a designated quota of citizens who harbor capitalistic sympathies, easily distinguished by their plasticreds and other blatant displays of materialism. Membership in the new party requires each new comrade to cleanse himself of all material possessions by turning them over to the Chairman's deputies for eventual redistribution to the masses, and then to complete an assigned mission, such as a harassment raid on a New Free Enterprisers meeting.

If anything, the new Communists are even more despised than the old Communists, owing to a prevailing rumor that the Computer crash was the first step of a Commie takeover. However, in some places, the Communists have gone public and control entire sectors. The party has been heavily infiltrated with Free Enterprisers who not only keep an eye on the comrades, but also help themselves to the liberated goodies.

Corpore Metal

Corpore Metal remains virtually unchanged from its pre-crash days, and sees the passing of the Computer as an unfortunate but necessary step in the inevitable ascendancy of bots to positions of leadership. The members still agree that the perfect society will never be achieved until the human meatheads are no longer a part of it. Advancement in the ranks, as well as new membership, is still awarded to those who rack up the most impressive body counts of superfluous biological intelligences, as well as service to bots above and beyond the call of duty.

It goes without saying that the leaders of CM enclaves are bots without Asimov circuits. Most of them have little or no regard for the crude, simple, fleshy things that share their lives. They are cold, humorless, relentless, merciless. Yes, just like tax inspectors, in fact. However, humans can do work for CM above and beyond the call of duty, and thus earn the bots' gratitude.

One member is working on the construction of meat-bots that are indistinguishable from humans, to be used for infiltration of enemy groups and Simplexes, particularly that of the Frankenstein Destroyers. Corpore Metals now maintain their own Simplex; only bionic entities are allowed entry. Any human who wants to enter one must have at least one bionic limb. This usually means submitting to the tender mercies of one of the docbots, a dubious privilege when you are sick, let alone when you are not. Still, it would be quite fun to send a bunch of Troubleshooters on a mission which involved them having to enter a CM enclave

Death Leopard

Not much has changed with Death Leopard. They're still as obnoxious as ever, devoted to acts of random destruction and deviant behavior. Trouble is, there's no risk if The Computer's not around to expose them. And without the risk, how's a guy supposed to establish a reputation?

Fortunately, the Head Honchos have risen to the occasion by dreaming up elaborate pranks to torture the other secret societies (except for PURGE, with whom they



People who work at glass computers shouldn't grow clones.

remain on good terms), the populace in general, and other Leopard gangs in particular. Especially favored are pranks involving The Computer — in fact, advancement to higher degrees and the initiation of new members requires the successful execution of a spectacular prank of which The Computer is an integral part. An example that earned its creator an advancement to Superhero level: infiltrating a First Church of Computer-Programmer sect, convincing them that the Computer had been reincarnated as a fungal growth on the bottom of the primary food vat, and watching them dive in.

First Church of Christ Computer-Programmer

Advancement in the ranks of the new FCCCP, as well as new membership, is awarded for exposing heretical actions. This is especially valuable if the action exposed is that of a current member.

The FCCCP is currently in the process of conducting thorough loyalty tests for their members. Depending on the fervor of a particular group, the tests might include recruiting new converts, driving out the AntiComputer by setting fire to the sectors it has infested, or procuring traitors for sacrificial offerings. All actions, of course, are performed in the name of the Holy Database.

Recruits are given similar but more severe tests to determine the strength of their devotion. New recruits after the crash can normally only become Believers. Entry to the Priesthood is now a matter of long study, entrance exams and substantial bribery.

One favored test for both old and new members is the quest Beyond. A pilgrimage to find Beyond is something that very holy

In Pursuit of Mediocrity

The PCs are trying to get Emplo-Y-EEE, the clone at the PLC dispensary counter, to issue them with some equipment. For the first ten minutes he ignores them completely as he busies himself moving things from one shelf to another. Suddenly he comes to the desk.

"Sorry to keep you waiting, citizens, but my work plan for the daycycle required me to be sorting the stock when you arrived. How can I help?"

"Here's a list of the stuff we need. We're paying by FE Express card and the order has been approved by Thebigg-B-OSS of your Sales Department."

"I'm delighted to accept your request, citizens. FE Express is always welcome here. Unfortunately

people do. Such enforced pilgrimages usually start with the citizen involved being expelled into a Death Leopard-controlled region, or the Outside.

Frankenstein Destroyers

By causing the Computer to crash, somebody has realized the Frankenstein Destroyers' greatest ambition. The society has now devoted itself to locating this magnificent patriot in order to award him a place of honor in the highest ranks of their organization. Since no one is talking, the Destroyers are working to infiltrate the Humanists, PURGE, Death Leopard, Corpore Metal, and the Communists, the groups assumed to be the most likely source of the Computer killer.

The favored method for tracking down the killer's identity is cornering a potential informant and beating him senseless until he gives up a name — any name. If the name doesn't pan out, the informant is executed for revealing false information. To remain in good standing, Destroyers are expected to produce new informants on a regular basis. New recruits are expected to supply informants from the secret society of their sponsor's choice. Destroyers are also expected to wipe out as many of the Corpore Metals as possible and continue the extermination of bots.

In the Frankenstein Destroyer enclaves bots are forbidden. Indeed, all forms of machine are suspect (except for those required to defend the enclave). There are no vending machines, no vehicles, no communicators. You may wonder how these guys survive. So do we, actually. Perhaps they have captured a few tame and well-

we are unable to fulfill the order at present."

"So what's the problem?"

"In the interests of efficiency all weapon stocks for this and neighbouring sectors have been centralized to WHS sector; that's the far side of the Corpore Metal enclave. Also this office deals with sales orders only on every third daycycle. We are very busy reorganising our storage facilities to improve our service to customers."

"You'll be very busy getting this laser out of your nose if you don't give us the stuff."

"It is company policy always to accept complaints from customers with humility and a smile. Have a nice shot. Please feel free to call again."



Romantics try out the new sex-appeal enhancement products.

educated Sierra Clubbers and given them a little piece of Outside to farm. Perhaps they keep having to launch raids on their neighbors to steal food. Perhaps they eat traitors, or visitors ...

Free Enterprise

With the meddlesome Computer out of the way, Free Enterprise is flourishing like never before, supplying goods and services to product-hungry clones at record-breaking profit margins. As always, Free Enterprise maintains friendly ties with their customers in all other secret societies, but they are especially trying to nurture a strong relationship with the Romantics, perceived as a potential gold mine for the Enterprisers' newest line of products for sex appeal enhancement. The Romantics are snapping up breath sweeteners and designer underwear as fast as the Enterprisers can crank them out.

Consultancy services supplied by FE are numerous and varied. They do Time and Motion studies, Communications Audits, Management Training Courses, and Staff Motivation Courses, along with the Power Profits classes for individuals. The objective here is to take all those wonderful management training philosophies to their absurd conclusions. The sidebar gives an example of what might happen.

FE, of course, is doing very well thank you, and there is a steady stream of eager applicants for membership. But being a Consultant is not always easy. People don't like being told that they are doing things wrong. Nor do they like change. And when they have ignored your findings and are

sticking rigidly to the old way of doing things to spite you and they are making even less profit ... well then, you must have failed in your job. The first thing that FE does in training a new Consultant is teach him to recognize when he needs to get the hell out of wherever he is and back to the safety of the office. This is not an easy skill to learn.

Joining Free Enterprise requires a recruit to dream up a marketable product and demonstrate its profit potential to the always-skeptical Clonefathers. Advancement depends on the development of additional products lines, or a demonstration of superior business skills by successfully managing one of the consulting services.

The rebirth of capitalism has made the new Communists see red. Enterpriser kingpins are willing to sacrifice as many new recruits and junior members as necessary to defend their markets from Commies as well as from rival Clonefathers.

Humanists

The Humanists are in a remarkably ticklish situation: in order to realize their fondest dream, they must re-energize their worst enemy: The Computer. The important thing is to make sure it is a *subservient* Computer.

To further this end, Humanist members are encouraged to locate and recruit former Computer Phreaks. The lure of restarting The Computer is powerful bait for these otherwise listless fish; the Humanist watchword is to simply never tell the recruited Phreak what the Humanists plan to do with it once The Computer is back.

New members who are former Computer Phreaks are inducted immediately. Others must demonstrate musical ability (see "The Moment of MegaWhoops") or provide some new information about The Computer's inner workings. Humanists and potential Humanists are quite interested in Sleepers for this reason.

Illuminati

Little has changed with the Illuminati. They remain as cryptic as ever, though more violent. Asking questions about an assigned mission or failure to execute a mission precisely as ordered are considered treasonous actions, punishable by immediate execution. New memberships are by invitation only. Refusing such an offer is usually considered a breach of confidence, punishable by you-know-what. It is rumored that novice members are required to man secret radio broadcast stations used to coordinate Illuminati activities.

Mystics

The Mystics view the death of The Computer as an event of truly cosmic significance. All Mystic energies are now focused on contemplating its meaning. True transcendence, they believe, is attainable when the consciousness of a Mystic becomes one with the spirit of The Computer.

Particularly admired are Mystics capable of acting as channelers for The Computer. When a channeler reaches nirvana, usually with the help of mind-altering drugs or light taps on the skull from a sacramental hammer, the channeler spews seemingly random strings of letters and numbers in ancient data languages. Mystics may spend weeks attempting to interpret what The Computer is trying to communicate from the Great Beyond.

Newcomers are always welcome to the Mystics, especially those bearing crystal balls, x-ray spex, or other artifacts that might enhance the group's chances of making contact with the Computer.



A shard day's nightcycle.

Pro Tech

There was not much left of this society after the crash. The remaining Pro Techs have devoted themselves to reactivating The Computer, tearing apart and reassembling each and every terminal and compnode in the Complex if necessary. Passing a dead terminal in a corridor without stopping to offer it aid and comfort is considered a violation of Pro Tech ideology, punishable by demotion or termination, depending on the nature of the snub.

Pro Tech is actively pursuing new members, providing they can demonstrate sufficient technical knowledge and can convince the senior members of the depth of their sorrow (such as openly weeping at the sight of a blank compscreen). Advancement is awarded for procurement of diagnostic equipment and successful infiltration of PURGE, Frankenstein Destroyers, or the new Communists. Pro Tech is also extremely interested in the whereabouts of the Mark IV robot and the Transdimensional Collapsatron, generously rewarding members who turn up with pertinent information.

Psion

Generally, the Psions have been ambivalent about The Computer's crash. Though The Computer might have come in handy when the Psions got around to taking over, the crash revealed it to be just another undependable machine contaminated by human hands. So who needs it?

Of more interest to Psion is the rumored existence of new strains of mutants, many of them said to possess remarkable talents never before seen in Alpha Complex. Psion is diligently searching for these new mutants, offering accelerated advancement in the ranks to any member able to recruit one. Psion is also stepping up their efforts to infiltrate the Anti-Mutants, not only to monitor their activities, but also to sniff out any new mutants who may be hiding there.

PURGE

PURGE made a lot of noise about disbanding just during and after the crash, then secretly re-organized after terminating any old members deemed untrustworthy. Members now meet wearing dark hoods and long robes to conceal their identities. They plan to wipe out The Computer for real, and that means reducing every terminal to rubble and every microchip to dust. Their methods are closely guarded secrets of which little is commonly known.

PURGE has very few active members, and is one of the hardest societies to join. At the invitation of a superior officer, membership is open to new recruits who dem-

onstrate a knack for arson, sabotage, or other useful skills. They must also supply their own hoods and robes.

Infiltration of PURGE is difficult, though Pro Tech, First Church of Christ Computer Programmer, and the new Communists are always trying. PURGE is among the prime suspects in the Computer crash, and are admired and despised accordingly by the other societies.

Romantics

Now that The Computer's gone, the Romantics can get down to the serious business of exploring the mysteries of the opposite sex. Though they were familiar with such Old Reckoning concepts as "going steady" and "motel room," the Romantics attached no particular significance to them until they recently began to experience strange and mysterious ... feelings.

Meetings of the Romantics are usually devoted to analyzing these feelings and planning strategies for acting on them. They are desperate for ideas to make themselves attractive to members of the opposite sex. They are major supporters of Free Enterprise and the most ardent consumers of the Enterprisers' sex appeal enhancement products. The Romantics encourage their members to infiltrate Free Enterprise, not so much to keep tabs on their activities, but to get the early word about new products under development.

New membership, as well as advancement in the ranks, is awarded to members providing artifacts to help unravel the mysteries of sex and love. Particularly sought are texts by Sidney Sheldon, Jackie Collins, and other Old Reckoning philosophers. Public displays of affection — hugging, kissing, the whispering of sweet nothings — are not only sanctioned but expected; members who refrain risk demotion and possible expulsion.

Sierra Club

The end of The Computer brings the Sierra Club one step closer to opening up Alpha Complex to the wonderful world of the Outdoors. Still, there is a growing concern that some of the more repressive secret societies may be plotting to reactivate The Computer, which would be an intolerable setback.

Along with their regular duties of locating natural objects for study and performing political acts to prepare the citizens for their future life Outdoors, members are now required to get the goods on the bad guys. Specifically, Sierra Clubbers are required to make regular reports on the activities of Pro Tech, Corpore Metal, the First Church of Christ Computer Programmer, and the Computer Phreaks to see if they're any closer to re-starting the despicable

Computer. This information may be obtained from informants or by actually infiltrating the enemy ranks. As an incentive, a dehydrated earthworm or similarly valuable prize is awarded every month to the Clubber who produces the best report.

A New Secret Society Table

Use this table instead of the one provided in the rules, when creating post-Crash characters.

Transition characters may be forced to re-initiate in their old society, or they may even be expelled, depending on their former society (some society expulsions can be quite messy). If so, or if a new character rolls "no society," then he or she must seek out contacts and perform the initiation rites before he may become a part of any society.

Roll Secret Society

1-2	Anti-Mutant
3	Communists
4	Corpore Metal
5	Death Leopard
6-7	First Church etc.
8	Frankenstein Destroyers
9	Free Enterprise
10	Humanists
11	Mystics
12	Pro Tech
13	Psion (with usual restrictions)
14-15	Romantics
16	Sierra Club
17-18	No Society
19	Other (with usual restrictions)
20	Roll again:
	1-4 = Illuminati
	5-8 = PURGE
	9+ = Computer Phreaks

A Note About R&D

We've had a whole section on service groups, but that doesn't do justice to what's happened to R&D. If one of your players is an R&D priest, you'll need to know a bit more about the inner workings of this mysterious and dangerous "new" group. Here's an in-depth look at what's up with the boys in the white coats.



Each completed R&D project was a major ... achievement.

The New R&D

by Edward S. Bolme

Hysterical Notes

It is admittedly difficult to give a coherent, concise, and understandable synopsis of the development of the group insanity of a bunch of incoherent, scatterbrained, and undecipherable geniuses, but such is necessary to understand the mentality of R&D after the crash. So bear with me.

Nowhere was the stress caused by The Crash more acute than in the myopic facilities of R&D. True, everyone's life was tumultuous for a good while, but the benefactor of the entirety of Alpha Complex's research program was no longer providing its legions of laboratory loons with a carte blanche, let alone sanction against retribution by disgruntled Troubleshooters. Relentless, even obsessive pursuit of knowledge being their sole existence, the workers of Research and Design faced utter extinction in the wake of the crash. Unable to provide even simple manual labor like filling chapstick tubes, the quivering pop-bottle-eyeglassed scientists engrossed themselves completely in their useless work, trying miserably to ignore the total collapse of society as they knew it, desperately ignoring the spectre of their own imminent demise.

Such monomaniacal dedication to duty in the face of total chaos rarely goes unnoticed, and soon citizens everywhere started whispering about the goings-on at R&D. Top scientists were pulling twenty-hour daycycles. Lab Technicians actually hustled to provide prompt assistance. Workers dropped dead of starvation at their research

stations. Even those researchers previously accused of being political carpet-baggers and no-talent brownnosers were seen providing productive assistance and insightful advice on difficult projects. These are all dramatic examples of the depth of terror that pervaded the R&D mentality.

Meanwhile, out in the real world, some Armed Forces units had reorganized and seized critical food and ammo supplies. Platoons were then dispatched to guard the R&D labs and thereby insure a continued influx of very lethal weapons, which would in turn better enable the Armed Forces to keep control of the food and ammo supplies. And the R&D labs. Which would insure even BETTER weapons, and ... well, you get the idea. Mind you, during this time, the average disoriented citizen equated organization with knowledge (definitely at a premium), and, of course, they equated power with — well, power. Thus were people unnerved by the galvanization and purposeful direction of those in R&D, and rumors started flying about the mill that those in R&D knew exactly what was going on, and may indeed have started all this. Add the fact that R&D had apparently summoned large groups of well-armed Vulture guards, and passers-by started to feel that perhaps they were missing the boatbot.

After a week or two of fretting and wondering, folks started leaving offerings of food, clothing, chapstick, and other necessities at the massive doors to the testing rooms. I mean, it was pretty obvious these guys were up to something darned important, and best to be on their good side, right?

This proved to be the turning point for R&D. Malnutrition and chapped lips had

been taking their toll. Uncertainty had started to creep into the labs; conviction was faltering. But the sudden arrival of supplies encouraged the whimpering nerds to continue in their self-deluding ways. Frightened to the point of tears by their success in keeping reality at bay, those in R&D strove to better their fantasy world lest they be forced to face the truth. Hoping to improve the ambience and rouse flagging morale, junior research assistant Ack-O-LYT-6 started reading The R&D Lab Safety Manual over the loudspeaker, interspersing the dry text with quotes from your friend and mine, The Computer. This was more like home to the R&D workers; somber and menacing with the familiar words of Their Benefactor to provide comfort. Then came the successes.

Fear is a wonderful motivator, and with so many scared and brilliant minds all working together it was inevitable that they'd start completing projects, and very quickly at that. And not only were these projects completed, they were carefully tested, debugged, and proven useful. We're talking innovative, quality material here. No, really. This time I'm not kidding. A reliable cone rifle safety was the first item completed. The Armed Forces were overjoyed and doubled the guard at R&D's gates, frightening the local populace even more. Other devices soon followed; an Algae Chip Sta-Krisp resealable pouch, a high-powered laser barrel, and an accurate digital watch. Each of these was released to those who left offerings; they in turn became quite rich selling the items to an ecstatic public.

But for those in R&D success was a mixed blessing. Granted, each completed project allowed the workers to bask in the unfamiliar glow of popular acclaim, to say nothing of the donations each device generated from honest thankful persons and greedy speculators. But each bright success brought with it its dark shadow; another project was finished, completed, done for all time, and there was nothing in the works to replace it. No more pet projects at the whim of The Computer. In other words, R&D was going to succeed itself right out of business in about another week.

Frantic to avoid acknowledging the



A former CPU member.

inevitable, scientists who finished projects immediately moved to help others along, hastening those programs to completion. The R&D technicians greeted each completed item with screams. Screams of joy? Fear? Hard to tell. Both, probably, and heavily tainted with hysteria. Prospects were once again looking bleak for R&D, despite Ack-O-LYT's monotonous droning. Then something miraculous happened.

They ran out of parts.

Not only did this indefinitely forestall R&D's impending obsolescence, but an acute lack of proper materiel felt comfortably like the good old days of unlimited research grants. To the R&D scientists, their neurotic ambience was a success; they had successfully preserved the dead past. Soon everyone in the lab parroted Ack-O-LYT's incantations against the unpleasant present — it provided that same sort of numb security one might expect from repeating a rosary 500 times or continuously swearing under one's breath. Now, lacking proper equipment to finish projects, yet having literally brainwashed themselves into a spartan work ethic, the R&D staff felt like they had to do something productive.

The only solution was to do pure theoretical research — in other words, design new items on paper, test them on paper, and file them away against the time when the knowledge might be useful. Thus it was, after continuously embroiling themselves in purely hypothetical debates, constantly pushing the envelope of theoretical physics without the support of lab testing or practical application, that R&D evolved from a scientific discipline to a nebulous religion.

The Adeptus Obscurus

Surprisingly enough, the truly crackpot inventors did not get weeded out after the crash. Sure, you'd think that the people who always built useless gizmos or (worse yet) death traps would have been lynched, but such was not the case. You see, to execute these parasites would have been tantamount to accepting The Computer's death, for these selfsame wackos were the only ones crazy enough to work on The Computer's pet projects, which was indeed why they were kept around. (The "better him than me" rubric.) Instead, after the crash, these fifth wheels were allowed to continue their useless work and were by and large ignored until the supply crunch.

But big league insanity requires at least one part brilliant intelligence, and when the R&D staffers were forced to start working purely on paper, this intelligence was given freedom from the constraints of practicable experimentation (i.e., reality), and the crackpot inventors came up with all sorts of off-the-wall hypotheses and unified field theories that opened whole new fields

of research, or at least seemed to. Even when these yoyos were simply babbling and had no idea of the actual physics involved with a certain device, their explanations were so delphic that other more stable scientists could read anything they wanted into their words. Soon these unstable mentalities were considered Prophetic Scholars of the Incomprehensible Wisdom of the Universe. Their every word was taken down, bound into books, and catalogued in the rapidly growing library along with gobs of inventions, ideas, and other worthless stuff.

Meanwhile, in the world beyond the R&D labs, the rather sudden interruption of the flow of new devices was alarming to many people, especially those entrepreneurs who were making a good living tithing for new inventions. Soon salvaged technology started appearing among the packs of cold Hot Fun and toilet paper left at R&D's gates.

The Temple Guards

Dim though they might be, it still didn't take long for the Vulture goons assigned to guard R&D to realize that they had a say in the distribution of the new weapons technologies therein. Understandably tired of turning exciting new gadgets over to their lard-butted superiors, they quietly kept a few new megadeath gizmos for themselves, then declared themselves autonomous mercenaries sworn to protect the temples of knowledge, and if their former superiors didn't like it then they were welcome to be the first targets of the new Metapulser Destruct-Ray.

Good Stuff

OR WHY YOUR PLAYERS WOULD VOLUNTARILY HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH R&D.

In the old days, R&D devices were horrid accidents waiting for a Troubleshooter to make them happen. Naturally, most folks wanted nothing to do with them, which is why we included them in *Paranoia* in the first place. Now things are different. R&D produces quality items. Carefully designed by the greatest minds, they are often quantum leaps in technology. And, given the general shortage of high-tech supplies remaining after the crash, R&D technology stands far above and beyond what most citizens carry.

Not that everything R&D produces is failsafe - nosirree. "R&D safety" is an oxymoron. But these daycycles the danger of the devices is more subtle, usually contingent on reckless use or abuse of equipment by overzealous PCs. Also, with quality parts in such short supply, R&D techs might be forced to use slightly damaged equipment or do some very creative improvisation.

Stuff that wouldn't have any effect unless the device was used under less than ideal circumstances.

So How Do I Get a New Gizmo?

Citizens regularly approach the doors of R&D to beg for new devices. The heavily armed guards admit them into the foyer, usually taking a mouthful of any food offerings as a service charge. Once inside, surrounded by chanting techs and high researchers engrossed in meditation, the supplicant must make an offering and request what he wants. If his offering is big enough (or he's a well-known Troubleshooter) and the requested item has indeed been completed, the device is given to him. If his offering is small or the requested invention cannot be completed with the materials on hand, the supplicant is sent to prove his devotion — sent on a quest for some technical item in short supply, usually last seen in the hands of some powerful psychopath or Outside in some creature's lair. Or maybe it's an integral part of the Warbot 425 Mark IV. Or it's in the bottom of a fusion reactor (the Crack of DUM sector). Whatever tickles your fancy.

If/when the supplicant returns with the object of his quest, he is given the item, along with very careful and explicit directions on its use (yes, we all remember The Holy Hand Grenade). The device must be returned within a specified time or he will be declared heretic and a reward will be posted for his head or other critical organs.

When the device is returned, the citizen is questioned thoroughly about its operation. If he seems to be hedging on his answers or the device is broken or damaged in any way, he is taken to Cardinal Rich-LEU, who, in his own inimitable and time-consuming way, extracts the truth from the unfortunate. Send in the clone.

What's New at R&D

Here are several new devices that your players can request and test. Note that testing superweapons is a very difficult proposition, as the guards at the door will tend to confiscate them for their own use.

Submachinelaser: A logical development of the trusty pistol and rifle, the only danger inherent in the submachinelaser is the tendency of PCs to use it in excess of its capacity. It is a reliable piece of equipment, firing three shots per round to a range of 50 meters for 8L damage. It is a spray weapon, and can use the spray fire rules on page 66 of the 2nd edition rules. Unfortunately, many players will forget that the submachinelaser still uses standard laser barrels. In other words, only the first six shots are safe. Well, five shots, really, because the heat generated by rapid fire means that the sixth

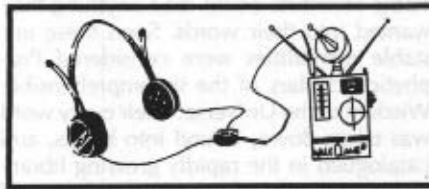
shot fired by the submachinegun has a one in twenty chance of malfunctioning, and this chance increases by one for each subsequent shot. So, if a PC is being charged by hordes of Commies and cuts loose with this weapon for three consecutive rounds, on the third round the laser shots will malfunction on a roll of 19, 18, and 17, respectively. This means that on the third round of full autofire, there's an almost 40% chance the submachinegun will malfunction. Then it's inquisition time. But that's what they get for abusing the equipment!



Sonya Chirochia

Son-Y's Walkclone: The walkclone is an AM/FM clock radio with alarm and snooze buttons, small enough to hang from your belt. It comes with a pair of earphones to protect others' right to peace, to say nothing of your own privacy. The walkclone's wide reception band insures that it can receive all of the stations that have sprung up since the crash (KNEW, Romantics; KOMI, Communists; KKAM, Anti-Mutant; KPTL, FCCCP; and of course the Illuminati's subliminal broadcasts. For more on this, see "Radio Crash."). The earphones fit snugly inside the ear (sort of like a hearing aid), providing high-fidelity reproduction and effectively blocking out most ambient noise (we've all had to contend with walkman joggers, right?). The earphones' snug fit also means the citizen will be blown out of his socks by the volume of the alarm. Unless he pulled the earphones out during his sleep, which means the alarm will be inaudible. The only other drawback is that walkclones are

coveted items, and invite muggings and robbery. There is no truth to the rumor that some walkclones have been sabotaged to electrocute the user's brain.



Sonya Chirochia

Neutronium Nightstick: The ultimate in melee weapons, this is a short (half meter) rod housing a small power cell and a magnetic field generator. The generated field holds a small (two kilogram) piece of neutronium about an inch away from the tip of the rod. Neutronium, for you who failed physics, is solid wall-to-wall matter; none of that intermolecular space in this stuff. It's one step short of a black hole. Even small amounts of neutronium generate horrific gravitic attraction at short distances, sucking in matter in much the same way as a black hole would. If a person (or anything else) is touched with the neutronium, it will gouge a divot five centimeters in diameter. If it's swung across someone's chest, worse things happen.

In game terms, the neutronium nightstick does 15I damage and ignores physical armor. Electromagnetic armor of any sort helps against it. One drawback of the neutronium nightstick is it's a purely thrusting weapon. Overhand swings are generally ineffective, as the target is more frequently impacted by the rod instead of the neutronium. Imagine swinging a club at a dodging foe and trying to miss by as small a margin as possible. It just don't work. Worse yet, any matter the neutronium draws in is itself crushed by the high gravity and deposited (as more neutronium) on the small sphere. Conservation of matter and all that rot. So the more it's used, the

heavier the neutronium sphere gets. Sure, the increased gravitic attraction means it starts doing more damage, but it also gets more tiring to carry and more cumbersome to wield. Chop up a couple opponents and soon the neutronium nightstick will get too heavy to swing with one hand. And if the neutronium sphere gets big enough it will overcome the strength of the built-in magnetic field and start pulling in the rod. And if someone manages to drop the nightstick and it lands on its end ...



Sonya Chirochia

Cyberjunk

With bots now in slowly dwindling supply, there's a lot of spare parts without bot brains to run them. All those parts, and nothing to do with them ... And now hospital care is not automatically provided. All those poor mutilated clones, sitting around, missing eyes, hands ... Rumor has it there's a group of R&D priests who have begun experimenting with fusing machine and man. Cyborging? Gosh, no, cyborging is treason, and no one in R&D will deny their reactionary facade by engaging in treasonous activities. This is the Biologically Interfaced Option for Newly Injured Citizens. Makes citizens more likely to take care of equipment if it's grafted onto their bodies. And with the Corpore Metallics running around, there's no shortage of volunteers for BIONIC equipment.

Incidentally, all clones of a given family must submit to identical operations to provide statistical assessment of the procedures. And, supposedly, those who have too many mechanical appendages grafted on begin suffering from a psychological disease called narcissistic cyberosis. But that's just hearsay — or perhaps heresy.



Chapter Six: Adventures in Crashland

Note: To continue the tradition set up in the last chapter, this stuff here is mostly GM related. In fact, this is even more GM related than the last chapter, since it concerns adventure-related things that you players shouldn't know about or you'll ruin the game and stuff. So we're not going to tint this, and if Nicc-O has anything to say, he'll have to do it in a sidebar.

Paranoia: The Roleplaying Campaign?

Campaigning? In *Paranoia*? Surely this is a demented nightmare of some strange, sweaty, sleep-tossed game designer — *Paranoia* can't be campaigned! People die too often! There are no long-term goals! The referee is encouraged to deliberately hinder his players! There are no benefits for experience! The whole point of *Paranoia* is to punish power gaming!

Well, we won't lie to you. We haven't got answers for all those points. In fact, now that we look at it, we've hardly solved any of them. You have to solve some of them yourself, Mr. GM, and all we can do is suggest how this can be done.

Paradigm Shift

The first and most important step is to make a paradigm shift in your head. This means, start thinking of *Paranoia* as a campaign game as opposed to an occasional one-shot. Merely this, and nothing more, can make a world (so to speak) of difference in your outlook. You could practically (note we said practically — even we aren't that deluded) make *pre-crash Paranoia* a campaignable game, as long as you shift priorities in your head.

To do this, think of each character as an expression of your players' desires and aspirations. This is the way, unconsciously, we think about characters in other games: we look forward to seeing "where they will go." In *Paranoia*, up till now, we've been encouraged to see "how they can end." Well just cut that out! Post-crash Alpha Complex is plenty deadly without your messing around with the rules. If you let nature take its course, more players will survive, and those that don't will actually

meet much *messier* (players being as silly as they are) ends. Who could ask for anything more?

An example of a paradigm shift: how many *Paranoia* GMs pay attention to the secret society rules at all? When was the last time your character rose in rank in his or her secret society, and did it really mean anything? Most often, the answers are "never, never, no." GMs are too busy hosing people to pay attention to the details that make the *Paranoia* experience so rich.

Now shift your focus a little. Imagine that the mission itself is only half of the evening's run. The other half is little individual snippets, as the characters try to get along with and rise above the conflicting desires of their service groups and secret societies. A whole subculture is waiting there! You could run a solo adventure for a character as he attends a secret society meeting!

And the post-crash environment is ideal for this kind of roleplaying. Intrigue! Betrayal! Greed! Lust! All sorts of great things! Especially lust!

Rewards

One of the essential ideas of a campaign is 'ongoing reward.' A player commits himself to a long-term goal by adopting a particular persona, and sticks with that persona over a long period of time. That persona will get awfully dull ("I wanna roll a new character!") unless it grows and expands and has constant new horizons.

One way *Paranoia* used to do this is through rising security clearance levels and secret society ranks. In fact, that's about it (other than the occasional skill point) for character development in Alpha Complex. We still suggest you be sparing with the skill points, but the MegaWhoops has caused a few changes in availability of other rewards.

For instance, politically, the sky's the limit. Players who begin as a odd-job group for The Powers That Be in a Simplex can now aspire to become those selfsame powers. This is different from the former goal of becoming a High Programmer, since High Programmers were ultra-loners and therefore made lousy PC material. The warlord-leader of GoonLand (and his cabinet — i.e., the other PCs) has much more potential, since conquering nearby Simplexes (and leading the troops on said

conquests) is an integral part of the job.

If your players aren't into political or military intrigue, there's always the not-so-secret societies. Now that they're out in the open, and wielding more power than ever before, they're a lot less laughable. I mean, it used to be pretty small incentive to imagine your character someday leading the Sierra Club, huh? But now, the Sierra Club is dedicated to Outdoors expeditions, and the liberation of Alpha Complex. And they don't have to sneak around anywhere near as much! See the section below about "Secret Society Intrigue."

Aside from politics and secret society advancement, the opportunities for the more mundane sorts of mayhem are growing as well. Whole portions of the Complex are falling into decay and ruin, with whatever stockpiles of supply within them accessible only to the chosen few. Strange things are taking over the infrared vat levels. Survival is a daily fight. And there are plenty of rival Simplexes, societies, and service groups out there waiting to be bashed on (or to bash on you if you're not careful).

Speaking of which, there are lots of plots

A Working Terminal

If the PCs come across a working terminal in an abandoned section of the complex, different interest groups and secret societies would make every effort to locate and seize that area.

Sleepers would come, trying to get their tongues access to "The Magic Database" without Empire scrutiny; the Computer Phreaks would make a desperate attempt to re-start The Computer (or at least learn more about the cause of the crash); the Empire would try to claim the terminal in the name of The Computer, as would FCCCP. PURGE and Frankenstein Destroyers might band together to destroy the terminal, and the Humanists might try to regulate its use to a subservient role.

A Tech Service group might steal a transistor from it and hold it for ransom; a local Simplex warlord might simply claim that corridor for his own and charge admission ...

Not to mention what the PCs might get out of it themselves.

afoot in MegaWhoops Alpha: the Corpore Metallists are still working on their flesh-bots — and you never know when your new buddy might turn out to be one. Lots of Simplexes have conquest plans, either overt (like the Vultures) or covert (like the Clone Vats). Something as simple as coming across an unbroken terminal can be the catalyst for an entire adventure.

What's the Use, Anyway?

The only problem with something this grim is that certain players may decide there's not really much point ... if every day is a struggle just to survive, how can anyone ever hope to get ahead?

Well, it's not quite that bad, really. Sure it's tough at first, but with a bunch of good buddies by your side, there're plenty of nice living quarters waiting to be won. And if you can hold them against the waves of Simplex conquerers, there are supplies to be gathered, data files to access, societies to rise up in. Who knows? Your player may someday control whole sectors. And then they can go Outside.

Secret Society Intrigue

A lot can happen with a player's secret society (which we'll just call 'society' from now on, since so few of them are secret). As we've seen, each one has some new goals and some new ways of handling things. How to use them in your campaign?

Well, first thing is to decide where your characters are in the hierarchy of their various societies. If they're Seal Clubbers, they're probably pretty high up in the new Sierra Club (ditto for Zany Eddies in Free



Don't forget those bootlicking skills!

Enterprise). If they're PURGE, then they must be part of the inner sanctum. But if they *join* PURGE during the course of the campaign, they'll be new members and suspect for a long time.

This makes a big difference, because there are other, NPC society members who want positions of power within the society. That means backstabbing, blackmail, and blackballing (the three B's of society success) in order to get ahead. Rival factions within a society? Secret societies within the societies? Favor-carrying? (don't forget those bootlicking skills!) Toadying? It's all here.

The Computer

Another big factor in all this is The Computer Itself. It may be out of the picture as far as personality and control, but there are still some functioning parts that can be found and accessed by hardy players. Here are some examples:

1) Terminals that still work can access the library information files. This means that your last security clearance (which can change — see "Security Clearances After the Crash"), along with your tongue-print, can get you access to information cleared for your level (which admittedly isn't going to be much). This is especially valuable if something vital breaks down, and you've got to find out how to fix it. Sleepers can also use terminals like this to get random information (see "Sleepers.")

2) Confession Booths can be jury-rigged to provide access to some Computer files dealing with suspected mutants and traitors, and to provide communications with other working confessions booths. Also, as far as anyone can tell, lodged confessions are recorded, so if The Computer ever *does* come back, it'll know whether you've been a good clone ... or not.

3) Multi-Purpose Chutes occasionally seem to access PLC supply warehouses, and disgorge items spontaneously, or at least can be made to disgorge items spontaneously (with hearty whacks from a ball-peen hammer, no doubt). This is sort of like getting rewards from God. They usually cease working after a few tries, since the backlog of items is now cleared (and that cumulative ball-peen damage is rough on delicate machinery).

Scenario Hints

When designing your own scenarios (which you shouldn't have to do for a while, given all the adventure outlines we're providing for you in this book), keep in mind the paradigm shift: stop thinking like an Alpha Complex GM and start thinking like a MegaWhoops Alpha GM.

This means that the classic *Paranoia* adventure line: briefing, trip to R&D, re-

peated hosings, debriefing, has to be replaced by something a little more sophisticated.

The New Briefing

Instead of receiving a mission summons from The Computer, which cannot be ignored or else, you now face the problem of legions of other roleplaying GMs: what if your players don't *wanna* go on the adventure you had planned for them?

Well, this is a big advantage that *Paranoia* had, and we freely admit things are not as easy now. However, coercion hasn't ceased to exist just because the big C has kicked the metaprocessor. Your Simplex government or society leader (or the Empire or whoever the heck it is you're loyal to these days) certainly has every right to expect you to handle even those dirty jobs — or else. See? Some things never change.

And if your players are tough mercs, there's always the greed factor. For someone who hasn't eaten in days, a sumptuous five-day supply of Hot Fun can look like diamonds ... and be almost as hard to swallow. But we digress.

Greed can also be a positive thing — there's information to be gathered and supplies to be had, for the right price. Which usually means taking on a mission. And if nothing else, MegaWhoops Alpha is rife with opportunities to get beat on by each of your neighbors (sometimes simultaneously) and you may spend a fair portion of time just surviving! In other words, sometimes the adventure can begin with (sinister music) *no briefing!*

A Trip to R&D

What *Paranoia* GM does not sigh fondly each time he or she thinks of the R&D portion of an adventure? New devices ... possible fatalities ... excitement (not necessarily in that order).

Well, that hasn't changed. The flavor may be different, but you still gotta eat dinner. In fact, as you've seen in the "Simplex" and "New R&D" articles, a trip to R&D now is more like an adventure unto itself. Especially since the terrain between your home ground and the R&D enclave is probably replete with technobandits waiting to ambush your party on the way back.

And those whacky R&D items have a much more subtle trap than simply not working: they work some of the time. Meaning that the rest of the time (except you don't know when) ... well, you've got the idea.

Repeated Hosings

This hasn't changed, except as noted above.

Debriefing

Debriefing used to be the part where you tallied up the treasonous activities and secret society actions, and found out who to execute (which was usually everybody). This doesn't quite exist any more.

Instead, you'll have to keep track of things during the adventure, tallying various "treason points" as they are accrued. Society missions are also on more of an ongoing basis than before. And finally, returning an item to R&D can be a follow-up adventure unto itself. Now doesn't that sound familiar?

In other words, the "reward" aspect of a post-crash adventure has gotten a little more complicated, in that you have to at least consider giving one. However, the players should in most cases be declaring their own rewards and working toward them (sort of like being on a game show), so you should have some help from that quarter.

Other Adventure/Campaign Notes

Here's a bit of general running-a-campaign advice, Alpha Style. As usual, the following information is subject to GM fiat; however, you GMs who still are having a hard time thinking of *Paranoia* as campaignable should look very carefully at this section.

Current Events

One thing that helps make a campaign enjoyable is a background of world events that don't necessarily concern the PCs, but can either affect the PCs or be affected by them. In MegaWhoops Alpha, this "timeline of current events" can be as simple or as complex (no pun intended) as you like.

For instance, you might lay out a list of events concerning Simplex wars: this is the backdrop your adventures are run against. This means your players will be involved in or at least observe troop movements and battles, interSimplex negotiations, raids, refugees, and the conquest of one Simplex

by another (with consequent integration of the subjugated clones, proclamations from the victors, etc.).

Or you might detail a society background: what each society plans to do (find working terminals, smash working terminals, defeat this enemy society or Simplex, prepare expeditions to the Outside); the PCs then meet and become a part of many different society plans. They can help them or hinder them as they will, while they're involved in their own adventures.

Or you might use the Empire as a driving force: the IntSec infiltrations and takeovers of service group-based Simplexes, decrees and alterations to martial law by the Empire forces, negotiations with other Simplexes, rumors of working terminals or even working sectors ...

Of course, the truly superior GM will make a list for each of these categories, and have them all going on simultaneously. This will provide an incredibly rich and exciting backdrop for your adventures, and will also generate plenty of adventure material on its own — not to mention putting you in the hospital with a brain embolism from overwork!

Interesting NPCs

As a logical offshoot of this, your players will meet plenty of interesting NPCs in recurring roles, as they interact with all the stuff that's going on. The better defined and more interesting your NPCs, the more interesting your campaign.

In keeping with the above examples, your PCs might meet a recurring commando group of Vulture warriors or Humanist deathsinners. Assuming the PCs are not their direct adversaries, they might speak with or even spend time with this group each time they meet. And each time they meet, the group has been in another battle, lost a few more limbs, has a few more scars, looks a little more ragged and beat up. But they're always enthusiastic and ready for another fight!

Or you might have high-level members of various societies be recurring NPCs who

hire your player characters, or who constantly oppose your players' attempts to rise within their societies.

You can also use some of the characters in the *DOA Sector Travelogue*, updated for post-crash play. Where might some of those people be now? And of course, it's *de rigueur* to have the main villain of the Empire be a powerful mutant named Dar-V-DER, whom the players come up against again and again.

Maps

Another way to help add to the ambience is with maps. If you make maps for your players to get ahold of, they can become valuable treasures or at least useful tools. They also give a scope to the world around them, and allow better adventure planning. Somewhere around here there's an example of such a map. You can use this as a jumping-off point, or simply steal the best ideas to make your own maps from.

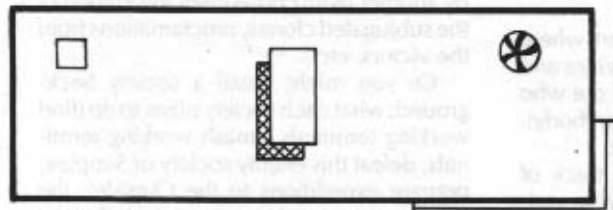
Encounters

And as a final logical outgrowth, there are the much-beloved "random encounters" of roleplaying lore. Simply put, these are charming little diversions designed to put bee-bots in the players' bonnets without requiring additional work on a specific adventure. In other words, you take your 100 or so favorite death traps, make up a table (or write them on 3" by 5" cards) before you start playing, and you never have to worry about dead-time (so to speak) or "what should come next."

An example of some things you can use for encounters include a lot of the stuff mentioned above: working terminals (or non-working ones that might only need minor repairs) and multi-purpose chutes, invading forces/refugees, Greys and Rainbows (from the "Security Clearance" section), FreeEnt consultants, FCCCP zealots, Death Leopard gangs, High Programmers in disguise, Infrared gangs, supply caches, flooded areas, etc. etc. Have fun!

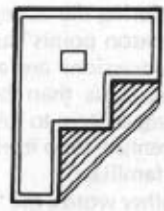


Some of the new foods in Alpha Complex are more dangerous than the weapons!



Armed Forces Simplex Barracks

VULTURE LAND

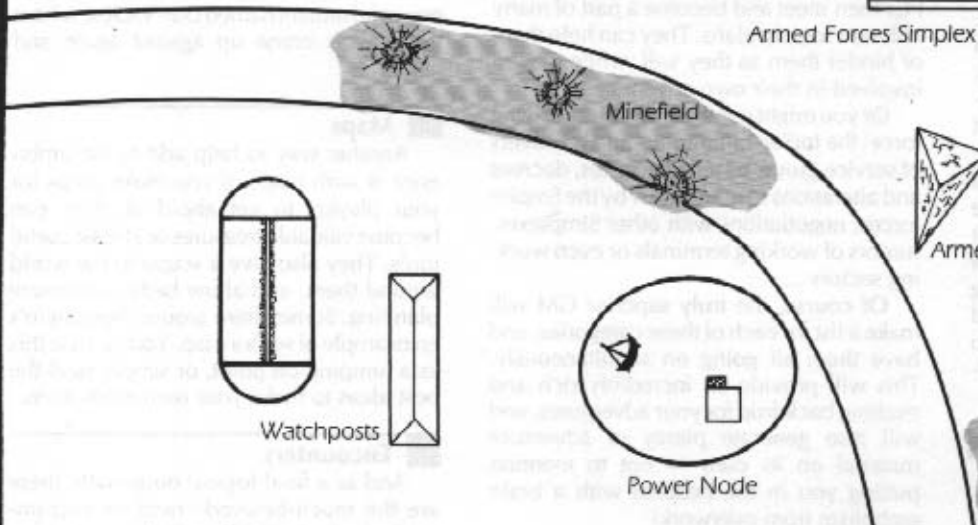


Armed Forces HO



Armed Forces Guardpost

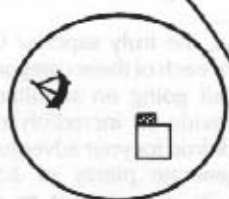
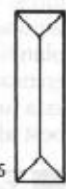
Armed Forces Officers' Quarters



Minefield



Watchposts



Power Node

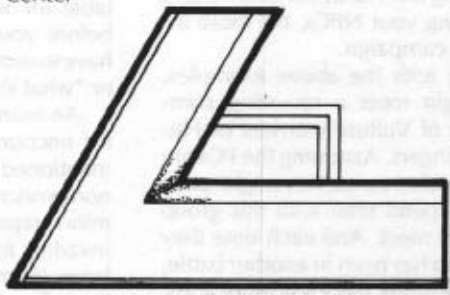


Minefield

HUMANITY



Bot Brain Extraction Center



Humanist Government HQ



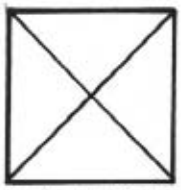
Clone Brain Extraction Center



Guardpost



Guardposts



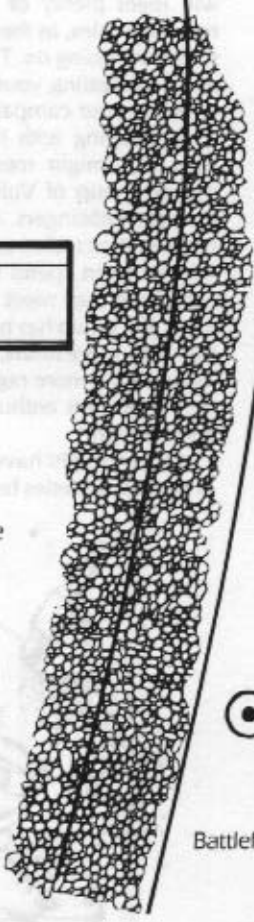
Residential Block



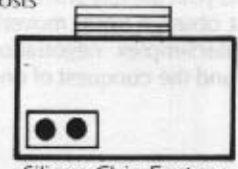
Sewer Entrance



Abandoned Grooming Station



Battlefield Rubble



Silicon Chip Factory

CORPORE METAL ENCLAVE





Chapter Seven: A Passage to NDA Sector

by Edward S. Bolme and Peter Corless

Background and Everything

Gosh, wow, if we haven't even included a spiffy adventure to start your players off on the wrong foot. This introductory adventure is designed to make the transition from "normal" Alpha Complex to post-crash Alpha Complex as horrifying and painful as possible.

The Troubleshooters start this little escapade trapped in WAR sector, just after the crash. Damnation arri — er, ah, salvation arrives in the guise of Marco-B-OLO-2, a CPU administrator-turned-caravan leader, who hires the PCs as guards so he can journey to The Promised Sector of NDA. As the PCs' life expectancy in WAR sector is measured in mere hours, they should willingly join the trip to paradise, only to get hosed. Brutally.

Repeatedly.

Episode One: Gee, Mom, I Wanna Go

Episode Summary: The players are gently ushered into the New Age. Cornered like rats, they join a group of powerful people going to NDA sector to escape a major bloodletting. They get a chance to meet their new friends, and then maybe start to regret their decision.

The Teaser

Call your players over for a night of good-ol' *Paranoia* gaming. Don't let them know you've got this booklet. Haul out an adventure you ran a long time ago to disguise your true intentions, and then, just as everybody is ready to toady to The Big C, tell them about:

WAR Sector. A sector-wide Vulture Squadron training ground and Troubleshooter death zone. Fourteen teams gone without a trace last monthcycle, every last clone Missing In Action. Five days ago, The Computer sent you, like them, to investigate rumors of treasonous activities in the Armed Forces. You ended up in a home on the range: cone rifle range, to be specific. The Vultures grudgingly let you

set up your mission command post in a charred and bullet-riddled shack in the middle of a cratered proving ground. Spent laser barrels littered the floor ... boots and ashes everywhere ... and one broken Teela O'Malley good luck charm.

You never felt particularly welcome here. No sooner had you set up your gear than you saw Vultures sandbagged all around you, loading their weapons. Then spotlights blinded you. Marker smoke exploded right outside your window. Your com-units were expertly jammed.

Thank goodness The Computer, in its infinite wisdom, chose that very moment: To die.

You know: Dead. Fini. Crashed. Kaput. On the fritz. Gone.

Wait a minute: No more Computer? Your players might have a lot to cope with all at once. Take some time to explain it to them. About how the lights flickered, then went out. How Computer monitors suddenly shut down or fried. Mention the blaring alarms, and then the silence.

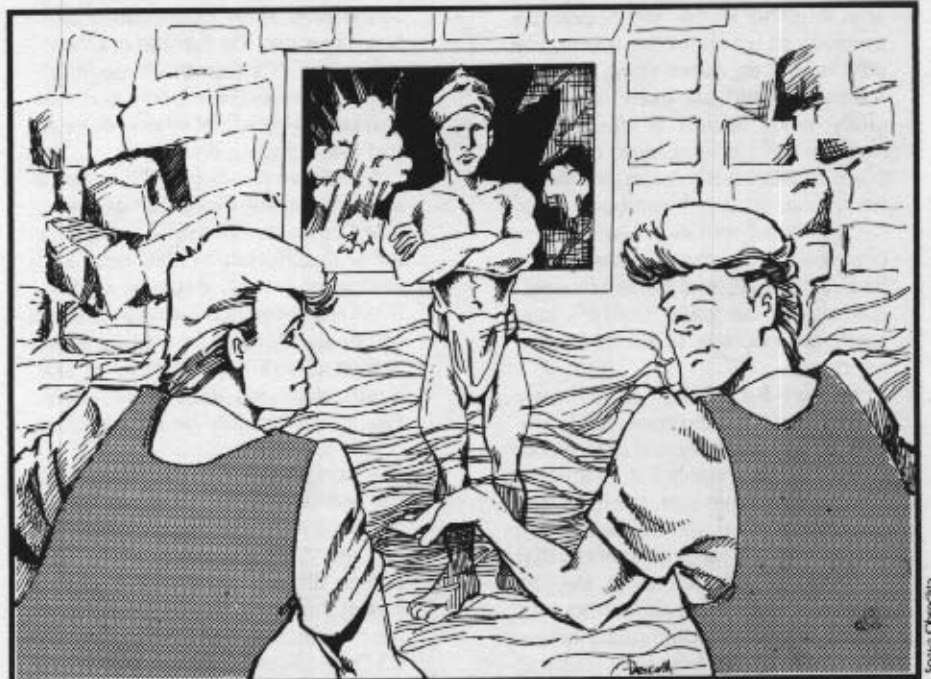
Although at first it might seem like a blessing, remember to mention some of most obvious negative results: no vidshows,

no food, no showers ... no intervention. After the players get a good vision of crash-course life, continue with the read-aloud:

Suddenly, without The Computer's vigilant watch and incessant directives, all hell broke loose. Vultures turned upon fellow Vultures. Commagd control shattered. With the Digital Generalissimo out of commission, all the pent up frustrations of Security Clearance restrictions, hidden secret society allegiances, and personal pet peeves were collectively released by every citizen of Alpha Complex. For the past five days, you've been cringing in your clapboard shack, desperately plugging your ears as 200,000 Vultures play Laser Tag and King of the Ammo Dump.

During a short lull (as the Vultures hunker down and reload) a scrawny junior citizen, dressed in brown rags, with brown bandages around his head, crawls through a shell hole in the hut's wall and addresses you:

"Good daycycle, sahibs! My master has sent my miserable self to request your presence. I humbly ask that you please follow me before these barbarians make the whole point moot." He bows and



Salvation comes in many forms.

scrapes at your ankles quite pathetically yet pleadingly.

He then crawls back through the holed wall, and, hopping from crater to crater, beckons for the team to follow. Blow the front wall in with a grenade to convince anyone who seems reluctant at this point. The junior citizen, Gunga-DIN-1, leads the PCs to his master, Marco-B-OLO-2, who awaits them in a dingy garage fairly well-protected from the shelling.

Marco-B is an autocratic, almost severe CPUit Leader who is obviously used to getting his way. He does not look at the PCs, and addresses his servant with an annoyed tone:

"Ah. Very good, Gunga-DIN, though you were three minutcycles late getting them here."

Marco-B-OLO-1 then turns to face the PCs. He looks them over with a scrutinizing glance before speaking. He is short with question-askers, but nowhere near as imperious as he is with Gunga-DIN. He speaks:

"Troubleshooters, I am in need of some good, trustworthy and courageous guards to see my expedition safely out of this ravaged ruin and all the way to NDA sector. Sadly, all the Vultures seem to be enjoying themselves too much to join me, so I'll have to make do with you.

"The expedition consists of myself and a few others. I shall provide transportation, food and water. You shall provide protection and some light cargo handling duties."

He then gestures to the small group of people waiting behind him.

"Since The Computer's commissaries

are all pretty much looted at this point, Curry-B-URN-6 here will take care of preparing our meals. You have already met Gunga-DIN. He is my servant, and is the only one who knows the way to NDA sector. Protect our little guide better than you protect yourselves. Without him, we are lost.

"Lastly, we have Ghand-I-WOT-4. Besides being of extremely high rank, he also is a registered mutant. He will definitely be of importance to us later on.

"Our objective is NDA Sector, a recreational center designed for upper-level citizens. In addition to feeding and transporting you out of this mess, I am also willing to offer each of you five credits per day until we reach NDA. Considering your alternatives," he says over the rumble of a not-too-distant artillery duel, "I think my

Our All-Star Caste

- **Marco-B-OLO-2:** He's the leader, organizer, and overall dictator of the expedition. As an ex-CPU, he knows a lot about everything. He has quit his secret society, instead devoting his life to making mucho dinero. Marco-B is imperious to a fault. He is the prime mover and shaker to the PCs' actions. Kind of like a portable Computer. Only not as dangerous. He's also straight man to the pseudo-philosophical-spiritual ramblings of:

- **Ghand-I-WOT-4:** A Psion who had most of his brain cells sear-sizzled by biochemical sabotage. This has only entrenched his spiritual beliefs, and thus he is the self-appointed theological leader of the group. He continually espouses some form of mental or spiritual exercise, especially when action is desperately needed. He's a total loon, counterpoint to Marco-B's excessive sternness. Ghand-I was hired because of his registered mutations (which are practically everything in the book). Sadly, this awesome mutant has neither oar in the water. As he's currently on a hunger strike, he has no need for:

- **Curry-B-URN-6:** As previously stated, Curry-B is the cook. Since The Computer was the actual preparer of every citizen's meals for as long as anyone can remember, the lost art of cooking is vital in the post-crash environment. This is not to imply that Curry-B has any such talent. He was simply a PLC supervisor who was hiding out in a commissary when Marco-B came looking for something to eat, and was shanghaied into join-

ing. Curry-B is a complete and total wimp, and it will take a very desperate situation to make him draw his hand flamer. Curry-B's biggest headache is feeding:

- **Gunga-DIN-1:** Little Gunga is about twelve cycles old, smeared in grease and dirt; his dark skin frames treasonously white teeth and eyes. Happy and enthusiastic, he wants to become the best Vulture in the Computer's Armed Forces, which is a pretty lofty dream considering the shape of things. He acts a lot like his Ruyard Kipling-namesake (constantly bowing and scraping), combined with Short Round from *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom*. When the PCs join the expedition, Marco-B issues them a com-unit that can call Gunga-DIN wherever he is, just like a paging device.

Unknown to anyone, Gunga is a member of the Clone Rangers (see *The Computer Always Shoots Twice* for a description of this new and nefarious group). Because of this, there is a virtually unlimited number of Gunga clones just waiting to be activated. So kill one of them off, and another takes his place immediately. Gunga can usually be found riding on the top of the:

- **Scrap Identifier and Manipulator Bot:** or SIMBot, for short. This is an industrial cleaning bot designed for the Miscellaneous Parts and Lumpy Bits Reclamation Group; the sort of thing sent in the vanguard of the disaster relief crew whenever an R&D test was, shall we say, more successful than anticipated. SIMBot

looks like an elephant, with a large treaded chassis. Mounted on the front is the control cab, which has several attachments, including a vacuum and manipulator tentacle to move small and medium-sized debris, and a large forklift to carry heavy loads. The main body is comprised of the drive treads, which can propel the SIMBot at respectable speeds of up to 45 kilometers per hour, and a hopper for garbage stowage. A high-voltage power coupler dangles from the rear of the chassis for recharging the SIMBot's powerful energy cells. In order to provide easy access, the SIMBot can lower itself on hydraulic lifters ("Down, SIMBot!").

Everyone usually rides in the hopper, which has been thoroughly cleaned. Unfortunately, most of the hopper is filled with huge crates of goods that Marco-B hopes to sell when he gets to NDA Sector. Two additional people can fit in the control cab, one of which is usually Marco-B, as he's the only person the SIMBot will take orders from on a regular basis (others might catch it in a good mood ... you never know). Gunga-DIN has staked out the top of the control cab as his favorite spot.

It has been said that an elephant never forgets. Well, neither does the SIMBot. Even though it has been repeatedly reprogrammed by Marco-B, the SIMBot will occasionally revert to his original programming and start picking up stray bits (like Troubleshooters) and dumping them in the hopper.

offer is quite generous. So I ask you, Troubleshooters, do you have the courage to make ... a passage to NDA sector?"

Ghand-I, the last citizen Marco-B spoke of, sits cross-legged upon the floor of the garage with his eyes closed. Upon the mention of his name, however, his eyes snap open, and he peers at each PC in turn. As Marco-B finishes, Ghand-I pipes up in a low voice:

"Marco-B, please do not hire these spiritually stunted beings. They will be violent, even brutal. Bigger jerks cannot be found in any state of reality. Their karma is grody to the max. Please, I beg of you, hire someone who will pursue our goals through a program of passive resistance."

Marco-B ignores Ghand-I's statement as he waits your answer. Realizing this, Ghand-I announces his intention to begin a hunger strike, and quietly sulks.

So, now what are you going to do?

Assuming the players agree, Marco-B smiles slightly, and gestures the PCs to load their gear on his transport. The next hour or so is taken up by last minute preparations and more in depth introductions to the various members of the expedition.

The stats on these magnificently detailed and realistic personae may be found on the Everything Sheet (see page 67), along with various stuff you'll need for this adventure.

Running Gags

There are several items in this adventure which can be used to liven up any panic

situation, or torment your players when they think they have everything under control.

- **The Food:** Every single meal Curry-B serves is the same. Packaged in single serving cans, the stuff is typical Alpha Complex neon pink in color, though it's caustically pungent and powerfully seasoned. PCs' eyes will water eating this stuff, and it always gives a bad case of heartburn and gas. Feel free to give the PCs negative modifiers for cramps when they get into a combat. After a while the PCs will notice their eating utensils are being corroded.

Little do they know, but what they are eating is actually a form of jellied cooking fuel that R&D was trying to convert into an emergency ration.

- **Gunga-DIN:** He's just a little kid. He's full of questions. He's irresistibly curious. He gets into things. He breaks things. He's annoying. There is no situation that the PCs can get into that Gunga-DIN cannot make worse. And he's completely indispensable.

Hey, Wait! What About Clone Replacements?

Of course! The PCs get clone replacements.

How?

Well, see, The Computer might be brain dead, but its analog medulla oblongata is on a different set of circuits for safety's sake. The Computer still runs stuff like ventilation and lighting, most of the time. Though most of The Computer's functions have stopped altogether, it's still slowly dying, as automatic systems run out of power and break down. Thus the Clone Replacement Unlimited Delivery system is still operational (see *The Computer Always Shoots Twice* for details).

In fact, the Troubleshooters' clones are all currently trapped at Troubleshooter Headquarters. They're all there because The Computer expected to have to send a lot of replacements to WAR sector. They've been stuck inside a small room for five days, with no food and only a warm, tinny water cooler for refreshment. They ran out of paper cups yesterday. They're hungry. They smell bad. They've got cabin fever. It's a miracle they haven't killed each other off. Instead, everyone's fervently praying that their lower-numbered clones die really soon so that they can be activated for duty.

When a clone gets activated, he or she shows up with a big grin, says something like, "It's about time that worthless lump got axed," and digs into the canned food.

Episode Two: Up, SIMBot!

Everyone piles into the SIMBot: Marco-B, Ghand-I, Gunga, Curry-B, and, of course the PCs. As soon as they are hunkered-down in the seemingly-well armored interior of the noisy bot, it rumbles across the devastation of WAR Sector towards Exit #2359-0234.

You can make the escape from WAR Sector as detailed as you want — relate the squeal of the SIMBot's treads as it trundles down cratered robo-roads, explode balloons to simulate the pyrotechnic displays of Vulture Squadron bombing runs, etc. By this time you should be an expert on creating senseless violence, pain and misery. But if you don't want to bother with all that routine mayhem, skip to the read aloud below.

Exit, Stage Right!

Read the following aloud:

Through the fog of persistent chemical agents and smoky flames, you can see a red-lit sign that reads "EXIT #2359-0234."

"That is it, the entrance to the passage to NDA Sector!" shouts Gunga from his vantage point high atop the SIMBot.

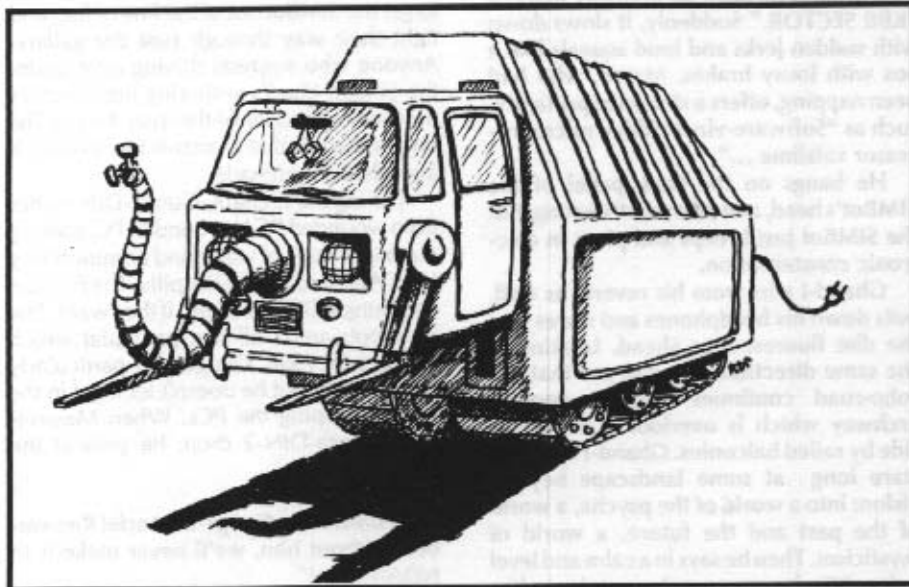
* WHU-HUMP! *

Suddenly, the SIMBot rolls out of the way of a mortar explosion just off to the left. Everyone hits the floor of the SIMBot's interior. All, that is, except for Gunga.

* KERR-UMP! *

Another shell goes off as the SIMBot slams into a wall of rubble and comes to rest with a screeching of protesting treads and metal. As you recover from the blast and shake your ringing head, you notice that Gunga is no longer perched on top of the SIMBot. Disbelievingly, Marco rises, and picks up a smoking sandal:

Curry-B slaps his forehead in disgust. But before anyone can offer a suggestion



The SIMBot.

or pull a weapon, you hear a ghost-like voice off in the distance.

"Hurry, oh my muddled masters! This way!"

How'd He Do That?

The SIMBot lumbers through the exit as Gunga-DIN deftly leaps aboard. PCs who check Gunga over carefully will note slight differences in his clothing and equipment. Indeed, this is actually Gunga-DIN-2, clone brother of the citizen the PCs knew. He was delivered to WAR Sector via the C.R.U.D. delivery system. Since Gunga-DIN is a full-fledged member of the Clone Rangers secret society, he has access to the C.R.U.D. system that most citizens didn't even have while The Computer was up and running.

He has a seemingly unlimited number of clone replacements available (actually 4,238, but who's counting, right?). He will always receive his new clones without delay. In addition, his replacement clones are fully briefed as to the actions and fate of his former clones. (Unlike the PCs' clones, Gunga-DIN's are sitting in the still-air-conditioned and well-provisioned Clone Creches. It's amazing how some citizens get all the breaks...)

Gunga can be killed repeatedly throughout the rest of the adventure, and yet still seem immortal and omnipresent. Use this to annoy your players. For instance, while some of the players wait for their deceased clone replacements to arrive, (i.e., when you're good and ready to let them play again), have Gunga get blown up or gunned down repeatedly, with his clones arriving even more promptly each time — maybe even before the previous Gunga clone is wounded at all.

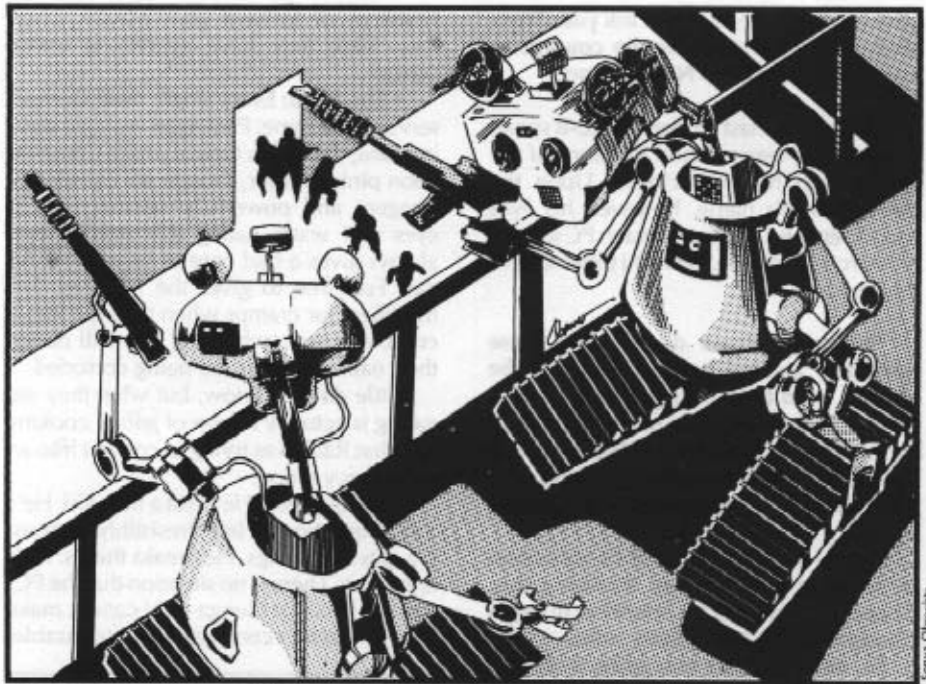
But remember, Gunga will always be polite and helpful to the PCs. Even if the PCs knock off a few of his clones, just replace him and have him kowtow a bit more.

P.S. It is very important that the players not know this little fact. Don't let on that Gunga has any more than the standard six clones. At least, not until we tell you to.

The KBR Pass

The PCs are in for some good news, and some bad news. The bad news is that they are heading into an ambush. Let's deal with the bad news first, shall we?

You see, after The Crash, many of Alpha Complex's bots suddenly found themselves without the constraining rules of The Computer and humans. With no purpose in their existence, they readily turned to the ways of Corpore Metal, who recruited the directionless bots and gave them a purpose. The jackobot factory in KBR Sector has become one of the most aggressive Corpore Metal recruiting centers in Alpha Complex. The leader of the pro-bot move-



Warriors of the Silicon Jihad.

ment is the legendary Cyborg/Troubleshooter Allarak-B-ARR. He has been very successful organizing his Silicon Jihad, vowing death to all who spurn the "true faith." Too bad nobody told the PCs, huh?

Then there is the good news. The PCs were fortunately travelling down a little-used tunnel through KBR sector. Rather than being immediately annihilated by countless metallic moolahs, they might be able to get through the sector by staving off a mere ten renegades.

Read:

After cruising down a wide tunnel that led from Exit #2359-0234, the SIMBot rolls around through an archway marked "KBR SECTOR." Suddenly, it slows down with sudden jerks and loud squeals like a bus with lousy brakes. Marco, who had been napping, offers a stream of profanity, such as "Software-virus-ridden microprocessor vatslime ..."

He bangs on the back panel of the SIMBot's head, and asks what's wrong, but the SIMBot just beeps and pings in electronic consternation.

Ghand-I stirs from his reverie as well, puts down his headphones and stares into the dim fluorescence ahead. Looking in the same direction, you can see that the robo-road continues through another archway which is overlooked on either side by railed balconies. Ghand-I seems to stare long at some landscape beyond vision: into a world of the psyche, a world of the past and the future, a world of mysticism. Then he says in a calm and level voice, "Grab your guns, boys. It looks like an ambush."

Headed Off at the Overpass

The jackobots are positioned in two galleries that overlook the KBR Sector Thru-Road robo-road the PCs are travelling on. They each are slightly modified from standard jackobots, having been up-gunned to perform as sentries and soldiers. For statistics on the Warriors of the Silicon Jihad, see the Everything Sheet.

So what do the PCs do? Whatever it is, it better be quick! Marco-B demands the PCs drive away the jackobots so that the expedition can continue. Unless you've given the PCs something that makes a pretty spectacular pyrotechnic display, they have to get the SIMBot out of the line of fire, and fight their way through past the gallery. Anyone who suggests driving right under the Silicon Jihad's withering fire deserves the Cannon-Fodder-of-the-Year Award. The only materials that Marco-B has to offer is a single ECM grenade.

During the firefight, Gunga-DIN rushes from wounded PC to wounded PC, passing out paper cups of water and administering Med-Aids and pain-killer pills. The PCs can use Gunga-DIN for cover, if they want. The jackobots aren't all that particular which humans they kill. Gunga isn't particularly eager to die, but he doesn't let it get in the way of helping the PCs. When Marco-B sees Gunga-DIN-2 drop, he yells at the PCs:

"Fools! Keep Gunga-DIN safe! Remember, without him, we'll never make it to NDA sector!"

So now the PCs must try to protect Gunga while battling the jackobots at the same time. We hope they finish off the bots before reinforcements arrive. Or before the bots knocked out by the ECM shell recover. Or before too many Gunga clones buy the farm. But whatever you do, try to arrange it so that Gunga-DIN is up to clone #6 just as the PCs dispatch the last of the jackobots. If the PCs take down the jackobots before enough Gunga clones are felled, have a jackobot sniper kill off a Gunga clone. Maybe some "unexpected" reinforcements hold the PCs escape long enough for another Gunga clone or two to buy the farm. Just make sure that Gunga-DIN-6 (whom the PCs believe is Gunga-DIN's last clone) is the clone that leaves KBR sector. It'll infuriate Marco-B no end as each successive Gunga clone drops, and he'll fine specific PCs 50 credits for "allowing" Gunga to die.

Why go to all of this trouble? What does it matter which Gunga clones live or die? You'll see why in the next episode.

Damn the Jackobots! Full Speed Ahead!

You can end this battle in any number of ways: The PCs might manage to bull their way through. Or maybe they can cause an explosion to blast a new exit from KBR sector. Or the Warriors of the Silicon Jihad decide they don't want to lose any more circuits just to wipe out some fleshies. Whatever. Make it as exciting as you need to without totally disheartening your players. After all, we want them to experience as much humiliation in an evening as they can stand, right?

After making their break through KBR sector, go on to the next episode.

Episode Three: Ollie-B-ABA and His Forty-Odd Thieves

Summary: Gunga-DIN causes more trouble. He goes running off and gets lost. The PCs have to go get him. The PCs find him at the entrance to a locked garage filled



with loot from a renegade Death Leopard group. The PCs try to get a few choice items without getting caught. Not much chance of that, is there?

Whole Lot of Nothing Going On

Read the following aloud to your players:

After escaping from the KBR pass, your small expedition crosses into a vast wasteland which used to be known as DES sector. The whole sector, which is shaped like a large, round, shallow depression, is abandoned. Lots of rubble. Although the spacious structure might have at one time been vaulted by a huge dome, you can clearly see that the roof of the sector has collapsed in the middle, covering most of the area with a rusty pile of erector-set-like scrap metal and strange brown-colored lumps. Smoke rises from a number of different places. It seems that there has been a terrible accident here since The Computer went belly up.

An Evening of Restlessness

It appears somebody set off a nuclear device and collapsed the sector's dome. The PCs will eventually find out who, but first lull them into a sense of security. Hint to them that they've been travelling a good long time. Maybe they can't sleep in the rattling SIMBot. Maybe it's running out of juice and the group has to stop so the SIMBot can recharge its batteries. And maybe the automatic lighting in the sector shuts off for the nightcycle. Maybe all of the above. That should get 'em to stop for the evening.

Once the PCs settle in to rest for the nightcycle, read the following aloud:

After a hard daycycle's work, everyone is looking forward to a good nightcycle's rest. First you enjoy another "heart-warming" meal prepared by Curry-B. Then, stretched out in the darkness, with only the light of a few distant gas fires to illuminate the ruined dome above, you each contemplate upon the fact that this is the first nightcycle in your life when the world around you is totally at peace. No Computer, no constant staccato of gunfire. No hum of machinery. No bustle of automatic systems. No blaring alarms.

You are scared out of your wits.

Fortunately, Marco-B breaks the total silence.

"Where's Gunga-DIN?"

Sure enough, after a quick search around their camp, there is no sign of Gunga-DIN-6. Calls into the nightcycle gloom go unanswered. No answer to his com-unit pager. He has vanished.

"No time to waste," says Marco-B. "You'll have to go after him. Remember, he's the last Gunga-DIN clone we have. And if we don't get him back, we'll never make it to NDA sector. But I promise a four-hundred-credit reward to the citizen who returns with Gunga-DIN safe in hand!"

Ahh! Finally something to get the PCs' minds off of that repressing peace and quiet. By the way, do you remember how we said to kill off all except the last Gunga-DIN clone? Well, this is what we've been saving it up for. You see, the PCs don't know that Gunga still has over four thousand clones resting comfortably in the Creches. They'll frantically kill themselves — and each other — to rescue the snott-nosed little brat. Plus, if they follow Gunga's trail to its conclusion, they'll end up in a whole vat-load of trouble.

Follow That Kid!

If the PCs want some help in tracking down the little tyke, they can turn to Ghand-I, who has been peaceably snoozing all of this time. After whining a bit ("Can't a poet-philosopher reach the fifth plane of Nirvana in peace any more!"), the PCs can ask him to use his strange mental powers to figure out the direction Gunga-DIN went. If they do, read the following aloud:

"Gunga-DIN-6. Now there's a noble spirit! You can actually see the Godhead glowing within him. The Force is strong in that one. But, ahh, you wound my spirit, Marco-B, by tempting these flesh-focusing people with money. It will only reinforce their petty materialism and add to the inflationary spiral that erodes this post-bullish market economy. How do you expect them to climb out of their spiritual abyss? If you want to find Gunga-DIN, all you have to do is expand your consciousness and soar the ether on silver threads in search of his essence. Come, let us sit in the lotus position and chant a mantra. Tie Yama Nydia. Tie Yama Nydia. Tie Yama Nydia. Tie."

Ghand-I sits cross-legged and chants to himself with his eyes closed for a few seconds. But just before Marco-B blows a gasket, Ghand-I's eyes pop open as he whips a pointed finger at the darkness.

"Him go thataway."

The path that Ghand-I indicates cuts across torn and razor-edged sheets of metal, across loose boulders of reinforced concrete, and through tunnels of questionable sturdiness. Just the kind of place a kid like Gunga would like to play in. If the PCs ask Ghand-I any more questions, they hear him snoring faintly.

Gunga's trail picks up almost immedi-

ately. The PCs spot a paper cup here, a discarded adhesive bandage wrapper there ... and barefoot prints across a dusty floor if they get confused. The trails leads through the worst of the wreckage. The Troubleshooters find themselves playing Follow-the-Team-Leader through very long and narrow drainage pipes, across creaking catwalks suspended over downed power lines, over slippery blocks of rubble strewn under gushing streams of toxic waste: the whole nine meters.

Force some agility rolls. Make your players do reckless things like holding ropes while teammates swing across yawning chasms. As they make their way through the wreckage, several PCs should get smushed in falls and cave-ins, or you're not doing your job right (at the very least, break a few ribs and legs).

Eventually, the PCs catch up with Gunga, who is standing in the middle of a very large chamber. As the PCs crawl out of sewer grate, they can survey the contents of the room around them. The walls are reinforced concrete lined with steel braces. Tables and workbenches are covered with technical diagrams, tools and spare parts. One wall is actually a huge armored gate. On the opposite side of the room is an area filled with four-high bunk beds. Graffiti-covered posters of Teela O'Malley line the walls. An overpowering smell of grease and battery acid fills everyone's nostrils.

Background to Ground Zero

Did we say that DES sector was abandoned? Sorry, we were wrong, it's not quite totally abandoned. It seems that the group that set off the blast, destroying most everything in DES sector, is still around. They did it to drive out the previous inhabitants of the sector and, after the fallout cleared, moved in and took over the place for themselves. Who would do such a monstrous act? Why did they do it? Well, that's the way Death Leopards like to do things. Especially Ollie-B-ABA and his forty-odd thieves.

Ollie-B was living a nice, normal Alpha-complex-type life before the Secret Society Wars ruined his fun. All of a sudden, it seemed that the Death Leopards lost their monopoly on wanton destruction. Soon, everybody was sabotaging Computer subsystems. Death Leopard morale sank to an all-time low. Even the well-prepared and artistically aesthetic pranks that used to get such rave reviews — such as the “The-Cano'-Napalm-in-the-Shower-Room-Trick” — didn't get the kind of laughs it used to.

Well, it was just too much for Ollie-B to take. He had to do something totally radical to get the Death Leopard's morale back in shape. So, for the first time, he gathered all of DES sector's Leopards for a big “End-of-

The-Computer-Era-Barbecue-and-Weenie-Roast,” where it was decided that they would barbecue all of the weenie PLC clerks in DES sector with one big bomb. A nuclear bomb.

It was magnificent. The lights. The sounds. The laughter. Everyone got a good tan in the blast's rays, and afterwards the whole lot got drunk on fermented vatstime.

Now, Ollie-B has put his Leopards to good use by ransacking the sector (what's left of it, anyway) and waylaying passersby. They're actually getting quite good at it. In fact, they've got a whole bunker/warehouse full of stuff. That's right. The PCs have found a secret way into the stronghold of a very malicious secret society gang.

Ollie Oops!

Read to the PCs:

Gunga-DIN-6 is very happy to see you. “Oh joy of my heart! Masters, look at what I have found here to give unto you.”

He displays an arm full of various equipment such as spare laser barrels, a lug wrench and a long fluorescent light bulb. With his spare arm, he indicates the rest of the room's contents.

“It is the bounty of The Computer's demise, my lords and masters! And it is ours to take!”

Give the PCs some time to explore around in the hideout. Let them find all sorts of broken equipment: weapons, bots, strange R&D devices. Unfortunately for the PCs (or fortunately, in the case of the R&D stuff) everything is out of juice, or ammo, or

just plain broken. But don't tell your players that. Let 'em think that they're finding a real treasure trove. Won't they be real surprised when Ollie-B comes home for dinner?

Some of the highlights the PCs might find to tip them off are a box full of spraycans under a sink, a large stock of ration boxes and a plate full of leftovers that haven't gone bad yet, and a few spare motorbots (2-wheeled transports) near the door. If the players start putting two and two together, they might figure out that this place isn't as abandoned as it seems.

Whoa! Hold on now. We know that giving them clues might seem like we're trying to be fair or something, but don't get the wrong impression. Just as soon as your players realize that this bunker is actually someone's current abode, they hear a voice-command from beyond the main gate:

“Open Sezz-U-MEE!”

And with that magic access code, the great gate slowly grinds open. Beyond it, you can hear the roar of dozens of motorbots' engines. The blinding glare of headlights mask the dark-clad figures of the riders as they wheel into their bunker. And at the head of the group rides the biggest, ugliest citizen you have ever laid eyes upon. He is covered in slugthrower ammo belts and kevlar-armored padding. In place of one eye, he has strapped on an electronic sensor ripped from the head of a security bot, and his right hand is covered with a chrome metal glove fashioned from spare bot manipulator parts. His men all seem similarly armed with a mix of make-



Our good friend Ollie-B.



shift and military hardware. There's just one question I'd like to ask you. Who wants to stick around?

An intriguing question, but one which we hope that most of your players know the correct answer to. Unfortunately, Gunga-DIN doesn't know the correct answer. He just stands out in the middle of the bunker, facing Ollie-B and his group as they ride in.

The PCs, we should expect, will be running for whatever convenient cover presents itself. For any sufficiently paranoid PCs who haven't even stepped foot beyond the sewer grate entrance, they can just duck back out the way they came. Of course, the sound of the closing grate cover might be heard over the roar of the motorbots. Other PCs can duck under work tables, hide in closets, jump under the blankets on the bunks, lose themselves behind the stacked boxes of loot, or stash themselves away in the food freezer (not very practical, but better than being caught out in the open and vaporized, if you think about it). Let the PCs be creative about it, but just remember, there are no other entrances or exits from the bunker other than the sewer grate and the main gate.

For those GMs out there with particularly troublesome Troubleshooters, you might have to deal a bit more bluntly. Any PCs who stand their ground and face Ollie-B and his men should be thoroughly atomized. Blown sky high. Smoking-Boot-City. That includes Gunga-DIN.

Yes. Poor Gunga-DIN-6. It will break the Troubleshooter's hearts, won't it? Imagine their reactions at having come all this way just to see the poor little defenseless dude get blown to ashes. Again.

The PCs can either bolt for the door or quiver in their places waiting for the shooting to end. The Leopards aren't that vindictive (or very bright, for that matter). As soon as they see that the immediate threat is eradicated, they settle in for a normal evening's enjoyment. PCs who chose very obvious hiding places might be found out and meet Gunga-DIN-6's fate, but for the most part, let your PCs suffer in hiding. Anyone locked in the freezer should definitely be made to suffer.

Eventually, any PCs surviving up to this point can escape one by one or in groups after the Death Leopards fall asleep. They're totally bushed after a good day's looting, so the Troubleshooters have a good opportunity to make tracks. The PCs can use their chance to sneak out one of two ways. They can either go back through the sewer grate or use the command phrase "Open Sezz-U-MEE" to get out the front door. Of course, the sound of the huge portal opening will definitely draw the attention of Ollie-B and the rest of the Death Leopards, but if the PCs steal a motorbot or two and scuttle the rest

they might have a good chance to get away. PCs who use the sewer hatch will escape relatively quietly, but face a very long and treacherous trek back on foot across the same broken terrain they arrived on.

What happens if Ollie-B decides to go for a midnight snack and discovers a Troubleshooter popsicle in his freezer? Or if any of the escaping PCs make a tremendous amount of noise while escaping? Well, then they're probably caught, but don't be in too much of a hurry to just kill them off. Savor it. Have them meet the giant citizen who looms hugely over them, sneering and fingering the trigger to his slug thrower. After the rude introductions, the PC can chat a bit with Ollie-B. You can relate how DES sector was desolated, and what Ollie-B has been doing since the crash. Ollie-B can ask some questions of the PC as well. Hmm. Wonder what Ollie-B would do if he found out a SIMBot full of trade goods was passing through his turf?

Let the encounter go on for as long as your players — or you — find it interesting. Then, Ollie-B can decide what to do with his captive(s). He can press them into slavery (repairing motorbots or cooking food, etc.). If his captive happens to be a Death Leopard, he might offer membership in his gang. Of course, you can pop the head off of anyone he finds annoying or boring. Regardless, captured PCs should be out of the adventure; activate new clones.

On the Run

If your players have been extremely lucky (i.e., you haven't been doing your job right) and have all escaped Ollie-B's bunker unscathed, you might have the Death Leopards track them down. Maybe stage a wild road chase sequence with a running gun battle. If your PCs escaped through the tunnels, maybe you have to improvise a "tunnel rats" firefight based upon Vietnam diaries and cheap mercenary novels. By ones and twos, the PCs return to the campsite where Marco-B-OLO, Ghand-I, and Curry-B await. After you resolve the escape of all of your PCs, read the following aloud:

Eventually, you drag your weary feet the last few meters to the side of the



I've heard of a glass jaw ...

SIMBot, which vacuums dust from your uniforms with tender care with its powerful, yet comforting tentacle. You barely register the fact that the lights have come on again, signalling that the previous night-cycle is over. The fire that you had made for warmth has long gone out, unattended. You gasp for breath and woozily lean against the SIMBot, wondering when how many cycles ago it was that you last got a wink of sleep.

"It's about time you got back," Marco-B comments with little sympathy in his voice, "Oh, by the way, it seems that The Computer made a fortuitous error in our favor."

Puzzled, you turn to look at Marco. But instead, your eyes meet those of a bright young citizen dressed in brown. On his shirt above the pocket is a label that reads "Gunga-DIN-7."

Wow. What great art. A total red herring! A red-level herring that is. Hoo boy. Can't hardly contain ourselves. Now the players will be kind of jittery throughout the rest of the adventure. They'll still be under orders to protect our little hero Gunga, but they don't know exactly when he runs out of clones. Of course you have every right to convince them that this is the last one. And when he dies, the next one has got to be it. Okay, maybe one more. You get the idea.

Gunga's Clue

Now the PCs are going to be given a chance to influence their own fate later on. Counter to the spirit of *Paranoia*? Not at all. This way, if the players forget the clue, they have no one to blame but themselves for their demise.

After the little-lost-child fiasco, Gunga comes to the players and says:

"I am sorry, my secondary masters, for the trouble I have gotten you in. In the future, if you have dire, dire need of me, push the button on your special com-units five times in rapid succession. Only use this in extreme emergencies."

If the PCs abuse this clue and push the button at an inappropriate time, Gunga appears as requested, but chides the players for wasting the effects of the summoning device.

Pushing the button five times activates a special Clone Rangers SOS signal, but Gunga himself must approve the usage. We'll tell you later in the adventure when the one appropriate moment arrives.

But don't ever convince them that there is an unlimited number available. If your players catch on to the gag, scare 'em by delaying Gunga's reappearance. Maybe even skip a clone number! But enough of this. Get on to the next episode.

Episode Four: The Seven Voyagers of Sin-B-ADD

Summary: The group comes to the edge of an entire sector full of water. They get frightened. A Tech Services crew promises to ferry them across the sector to the far shore. They get really frightened. Halfway across the reservoir, the Tech Services craft is intercepted and torpedoed by a rival Tech Services crew. The PCs barely get time to scream before their vessel sinks.

The Shores of the NDN Ocean

The SIMBot is trundling along a smooth, white robo-road when the PCs awake. They have been sleeping in the back of the SIMBot where they were placed, none-too-gently, by Gunga-DIN-7 and the SIMBot after zonking out. Once they were stowed away, Marco-B ordered the SIMBot to move out. The PCs have no idea on how long they were out, and no one seems to have any good notion of time any more. They are already aching after their ordeal, and a nap on a bunch of hard plastic packing crates didn't do a world of good for their coccyx bones, lumbagoes, and sacroiliacs.

While the PCs wake up to yet another heart-stopping serving of pink sterno for breakfast, they find out that Marco-B awarded the reward to Gunga-DIN-7 for "safely returning himself," as it were. In fact, Marco-B thought the PCs did such a terrible job the day before that he docked their pay for the entire day. Gunga feels bad about this, and offers the PCs a bit of advice (see the sidebar).

Before Marco-B can launch himself full-force into a diatribe concerning the PCs' personal failures, the SIMBot jerks to a halt. Read the following aloud:



Loyalty to a Secret Society is more important than ever.

The SIMBot stops just short of where the robo-road ends in a ten-meter drop. Beyond, from one side of the horizon to the next, all you can see is water. Not like in a water fountain. Not even like in a vat. Not even like in a High Programmer's whirlpool bath. There is more water here than all the water you've ever seen before combined. There is so much water that you cannot even see to the other side. A sign overhead reads "NDN Sector: Water Purification and Treatment Reservoir. No Swimming Allowed."

"Ah, yes," comments Marco-B, "I should have guessed it. We cannot get to NDA sector without passing through other sectors in the East ND's."

Ghand-I stirs from his reverie long enough to comment, "Contemplate upon the tranquility of mind that is brought about by the gentle susurrations of the waters' karmic emanations. Feel the life-giving energies it contains. Check out those breakers, dudes!"

Quick thinking PCs will realize that Marco-B is serious about getting across this great underground lake. Unfortunately, there is no immediately visible means of transport across and no obvious passage around the perimeter of the reservoir. They can ask questions of Gunga-DIN, since he is their supposed guide. Although this might seem like a good assumption, Gunga will admit that when he came this way, there was a robo-road that cut straight across the reservoir, and that he has no idea how to get

across at this point. PCs who check the edge of the road can confirm that it seems as though the metal has been torn apart, as though it had been connected to another structure, although there is no sign of bridge wreckage in the water below. While exploring, one of the PCs can spot a distant shape gliding across the dark surface of the reservoir. If the PCs are leery of signalling the vessel, hint to them that there doesn't seem to be any other way to cross the NDN reservoir, and it might be quite a long time before they see another passing vessel. (Wink at them for emphasis).

The PCs can signal by flashing the SIMBot's headlights. Or they can shout very loud and wave something around, although the passing vessel might view that as more of a challenge, given that this is still Alpha Complex.

When it turns to approach the PCs, do your best foghorn impersonation, and read the following aloud:

"MEEEEEE-OOOOOOOOO!"

Looking out over the water, you can see a spotlight glaring in your direction.

"MEEEEEE-OOOOOOOOO!"

You can hear other sounds coming from that direction as well. First, the sound of rushing water, as if some great object is cutting through heavy swells. Next, you can hear the basso murmur of a great power plant. Out of the nightcycle gloom, a huge barge approaches. It is so massive that it rises the ten meters from the reservoir surface so that its main deck is almost

A Wee Bit of Nautical Lore

Before we continue this segment of the quest, let's fill in a bit of color. The "NDN Ocean" was the largest single purified water treatment center for Alpha Complex. It took the activities of thousands of clones working around the clock to operate all of the water monitoring and processing station. When The Computer went down, many of the Tech Services crews realized that without their vigilant activities, all of Alpha Complex would surely die a slow death due to thirst and dysentery. They knew that everyone else would realize that, too. Thusly, they collectively decided to become power brokers. If people wanted to drink clean water, they would pay dearly.

Currently, many of the quickly-established puppet-dictatorships and feudal kingdoms have paid tribute to the NDN Sector Water Control Board. A few holdouts are busy trying to figure out how to tap in to the line, not totally unsuccessfully.

But the Board does more than just control the water supply. They also realized that by destroying all alternate transportation, they could control traffic and trade through a number of sectors, and so demolished the robo-road bridges, as well as trans-tubes and flybots that networked the East ND's.

How does this all relate to the PCs? Simple: Sin-B-ADD is one of the members of the Water Control Board. He and his crew are now merchants of both water and transportation services. But just because Sin-B is part of a powerful group of businessmen does not mean that he can dictate terms. He must offer prices competitively with those of other merchants who ply the water lanes. In fact, one secret the Water Control Board has been hiding is that its members have actually been attacking each other. (Old habits die hard, don't they?)



even with the level of the robo-road. Superstructures and upper-level decks are stacked on the barge like a miniature city. The ship glides slowly across your view, displaying hundreds of meters of bent and winding conduits and piping, dozens of small viewports and access hatches, and numerous artifacts beyond description. Eventually, the vessel rolls to a halt. With a lumbering cranking sound, the barge lowers a giant oblong metal device into the water.

"GREETINGS, MY TERRA-FIRMA-HUGGING FELLOWS!"

From out of nowhere, a figure swoops down out of the darkness in front of you. Before anyone can fire, a lithe fellow in a dashing blue Tech Services uniform swings into view on an insulated power cable. Lighting upon the robo-road beside your group, he gracefully bows and tips his cap. When he speaks, it hurts your ears.

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"Or what," we're afraid. But don't worry, he's actually pretty harmless. Sin-B-ADD is the "captain" of the barge, which was one of the giant travelling water purifying systems used to cleanse Alpha Complex's water supply. But over the long time that he has served as leader of the recycling and treatment unit, he has breathed in a lot of noxious chemicals, and has scooped a lot of scum. It's definitely muddled his brains. As well, since working on board the large noisy barge, Sin-B has gotten used to shouting everything he says.

As long as the PCs explain things slowly (and loudly) enough for Sin-B to comprehend, he will magnanimously offer to ferry them to NDA sector ("NDA, YOU SAY? WHY, THAT IS BUT A FORTNIGHT'S TRAVEL FROM THIS VERY LOCATION. AS LONG AS OUR BEARINGS LIE TRUE AND WE CATCH THE TRADE WINDS...!" etc.).

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The PCs can ask questions of Sin-B as long as they can stand getting yelled at. Eventually, Sin-B-ADD gets around to the subject of fares. He demands 100 credits from every one who wants to cross, and 500 credits to take the SIMBot aboard. Although he can be bargained with (any player with a significantly high Con skill may want to try), he won't come down to less than 75 credits per person and 400 for the bot. ("HEY, A CITIZEN'S GOT TO MAKE A LIVING, RIGHT?") If the PCs don't have enough credits personally, Marco-B will cover them by taking it out of their pay.

The PCs get a break as cranes and jackobots load the heavy cargo (like the SIMBot) aboard Sin-B-ADD's ship. Soon, the heavy oblong device is rewound on its chain, and with a roar of powerful turbines, the barge surges forward.

The PCs are allowed to roam around the deck of the ship freely, but under heavy escort. Life aboard ship is boring for the PCs. The barge is totally automated, with the crew only necessary to analyze water samples and give general directions to the barge's bot brain.

After two or three days, the PCs might get real tired of life on board the barge. The armed escort makes sure that the PCs don't get too curious. For example:

Curious PC: Hey. This vessel is pretty keen. Can you tell me how it purifies the water?

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One advantage to the barge is food made in the barge's galley. Now the PCs can choose between Curry-B's processed napalm and the watery vat-grog that suffices for ship's food.

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Daycycles and nightcycles slide by monotonously, when danger strikes out of the blue. Read aloud:

You are all lounging around waiting for something to happen when it does.
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(Shake the table and tilt it up on one leg to dramatize the listing of the barge.)

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A small vessel, half under water, is headed directly for Sin-B-ADD's barge. Atop the small vessel is a figure who seems to be shouting and wildly gesticulating. Before you can figure out what the figure is doing, a trail of bubbles shoots from the bow of the small craft. The bubble-trail cuts slightly under the surface of the water, but there is no mistaking its nature. The torpedo slams into the side of the barge, causing it to heave violently. Sin-B-ADD's men fire at the oncoming vessel, which replies with a hail of slugthrower fire.

Any PCs familiar with the adventure *Into the Outdoors With Gun and Camera* will be able to recognize the attacking vessel as an MTV (Multi-Terrain Vehicle). It seems that one of Sin-B-ADD's rivals, a group of Yellow-level Troubleshooters to be precise, has chosen this moment to ambush Sin-B-ADD and take over his trade routes and contracts. Although he hasn't figured it out yet, Sin-B-ADD is doomed. His barge has been torpedoed twice below the waterline, and he has neither the knowledge or enough crewmen aboard to repair the damage.

But there is still a lot of fighting to be done. The MTV will hover around Sin-B's barge, and make sure that none of the crew escape in rafts or life preservers. Sin-B-ADD, for his part, will battle his attackers as best as he can, in hopes of taking them down with him.



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Eventually, everyone aboard ship ends up in the water holding on to a lot of floating debris. Maybe some will be lucky enough to be able to sit in a semi-inflated raft. Slow-moving PCs or those who are trying to carry too much equipment can get sucked into the undertow when the barge goes belly-up. But we're not trying to recreate any scenes from *The Sinking of the Titanic* or *Lifeboat*. Just as the barge sinks under the water, it explodes, knocking everyone unconscious.

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Episode Five: I Think, Therefore IAM

Summary: The expedition washes ashore near IAM sector, where they are captured by the not-too-friendly natives. They are imprisoned, force-fed wholesome food, meet the resident tyrant, and try to steal a mysterious R&D device, and eventually escape the clutches of their captors, much the worse for wear.

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The expedition washes ashore in sopping, tattered clothing. Gosh, sure hope the PCs' weapons didn't get too waterlogged. Here's the situation:

You awake after what seems like days spent adrift. Your group is scattered across a few hundred meters of sloped concrete that spills directly into the reservoir. Shivering, you try in vain to squeeze your jumpsuits dry. Curry-B-URN begins to set a small fire for warmth. You notice, without surprise, that he's using a food tin as fuel for the fire.

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Gunga-DIN, who has begun to survey the area around you, points to a sign that informs you of your current location. It reads:

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While reading this strange sign, you notice that your surroundings are even stranger. There are long green cables everywhere running between corroded brown columns. The tops of these columns are covered in long, thin and pointy greenish-yellow objects. The floor is covered in a raggedy-looking green carpet. From hidden speakers near the ceiling, you can hear strange warbling, whistling noises.

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Eventually, your PCs are going to have to start exploring the areas around them. When they do, they find that the "forest" surrounding them was only thirty or so meters across. On the far side, they see a

large colorful building made of what looks like pink marble and gold trim. A broad courtyard before it is filled with strangely-dressed citizens. Regardless of whether the PCs sneak up to the site or boldly stride into the courtyard, they soon find themselves surrounded by these weird-looking citizens. You don't have to let them know, but Yul-B has posted all of the Minicambots around the perimeter of IAM sector to find and track intruders such as the PCs.

Read the following aloud, very warmly and friendly:

Suddenly, you are surrounded by dozens of oddly dressed, smiling citizens. They warmly shake your hands, clap you on the back, and welcome you to IAM sector. Then they give you all a big hug, clap you on the shoulder, on the neck, around the legs, and over your mouth. Before you can even think of reaching for your weapons, you are completely and efficiently strip-searched, thrown into heavy sacks and pummeled into unconsciousness.

After a seeming eternity of impersonating a backpack, you are unceremoniously dumped from your sacks onto a marbled-tiled linoleum floor in the middle of a great pink hall. Fortunately, though, you land upon a large pile of plush multi-colored pillows. You are surrounded by more of those strangely-dressed citizens. They are all watching you and smiling beatifically.

One of them bounces over and sits cross-legged in front of you.

"Welcome, honored strangers," she gushes, "to our King's Imperial Palace Throne Room Set. Soon, you will get to

meet our King, Yul-B-RNR the Third. He is so kind and powerful and loving-to-his-people and just: just perfect! The King and I get along wonderfully. He says I am his favorite supporting actress." She nods conspiratorily.

"But you must be hungry after your long journey. We must bring you food."

Break out some Ho-Hos and plenty of Dr. Pepper to simulate the extravagant party atmosphere. Or use whatever else you have in the fridge. The PCs are probably convinced that they are hosed (and rightfully so), so let them have some fun while they can.

The Man Who Would Be King of the High Programmers

After the PCs spend some time gulping down some excellent chow and dancing the hippy-hippy-shake, a hush falls over the great hall. With a fanfare of strange instruments, a tall man dressed entirely in gold enters the hall followed by a train of servants. He is glaringly bald, but the shine is hidden somewhat underneath a strange contraption which buzzes with electricity and crackles with power—obviously some amazing R&D device.

This is Yul-B-RNR-3, the King of IAM. Physically, he is bald, sports plenty of golden silk robes, shows off his chest, and struts a lot. Personality-wise, he is a combination of Mr. Brynner's roles as the King from *The King and I*, and Pharaoh from *The Ten Commandments*. Like many film directors, he is impatient, autocratic, and thoroughly

imperial. He don't take no guff. He speaks:

"Honored guests! You are welcome to my magnificent chambers, etcetera, etcetera, etcetera. Tonight, you will be guests of my people, and you shall wine and dine as we shall. Afterwards, you shall be treated to warm baths and covered in the finest of clothes."

The citizens filling the hall applaud at their King's decision, squealing and bouncing for joy. Yul-B restores order by holding up a hand. The helmet on his bald head crackles with energy, causing the crowd to ooh and ahh with delight.

Above the murmurs, Yul-B speaks:

"Silence! Tonightcycle, let our guests live like High Programmers. Tomorrowcycle, execute them."

With that proclamation, the crowd goes bananas, dancing the Hokey-Pokey and making all kinds of noise. Yul-B struts out of the room, followed by his hundred-some-odd retainers.

You are dragged, gagged, and bagged, just like before. Lights out: see you in the morning.

Imprisonment

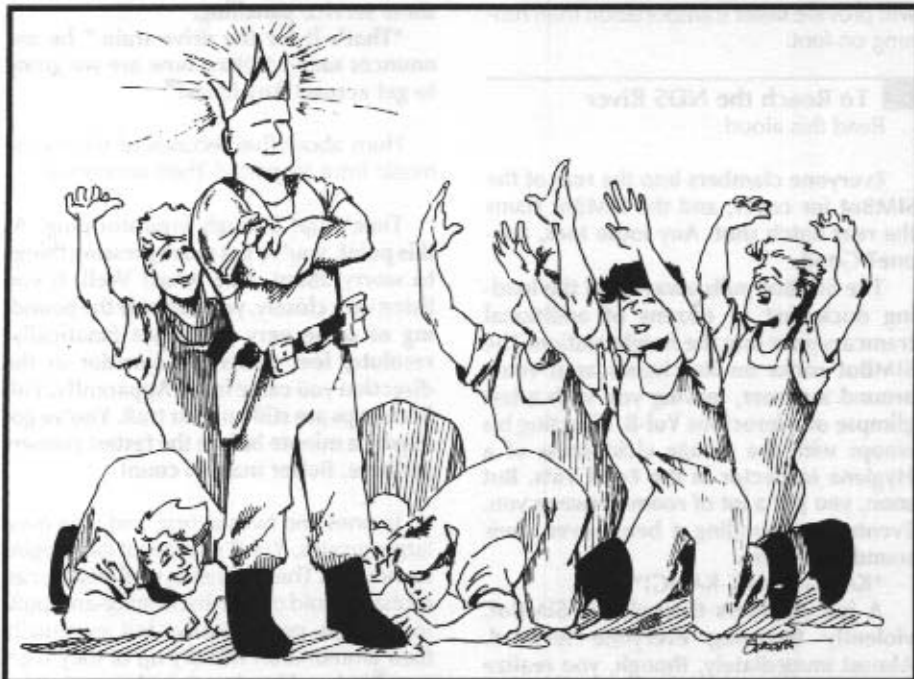
When the PCs revive, they are not, to their surprise, in an executioner's booth or in front of a firing squad. Instead, they are in a cramped little cell akin to those relegated to Infrared citizens. That means everybody. Ghand-I, spouting religious sentiments and requesting you move your knee from his side, Marco-B demanding to talk to some citizen named "Loy-R," Curry-B preparing a last meal, and all of the PCs. Hmm. Are we forgetting someone? Of course! Gunga-DIN seems to have somehow eluded capture again.

Indeed, he is still partying-hearty somewhere in the great halls a few levels up. It seems that he was able to blend in pretty well with the locals, and besides, he has a knack for ingratiating himself with just about anybody.

He's done such a good job, in fact, that he is currently conversing with Yul-B-RNR himself. Gunga is the kind of kid who can play dumb enough to be thought harmless, while at the same time be smart enough to pick up and analyze everything he sees and hears. Indeed, by the end of the evening's festivities, Gunga-DIN gets access to the secrets of Yul-B's kingdom, including the combination to Yul-B's personal safe.

Now what would any respectable kid do if he had possession of such knowledge?

Sure enough, late in the middle of the night, the PCs are awakened by a sound at their cell door. Gunga-DIN quickly unlocks the door with a set of master keys that he filched and, passing them an armload of laser pistols he lifted while no one was



Stonya Chencik

Yul-B's adoring fans.



encounter, they better come up with a plan to cross the canal, and fast! Too bad Gunga-DIN can't swim. Actually, none of the PCs in the expedition know how. In fact, not many people in Alpha Complex know how to swim. You never know, though, you might have an exceptional group here. If any of your PCs have reasonably good survival skills, they might be able to get across. Have them roll difficult survival skill rolls to make the treacherous crossing.

If no one has any such skills, someone (i.e., Curry-B-URN, if your players don't come up with the idea) suggests emptying a crate of sterno/rations to be used as a float. With it, a lone PC can dog-paddle his way across to the control booth. It'll also take some time, so the suspense should be magnificent.

Let the PCs fight a pretty dramatic withdrawal action. Yul-B's troops, mostly pumped-up on Hot Fun and Personality Stabilizers (and spouting lines from a dozen bad movies), will resort to primitive banzai-type attacks. This will get a lot of them killed, but will prevent the PCs from getting any sort of rest. Only Marco-B will refrain from fighting, continuously trying to examine and repair the SIMBot during the worst of the battle. The PCs have to protect their employer, as well as themselves.

Parting of the Waters

Eventually, the PCs spot Yul-B himself among his troops. Just beyond weapon range, he stands triumphant atop a converted transbot. Exhorting his troops into battle, he seems absolutely livid. Literally hundreds of mind-wiped zombies press forward, trying to wrest the crown from the PCs. Players may note that as the battle progresses, Yul-B's control of his legions becomes less sophisticated. Whereas at first, when there are but a few attackers, each showing tremendous zeal and aggressiveness, as hundreds more show up their actions become increasingly wooden and stoic.

But still, there are just too many of them for a small handful of Troubleshooters. Make it like some final scene in a Conan or John Carter of Mars novel, with the few heroes struggling for their lives atop the damaged SIMBot. The PCs can gun down as many of Yul-B's extras as they have ammunition for, but there will always be more. But just as the PCs get fully winded, and start using their emptied guns for clubs, Gunga-DIN can lend one last helping hand.

Yes, this is it: the appropriate moment we mentioned to these many episodes ago. Let the cue be a PC asking you where Gunga is during all this. Answer: "Nowhere to be seen. Maybe you'd better call him." If the players ignore this clue, they deserve to lose. The PCs are swamped

beneath the ravaging hordes and all is lost: roll up some new characters for next week's session.

But if they get the hint and push the button five times, this is what happens:

A new Gunga-DIN clone is immediately activated. Then another. And another. All are sequentially numbered, but soon the PCs lose track. As soon as any Gunga clone is felled, two are activated in his place. Soon, new Gunga clones with bandages and happy pills are tending to the wounded, and more are carrying dozens of paper cups filled with water to help refresh the weary Gunga-doctors and Gunga-soldiers. Dozens more pop out of nowhere to help Marco-B repair the SIMBot. Others gather around to pray with Ghand-I. The human wave of Yul-B's brightly-dressed troops is momentarily held back by a thin brown line of scruffy-looking Gunga-DIN clones. But even with that, the Gunga clones are only little kids, and soon the adult extras begin to break through again.

Meanwhile, the PC(s) that have been trying to cross the NDS canal reach the control room. Sopping wet, they hover over the controls, trying to figure which switch closes the canal locks and drains the water. After a period of shaky experimentation, though, they can actually figure the simple controls out (call for some Moxie rolls).

The PCs can now jump into the hastily-repaired SIMBot. With a final charge, the extras scatter the line of Gunga clones (who collectively realize they would rather live to fight another day than get trampled in this mess) and lunge forward as the SIMBot races across the canal bottom. Just as the SIMBot clammers up the far ramp out of the

canal, the PCs can destroy the locks or hit an "Emergency Open" switch which opens the locks up and floods the canal again. Any of Yul-B's goons caught in the flood are obviously washed away. At about the same time, the extras start to shake themselves of the effects of the mind control crown. The PCs can stand around and taunt Yul-B as he gets chased off into the distance by the remaining cast and crew. For once in Alpha Complex history, things seem to go right. (Except for the clone still in the canal control booth. He or she still has to roll to get back. It's probably more difficult now, what with all that water rushing by ...)

Episode Seven: The Grunt Finale

Summary: The PCs ride into the center of NDA sector. They find out that it's not all that Marco-B has built it up to be. Rather than being a Taj Mahal for High Programmers, it actually resembles the Black Hole of Calcutta.

The Streets of NDA

A short ride along to tunnel brings the PCs into a busy cross-tunnel. They spot groups of citizens walking in various directions, some carrying parcels, others carrying bits of salvaged hardware and electronics. A group of bots is making makeshift repairs to a wall panel. But as the PCs continue towards the center of activity, they notice the abject poverty of everyone. Citizens without proper clothing. Miserable Infrareds who flock around the SIMBot begging for food. The PCs eventually have to disembark to keep the pawing hands of vagrants from getting too close to the SIMBot.

It is obvious that Marco-B-OLO wasn't the only citizen that thought of escaping to NDA sector. Unfortunately, the premise that a recreational sector would remain tied in to the surviving network of limited supplies and rapidly dwindling automatic services in the event of such a wide-ranging

Oh, C.R.U.D., it's on the Fritz Again

The PCs receive any clone replacements for casualties suffered in the last episode. What they don't realize yet is that the C.R.U.D. system has finally broken down. It seems that the sudden delivery of over a thousand Gunga-DIN clones was too much for its circuits. Unfortunately, because of the crash, repairs may be a long time coming. For now, though, the only clue the PCs have to the loss of this vital service is that no further clones are activated after this one last batch. (We're certainly being nice today, aren't we?)





The Everything Sheet!

Marco-B-OLO-2: The big cheese who put together the idea of going to NDA sector. Has enough power to back himself up in case the PCs get restless.

Mutation: Charm

Secret Society: None (formerly Free Enterprise)

Weapons:

Needle Gun (8AP) _____ 12
Neurowhip (10E) _____ 13

Armor: Farraday Suit and Kevlar over Reflec (E4L4P3)

Tactics: Brandish amazing weaponry every once in a while to make sure that no one gets bright ideas about taking over the expedition. Kill anything that challenges him.

Ghand-I-WOT-4: Totally-gonzo peace-'n'-love former head of HPD & MC Office of Political Correctness, he was always a free-thinker with less than a full deck. Currently walking the road to Nirvana via NDA sector.

Mutations: Everything in the Book

Secret Society: Psion

Weapons:

Passive Resistance (0I) _____ 0
Kicking & Screaming (5I) _____ 16

Armor: None

Tactics: Convince enemies of their spiritual emptiness, then offer them the path to enlightenment. If they do not respond positively, fry 'em dead with mental powers.

Curry-B-URN-6: Mild-mannered cook for expedition. Makes a mean bowl of grub. Attempts to avoid confrontations, if possible, but will use his kitchen knife in a pinch.

Mutation: Matter Eater

Secret Society: Humanists

Weapons: Knife (9I) _____ 7

Armor: Kevlar over Reflec (L4P3)

Tactics: Pretend to be harmless. Then offer them some grub.

Gunga-DIN-1: Spunky little guide for the expedition. Polite and subservient — which should make everyone immediately suspicious.

Mutation: Empathy

Secret Society: Clone Rangers (see *The Computer Always Shoots Twice*)

Weapons: Unarmed (5I) _____ 9

Armor: None

Tactics: Surrender. Ingratiate self to captors ... Then rob 'em blind.

SIMBot (Scrap Identifier and Manipulator Bot): Transportation to NDA sector. Not very exciting, but quite rugged.

Weapons:

Tentacle (10I) _____ 7
Grinding Treads (12I) _____ 4

Armor: Big, thick sides (All4)

Tactics: Run over big trash. Grind trash into little bits. Pick up trash and dispose in hopper.

Warriors of the Silicon Jihad: Antithetical enemies to all fleshies. Crazyed turbined jackobots.

Weapons:

Green Laser Pistol (8L) _____ 8
Metal Manipulators (7I) _____ 6

Armor: Shiny metal bodies (L2P2I2)

Tactics: Kill! Kill! Kill! Death to all fleshies!

Ollie-B-ABA: Not-nice-guy with a tendency to pop off people's heads. Gets testy when victims die too quickly.

Mutation: Regeneration

Secret Society: Death Leopards

Weapons:

Auto Slugthrower (HE/10P) _____ 18
Nasty Fist (10I) _____ 18

Armor: Kevlar and Leather over Reflec (I1L4P3)

Tactics: Look them in the eye and smile while pulling the trigger.

The Forty Some-Odd Thieves: Ollie-B's gregarious and ever-so-unfriendly cohorts. Enjoy sitting at home watching a roaring fire ... like the one consuming their neighbor's house.

Mutation: various

Secret Society: Death Leopard

Weapons: various (kill the PCs if they even *think* of taking on these dudes!)

Armor: various

Tactics: Rock 'n' Roll!

Sin-B-ADD: Gregarious but enterprising captain; member of the secretive Water Control Board.

Mutation: Telekinesis

Secret Society: Anti-Mutant

Weapons:

Violet Laser Rifle (8L) _____ 17
Stun Gun (Special-E) _____ 13

Armor: Combat Suit (All4)

Tactics: SHOUT AT PEOPLE. IMPRESS THEM WITH YOUR BIG SHIP. MAKE THEM PAY THROUGH THE NOSE.

Sin-B-ADD's Sailors: Not-so-gregarious crewmembers aboard Sin-B-ADD's ship; tight-lipped and two-dimensional.

Mutation: various

Secret Society: none (Sin-B made them give them up for their health)

Weapons:

Truncheon (8I) _____ 12
Orange Laser Rifles (8L) _____ 11

Armor: Orange Reflec (L4)

Tactics: Batten hatches; hoist mizzen-masts; man the bilge pumps; then think about repelling boarders.

Crazy MTV Pirates: Typical Red-level Troubleshooters with lots of offensive power but little common sense.

Mutation: various

Secret Society: various

Weapons:

Red Laser Pistol (8L) _____ 7
Knife (7I) _____ 5
Vehicular Weapons _____ 4

Armor: Red Reflec (L4)

Tactics: Use the torpedoes! Full speed ahead! Man the machine guns! Shoot till you see the red of their blood! (For MTV description, see *Paranoia* rules, pages 123-124.)

Yul-B-RNR: Bald, imperious former director of HPD & MC vidshow special; man-who-would-be-king of IAM sector.

Mutation: Electroshock

Secret Society: Illuminati

Weapons: none

Armor: none

Tactics: Call for brain-washed guards. See below.

The Caste of Thousands: Formerly happy but vacant extras on set of Yul-B production; now happy but vacant mind-slaves of self-appointed dictator.

Mutation: various

Secret Society: various

Weapons:

Truncheon (8I) _____ 6
Thrown Knife (7I) _____ 5

Armor: none

Tactics: Hear and obey. Pummel, club, or stab any who threaten Yul-B. Use "human wave" assault tactics (makes for the best action shots).



Chapter Eight: Short Adventure Ideas

Introduction

Here they are, what you've been waiting for: the "code seven" equivalent of post-crash adventure ideas!

Here are eight different code seven lumpy bits, some of which can be broken down into smaller, lumpier bits. This should pro-

This is Radio CRASH

by Edward S. Bolme

In the Bad Old Days before the crash, Friend Computer provided Alpha Complex with entertainment, such as she was. Happily, no one has heard a peep out of Teela O'Malley since the MegaWhoops, although the lack of mind-jelling programming was somewhat depressing to many. Fortunately for the continued (in)sanity of the average clone-in-the-street, after the crash some folks started broadcasting various slanted news on whatever powerful multicorder units were available, and never again was a citizen of the wreckage at a loss for some audio trash to pass the hours.

Broadcasting stations have immense prestige and propaganda value, and have become a valuable resource and measure of strength and status in the new world. Every type of programming conceivable can be found somewhere on your radio dial. Commie propaganda broadcasts are common, emanating from hidden stations scattered among wrecked buildings. The Computer Phreaks run a continuous Talk Back to The Computer comedy show, using tapes of Our Friend's melodious voice to play straight man for some hideously treasonous scripting. Corpore Metal broadcasts sound like someone grinding an autocar starter, but are actually high-baud binary broadcasts downloading such things as programs for killing humans and the latest "how many fleshers" jokes. Romantics stations are of course everywhere, running everything from Johann Sebastian Bach to every deoderant commercial known to man. If some group or Alpha Simplex owns a radio broadcasting booth, that tends to become the centerpiece of the society, and the mouthpiece of the overlords. In other words, it's a fertile source of instant dea — er, adventure material.

vide you with endless hours of post-crash adventuring, assuring a good basis to your new *Paranoia* campaign. By the time you're done with all this stuff, there should be plenty of post-crash adventures on the market!

Radio Free-U-ROP

Internal Security (see also the section on Service Groups) has managed to maintain control of FCC sector and the loyal citizens therein, pending the (hoped-for) return of The Computer. Like a derelict ship adrift in a sea of Commie victory, the ever-vigilant staff and goons of Internal Security guide their desperate citizens in a tenacious defense against the rising tide of anarchy. The sector stands out among the rest of Alpha Complex as a bastion of order and bad taste. The Head of IntSec has ordered Free-U-ROP-6, head of FCC Sector HPD&MC, to take personal charge of the sector's impressive radio tower. Blasting the airwaves with all sorts of loyalist propaganda and exhortations of duty, Radio Free-U-ROP can be heard all through Alpha Complex.

Not only that, but there are also coded transmissions devised to direct the actions of the disturbingly many Internal Security agents who (for lack of any viable alternative) remain loyal to Their Friend. This powerful tool, when combined with the insidious web of IntSec intrigue, unnerves the many millions of people who just want to be left alone for a change. For some incomprehensible reason, everyone decides to hire the players (of all people) to go and sabotage the station.

PC: You mean ... return? To the Alpha Complex of my nightcyclemares? Interrogations, Cold Fun, Teela O'Malley and everything? Uh-uh, not me, bwanah!

If your players start reacting like that, have some flunky enter the room with the

So without further ado, we present the short adventures. You'll have to do a bit of fleshing out (adding stats and skills and so forth), and some notes to yourself about the characters wouldn't hurt (all the better to roleplay with, my dears). Then go nuts!

latest mysterious Radio Free-U-ROP broadcast: 'The doberbots are in the wastebasket. Activate Blue Goo.' "It must be some new code," mutters the flunky. Just then the door bursts open, an IntSec jumps in, spies the PCs and yells, "The doberbots! Blue Goo, attack!" and a squad of elite IntSec commandoes charges in. Why? Internal Security is eliminating disloyal Troubleshooter Teams (those who have not yet reported back). It's a good motivation for the PCs to go wipe out the radio station. So they've got to go back.

There's no chance they'll actually be able to sneak in, because there are Armed Forces guards everywhere, and now they really have something to guard against. No need to overexert yourself by telling the players. Let them try to sneak in. You know, slip past a guard by tossing a teammate out in the open for a diversion. Swim boldly across a pond of industrial wastewater under FCC sector. Crawl claustrophobically through an air-conditioning vent. And stop apologetically when someone opens a grating and jams a plasma rifle into the leader's left nostril. Then they have to convince the Internal Security Office of Joyful Affirmation that:

PC: We're loyal. Really. Honest, we were on our way back. To — ah, rejoin. No, we weren't trying to sneak in through an air duct. We just got lost. Major disorientation. Why am I carrying a Violet laser? Uh, I thought you'd want such a valuable item. I was just about to give it back! I never used it! Nope. It was almost empty when I found it. Yes, I can see the barrel's smoking. It's been doing that for a long time. Why am I out of uniform? Well, see, it's like this ...

Then, once the easy stuff is over and they are "back in normal society," they can try to break into the heavily-garrisoned broadcast booth. Or maybe they'll just narc on their employers for sending them on a suicide mission.

Bum Rap

The Illuminati also have their stations. One of them plays strangely entrancing music by a vocalist named Cand-Y Rapper. She's very popular. The station plays her songs twenty-four hours a daycycle. The drum slowly beats itself into your subconscious, the repetitive music disconnects your higher brain functions, and the monotone vocals lull you into complacency. Some claim there're backmasked phrases in the background, or that the keyboards are playing a fragmented command. No one knows for sure. But when Cand-Y Rapper says

LET'S find OUT /
Where EVERYone STANDS /
If you WANT to beLONG /
Just CLAP your HANDS (clap)

everyone claps. I mean everyone. And there's a new song that just came out. It goes something like this:

Now TAKE my advice /
Don't OBEY your boss /

Roach Motel

by Allen Varney

Say, what happened to all the kids? Infant clones fresh out of the decanter, scampering toddlers, teens getting into everything. They were all here in these creches just a catastrophe ago ...

Post-MegaWhoops, the Young Sprat population took a nosedive, much like the adult population of Alpha Complex. Yet some of the hardiest and luckiest of the kids have survived as "friends" (i.e., lackeys) of a genial Infrared Fagin-type named Bill-BOB-1. But these kids don't pick pockets or run con games. No, what they do can be much more dangerous.

They run a hotel.

In this mini-adventure the PCs meet some characters with long-term campaign usefulness. Of course, in *Paranoia*, "long-term" is a debatable concept. Still, keep reading.

Background

After The Computer went away in the Big Glitch, PURGE members were jubilant for ten, 20 minutes easy. Then everyone

Just STRANGLE him with /
A string of DENTAL floss /
Then EMPTY all his pockets /
Don't forGET his gun /
And LISTEN for my next song /
Then we'll HAVE some fun!

Those in power are understandably perturbed, and haven't dared floss their teeth for days. They want the PCs to go and silence Cand-Y Rapper. Unfortunately, the area is heavily guarded by all sorts of fans who've been reduced to subliminal zombies. So how do they get past? Maybe they could dress up as a punk band (Terr-Y and the Troubleshooters?) and audition. Or they could impersonate Cand-Y Rapper's backup vocalists. This would be sort of like trying to 'blend in' with Hare Krishnas. If you really want to have fun with this scenario, give each player a piece of paper with a couple of subliminally insinuated traits; stuff they'll do when they hear key words and the like. Maybe they'll make up their own, too!

Pop Music

There's a radio station in whichever enclave or Alpha Simplex the players happen to be. It's run by the Romantics, though this particular group did not have much material. Now all the listeners are getting sick and tired of hearing the same 40 songs over and over and over again, to say nothing of listening to the weekly countdown of

the Ten Most Overplayed songs. Even playing them on 45 rpm didn't help.

Now the station manager is desperate, and he's willing to pay bonzo bucks for the PCs to "seek out some new talent." They could raid another station, or they could go Outside to find an Old Reckoning record store. There's bound to be some confusion at the definition of 'record,' so they'll probably first visit a file company, a meter company, and maybe a wrecker company. Or they might go find the Black Disk clan and engage them in ritual contests, betting their lasers against the clan's records. Or maybe they'll decide to cut a few tracks themselves. Then they only have to find some instruments. After all, today's pop stars don't necessarily know how to play either ...

B Sides

Make the players roving news reporters for HPD&MC Radio. Or you could send them after the mysterious Black Box, from Yellow Clearance Black Box Blues. Get them to fix an antenna that's fallen over. Try and drum up some advertisers for a Free Enterprise radio show. Send them to assassinate Jim-B-AKR of FCCCP's station WPTL, on purely aesthetic grounds. How 'bout some popular band hires them as bouncers/roadies/managers? Say, some really class act that broke a contract with Free Enterprise. Or maybe they want to set up their own station ...

realized their mission ("Kill The Computer!") was over, and nobody had the fuzziest idea about what their next mission might be. The infighting started.

In the resulting bloodbath, low-ranking PURGE member Bill-BOB exited quietly. Surviving on handouts secured through adroit use of his Charm mutation, Bill finally ran into a gang of kids who pulled through the catastrophe by sheer grit. They all liked Bill (the Charm power on overdrive). And he liked them — the way a Persian cat likes anyone who buys it salmon and milk.

Bill-BOB overheard a Romantic (who after the crash had come out of the closet) describe the splendid Old Reckoning palaces called "motor homes" and "hotels." Recalling a site that he'd stumbled on in his Power Services days, Bill decided to resurrect the idea. He hooked up with the Armed Forces to get protection and persuaded his kids to do the work of running the place.

Now Bill and his "family" live a calm life, bartering their services for food or supplies. Believe it or not, the hotel pres-

ents no threat to your PCs.

Its guests, on the other hand ...

So What's A Hotel?

And why should your player characters use one? It's not so hard to understand, really. When The Computer isn't around to force you, why live in a scruffy Infrared barracks? But one can't just move up to Violet opulence. The Armed Force, and every other clown with powerful weapons, grabbed those suites and all the neat quarters down to Orange clearance. Wanna make something of it?

Yet Crash survivors who have assets above their clearance, like any nouveau riche, want to show off. Bill-BOB and his hotel cater to that impulse. Sign in, give over your barter, and you get a posh room with its own beds and bath — easily Yellow or maybe even Green clearance in pre-Whoops days. The staff brings you food, cleans your clothes, and takes messages. Pampering is a new idea in Alpha Com-

plex, and many citizens are willing to give it a try.

One such is the Orange robotics technician and Corpore Metal flunky called Clarence-O-BRD. He embezzled his weight in bot brains from R&D and took off, leaving behind a note: "I go to propagate our metallic successors! Soon the masters will join the servants!"

Clarence-O is pretty dense, so nobody misses him much. The trouble is, the brains he took from R&D belonged to scrubots. It gets dirty fast in R&D (all that rubble, you know); another few days spent hip-deep in debris, and the techs will start transplanting each other into scrubot chassis. Lower-ranking techs, who see their bosses fingering scalpels and eyeing them with fascination, want those scrubot brains back. Bad.

The PCs hear through their secret societies or a mission bulletin that Clarence-O is hiding out in the hotel. It's too well protected for a frontal assault. To get the missing brains and win a fat reward, the PCs must go in undercover, as guests.

What if your PCs refuse to check into the hotel? Don't get jittery. The post-crash world gives GMs fewer coercion devices, but making your PCs check in is still straightforward.

Let them try to stay where they want instead. But the cubicles they break into are occupied by Armed Forces goons. In the corridor they pass gang members out to rob them. Deserted byways where they bed down are traps. Dangerous world, huh? Maybe they should take refuge in *this hotel here, see?* Players usually get the picture.

What's It Look Like?

All the PCs see first is an ordinary door in an ordinary corridor. A sign by the door once read INTERNAL SECURITY SUBSECTOR PRECINCT ZOG-44/CCB, but is now defaced with black paint. A shakily hand-lettered bedsheet duct-taped above the entrance reads COZY REST HOTEL. On the door itself hangs a square of paper reading CHECK-OUT TIME: NOONCYCLE. The door is unlocked.

Inside — well, unless he's fresh from a *HIL Sector Blues* campaign, this is probably as close as any PC has gotten to an IntSec headquarters without cuffs, straitjacket, and a canvas bag over his head. Play up the forbidden-fruit angle as you describe *Things Clones At One Time Were Not Meant To Know*.

Five floors overlook a cylindrical atrium. Think of a stack of 45 RPM records, the kind with big holes; the atrium is the center hole, about 50 feet across. The hallways on each floor radiate out from it: six hallways per floor, each hallway about 60 feet long. On each floor a circular balcony runs all around the atrium. High-prestige offices (now ho-

tel suites) open onto the balcony.

At the atrium's center, the spindle of the 45 RPM phonograph (hope this isn't getting too technical), stands a concrete pillar studded with security cameras. These aim along each hallway and into balcony offices. But wait, don't shoot! The cameras hang down from loose wires, broken and plainly non-functional. Whew.

On the bottom floor by the entrance, where once eight combots lurked ready to fire, now stands the registration desk. When the PCs check in, they see

Wait a minute. Perhaps ambitious PCs are enthused with their mission to "Fetch the bot brains, and fetch Clarence-O's brain too if it looks handy." Perhaps they regard the Cozy Rest Hotel as a trap — not that published *Paranoia* adventures promote that attitude, of course. Perhaps PCs Ramb-O and Punish-R just want to storm the place, cone rifles blazing, in lieu of approaching the registration desk and politely checking in.

Let's talk security arrangements.

Roach Hormones

or Why The Vulture Squadron Likes This Hotel

When The Computer's suppressants wore off, fancies in the Vulture Squadron lightly turned to thoughts of love. In this sector, home of the Squadron's "Nuking 994th" Company, those thoughts involve the manager of the Cozy Rest, a tough but nubile teenage girl called "Roach." The goons find some other young ladies on the staff equally attractive.

So they're always hanging around. "Gee, Roach, how 'bout dinner tonight at the mess?" "Lydia honey, got me coupla Joyful Trusts, wanna share?" "Want you, Golda, want you *bad!*" The Vultures come on to the girls, macho and truckling by turns, simpering and oh-so-cute, the way the jocks in your high school came on to the cheerleaders.

The goons' efforts to win the ladies include protecting them from PCs' laser assaults. After a firefight or two where plentiful Green lasers mow them down like wheat, the PCs had best decide to check in instead.

Checking In

The Cozy Rest Hotel decor makes every effort to hide its IntSec origins. The laser-reflective shatterproof chemical-proof polarized uncuttable glass windows are gone. Doorway detectors no longer screech in the presence of metal, gelignite, or unclean thoughts. Sanitary facilities are now private.

The lobby desk, in particular, looks friendly. Pictures of vid-stars and Vulture Squadron heroes hang behind the counter. Vulture Squadron heroes, real ones, also hang around in front of it, waiting for Roach.

She's not around when PCs enter, but other guests are. They sit in upholstered chairs in the lobby, chatting in a casual way that shows the chairs no longer carry lie detector electrodes. The guests greet the PCs, chat with them, hail-fellow-well-met and all that. Introduce them and establish their personalities. A few modest suggestions:

"Colonel" Sandor-V-CHK and "Major" Durham-B-MNR, paranoid Armed Forces goons ("You! Freeze! What's your business? Stay clear of our suite on Floor 3, got me?");

Loren-I- and Gilda-I-PSH, a snobbish Indigo couple, a la Mr. and Mrs. Howell of *Gilligan's Island* ("Really, dahling, you'd think these party crashers might show some decorum in their firefights!");

and Uzin-G-LOP, an R&D nerd field-testing his brand new Gravity Neutralizer Projector ("Oh boy! Did you see that guy fly up and hit the ceiling? Like a cone rifle shell, wham! I mean *wham!* Wow. Here, you try it, OK?").

Let your PCs chat with, interrogate, or manhandle these weirdos as they wish. The guests are important, because later on they turn into —

But we digress. After PCs meet guests, out of the hotel kitchen (with a parting "Get that Blue Goodness looking blue by dinner or *else!*") strides the manager, Roach.

Roach looks like a young Mia Farrow (thin, waiflike, big eyes), greets Vultures and guests with the politesse of a mature Grace Kelly ("Always happy to see new customers!"), but talks to her staff like an elderly Captain Queeg. "Well, what about it? You gonna fetch this gentleman's luggage, or do I put you down in the reactor room shoveling plutonium?" Play up the contrast in her manners as a running gag.

Roach asks the PCs, "Would you please pay your lodging in advance? Six meals a night. In advance." This is how the kids find enough to eat: Three meals are served to the guest, the other three feed Bill-BOB or a staffer. As long as there are more guests than staffers, everything works out. So far, it has.

If PCs haggle well (have the players roll a few dice if you feel like it), they can bargain Roach down. Or they can offer supplies in lieu of meals. Roach takes whatever sounds reasonable, except weapons. But everyone pays in advance.

The new guests must sign the register. It's impolite to point out that the "register" is a stack of surplus PLC Personnel Requisition forms. Signing in, PCs see about a dozen names: other guests staying here.

They may notice (roll more dice if you want) that the last person to sign in was their quarry, Clarence-O-BRD.

Chit-Chat

In response to subtle inquiries — “So, uh, (ahem) know where we can pick up any neat bot brains?” and the like — Roach recalls the last guest who checked in, “a squirrely gentleman with a turned-up nose. He had strange luggage, a load of crates stenciled R&D.” Why, this sounds like a clue! Roach doesn’t know much of use, except his room number on Floor 3.

What if the PCs ask questions about the hotel and its kids? “Who, us?” says Roach. “We all knocked around the Complex after the Crash. We never had enough to eat.” (Whines from the Vultures: “I’ll feed you good, Roach, honest I will!”)

“I hooked up with some other kids,” she continues, “and we started this place. Like it?” The correct answer is “yes,” as the Vulture Squadron informs all PCs. (Note: Roach never mentions Bill-BOB. He prefers to stay anonymous.)

Roach talks with the PCs for about ten seconds less than they want to talk, then hands over a few slips of printout: “the combinations to your room locks.” The rooms are doubles, one room per two PCs. Then Roach calls for the bellhop. (She rings a surplus Armed-Forces fire alarm. For dramatic effect, push the test button on your home’s smoke detector.)

Jim the bellhop, a hulking mutant 13-year-old who weighs as much as six 13-year-olds, lugs all luggage up to the PCs’ room in one trip. As a classic song in Alpha Complex has it, “Don’t mess around with Jim.” He can’t talk much and one eye is swollen shut, but even the Vultures get out of his way.

The difference in IQ between Jim and, say, a stump-tailed macaque monkey is not vast. But (in case the PCs were too dense to talk to Roach) he remembers Clarence-O, his room number, the heaviness of his luggage, and his mumbling about “changing everybody around.” He can tell the PCs all about it — if, as he delivers them to their room, they give him a tip. Otherwise, *silencio*.

What works as a tip? Let your PCs try things, then decide whether a hulking 13-year old would like them. Roleplaying, right? One way or another, let the PCs discover Clarence-O’s room, stampede up there in assault regalia, and gnash their teeth when they find he’s gone.

Snooping Around

Not permanently gone, no. But the room is empty. No brains. The PCs, who often resemble the room in that respect, just have to wait around for him. Yawn. Or they can search the hotel.

If you feel like it, lead the players hither and yon through the former IntSec complex. Interrogation chambers on ground level, their bloodstains still dimly visible, have become “meeting rooms.” The “indoor swimming pool” used to be a corrosive chemical bath. Don’t ask what the sauna was. Think of Stalag 17 as a low-grade Hyatt Regency ... a metaphor for post-crash Alpha Complex.

As they wander around (scope out, invade) the Cozy Rest, PCs might meet hotel staffers: eight to ten kids, each at least moderately polite, each with a story of disasters endured after MegaWhoops. As models for the kids, we might almost suggest child stars from popular TV sitcoms, or your own younger siblings ... on the other hand, don’t encourage players to kill these kids.

One girl is a bartender-waiter, and another two pass as cooks and waiters of an endearingly pathetic sort. Jim serves as bellhop. The rest of the kids are custodial staff. Roach commands them with dictatorial authority, but they like and respect her — a perverse relationship in Alpha Complex. Kids always misbehave.

Can the PCs meet Bill-BOB himself? Not likely. He never leaves his room on the top

level. If you see an opportunity, create a mystery around the hotel’s owner: never named but referred to; high-level member of some secret society; an unseen guest in an unlabelled room on the top floor. “Armed to the teeth, I bet,” the guests speculate.

Truth to tell, Bill-BOB is about as heavily armed as a canary. But the rumor keeps your players from charging up to confront him. You don’t need to bring him in until the guests turn into scrubots.

Huh? Scrubot Guests?

Oh yeah. Didn’t we mention that the PCs keep meeting fellow guests? Use the ones from the lobby, or make up new ones. They look the same as before, but they all act *subtly different* from their earlier appearances. How different?

PC: Oh, hi, Uzin-G. Still working on the Gravity Neutralizer?

Uzi-G: (glazed look) No! It made people hit things. Blood everywhere, and that fine dust that just hangs in the air until I polish a chair or table, and then after I leave, it *gloms on!* And there’s nothing I can do about it! It’s all the fault of you messy meatbags. Why do I even try to clean up around here?

It won’t take more than a few encounters in this mode (or maybe you can hit the players with a ball-peen hammer) to make the PCs realize someone has given human hotel guests the personalities, if that’s the word, of scrubots. Clearly, Clarence-O has



Sometimes it takes more than brute force to impress a Vulture.

been at work here. But what has he done, and how did he do it?

Well, it's like this. The big problem that always nagged at Corpore Metal's human members was, "Next stage of evolution, fine, but what happens to us?"

Rumors filtered down that upper management, the so-called "High Transistors," had achieved immortality as translated software. That sounded great, but almost all the software went away in Mega Whoops. This brought about in CM's human contingent a crisis of conscience.

Salvation came from the society's friends in Pro Tech. These tinkerers, pursuing research The Computer never would have allowed, put together a device that switches out a subject's frontal cerebral lobes with a bot's higher processors. Humans into robots, with none of the risk of software translation!

Corpore Metal set up their wonder machine in the inconspicuous Cozy Rest. Now all they needed was bot brains. Clarence-O has brought those, and his Cosmic Upgrade program has commenced. He himself has delayed switching. But, fired with evolutionary zeal, he has started on the hotel guests.

Messing Around With Forebrains

When they search the Cozy Rest, the PCs don't have to check out each cleaning

closet and ice machine. Clarence-O lurks just two doors down from his hotel room.

If you want to move the adventure along, trot out one or two scrubot guests, but skip the hotel tour and the staff. When they leave Clarence-O's room, let the PCs observe an Orange R&D nerd leaving a room down the hall. He matches Clarence-O's description.

After him! Or do the PCs check out the room first? If they give chase, skip to the next section. If they investigate the room, describe the huge machine that fills it, Corpore Metal's greatest breakthrough: the Transephalic Uplifter.

It doesn't exactly look like an electric chair. The dome that fits over the seated subject's head hangs from a shiny device that doesn't precisely resemble a Cuisinart food processor. All the banks of machinery, bubbling tubes, spark coils, and glass jars containing human brains shouldn't instantly remind players of Frankenstein's laboratory. But that's the general idea.

Nobody is around, but the machine is clearly on. Operation is straightforward: Someone sits in the chair, the dome descends, and in a moment, faster than you can say "plot device," the Uplifter lobotomizes the subject, slips in a pre-programmed scrubot brain, then covers the scar across the top of the head with a wig or tasteful hat.

Player characters, those little devils, might sit in the chair — or rather, order another PC to sit. Great! What GM does not

giggle at the prospect of making a PC into a scrubot? Later in the adventure the victim can sit in the chair and get his or her own brain back. There's no way the Uplifter might accidentally give the PC someone else's brain instead. The idea is ludicrous.

"Oh, This Place Is Such A Mess!"

The PCs were chasing Clarence-O, right? He runs downstairs, and all along the way your players see nothing but crazy scrubot-possessed guests. They're polishing balcony rails, hosing down walls, and vacuuming carpets, always with that desperate neurosis that marks a bot. Play up this nightmarish scene as the adventure's climactic weirdness.

Maybe the PCs catch Clarence-O, maybe he gets away, maybe they kill him; it doesn't matter. Clarence-O gives as much exposition as you think the players should know, but if they manage to extort help from him, have him swallow a cyanide tooth or something. He's out of the plot.

Don't forget (because the players won't) that they must get those stolen scrubot brains. Can the PCs just shoot the guests and open up their skulls? Or drag them back to the Uplifter brain-switching machine and switch out the bot brains with the real ones?

No. That would be too easy.



We're not in KAN Sector, Tote-O!



The complicating factor: Roach and her Vulture goons like the guests better this way. "Less cleanup work," she says. "Now when the guests take room service, they send their plates back cleaner than we sent them up. They make their own beds, and they pay us for it!"

PCs can knock out a scrubbing-bubble guest easily enough. But Vultures protect the fallen guest, and the fight is on.

Now, Vultures present no serious obstacle to your PCs. Diverting orcs out of the dungeon is the first trick a player learns. ("Hey, the orcs on the next level are calling you nasty names!")

But by the time the PCs execute Orc-Pack Diversion Plan #24 and the Vultures all stampede out, the scrubot-people have spotted trouble and retreated to Corpore Metal brain-changing HQ on Floor 3.

The PCs can't just order them out; no asimov circuit still sullies those scrubot brains. And an assault on the well-defended base should prove suicidal, maybe repeatedly suicidal.

If they can't solve the problem by thinking, let them observe and follow Roach as she trots to the top floor. She's reporting the happy news to someone who can help the PCs: Bill-BOB.

Into the Realm of Bill-BOB

If and when the PCs venture to visit Bill-BOB's room, they find a dim, smoky suite decorated in deep shag carpeting and overstuffed furniture. Bootleg Tommy Dorsey swing music plays on expensive equipment. The air is fragrant with, not to say "reeking of," patchouli incense.

In a reclining armchair sits Bill-BOB, a grossly fat, unkempt, straggly-bearded Falstaff. He lives a life of the senses, but that doesn't include physical exercise. He prefers to run everything through his complicated remote control console, within easy reach of the chair.

Just as the Cozy Rest in its way resembles all post-Crash Alpha Complex, so its supreme manager embodies the new motives of all Alphans: just get through life as comfortably as possible. PCs must play to that if they want his help.

In the old days, PCs could intimidate Bill-BOB by threatening to expose him, or calling him a traitor, or just pulling rank on an Infrared. Now, like Roach, Bill-BOB works on the barter system, so the players have to bribe him. And the bribe must be good, since Bill-BOB likes clean, helpful scrubot guests as much as Roach does. Or the PCs could threaten to tell the scrubots how to get to Bill-BOB's apartment. The

thought of what the horde of scrubbing bubble-brains would do to his comfortably messy interior should be enough to get Bill-BOB's cooperation.

Once bought, Bill-BOB can declare a "fire drill" that sends all the guests, including the scrubots, out into the hallway. Or, if the PCs have paid him off really well, he gives the PCs a black-market cigarette lighter and says, "Go out in the hall, light this, and hold it up to the ceiling."

The action triggers the hotel's sprinkler system. Slippery pink chemical foam jets from ceiling ports, covering characters and carpet alike. The scrubot guests, aghast at the mess, rush out to clean up, and (sans Vulture protection) prove docile. Time to wrap things up.

Aftermath

If the PCs have avoided blowing up the hotel kids, the kids can befriend them and become their "Baker Street Irregulars." Kids can run errands or find out information that pulls PCs into future scenarios.

In other words, by succeeding in their mission, the PCs might actually make new friends and improve their lot in life. By gosh, perhaps things really are different now.

Hee, hee! That's a good one, huh?

A New Life In Utopia

by Pete Tamlyn

A New Home! A New Beginning!

The Computer is Dead. Alpha Complex has always been a dangerous place — and now things are far worse. Is your life a mess? Don't worry, help is at hand.

For Thousands of Cycles The Foundation has been working hard building an alternative home for clones. Omega Complex is that home. It is fully functional and all of its citizens are Ultraviolet clearance. Now, with the Death of The Computer, we can offer citizenship of Omega Complex to YOU.

Over the next few cycles our specialist recruiting officers will be coming amongst you. Be sure that they find you. This is an opportunity that you cannot afford to miss.

Leaflets like that have been appearing all over Alpha Complex for the past two cycles. Most citizens are showing a healthy scepticism, but an alarming number are showing interest in the offer. The Powers that Be, such as they are, are worried.

Thus it is that our brave Troubleshooters are brought before Formaj-U-NTA, head of the Armed Forces (at least of one branch which claims to be the only rightful Armed Force) and self-styled Military Governor of Alpha Complex. How they get there is up to individual gamemasters. They can be bribed, blackmailed, kidnapped (this could make an interesting scene), or whatever. Think of something, because they won't want to do this one unless they have to.

Their mission is simple. Make sure that they get recruited by The Foundation, find this Omega Complex, and either destroy it themselves or lead the army to it. Disobedience and Failure are Treasonable and punishable by summary termination under Article 14, Sub-section b(iv) of the Temporary Emergency Regulations. Unless the PCs are loyal Empire members, they aren't going to like this. On the other hand, depending on how you've handled it, there may not be any other choice.

First Task, get recruited. This shouldn't be too difficult. Go to the Canteen, talk loudly about what a wonderful idea Omega Complex is, and wait to get contacted. The fact that there is a group of FCCCP Zealots

sitting at a nearby table and who are bound to take objection to the disloyal, not to say Treasonous, comments of the Troubleshooters is just one of those unfortunate coincidences that seem to bedevil the most fool-proof of plans.

Nevertheless, Zealots do have their uses. In this case, it is helping our heroes pass their acceptance test. That is, demonstrating that they are ready, willing and capable of defending the concept of Omega Complex, to the death if need be (and don't you think the need be?). Shortly after the fight, the Troubleshooters are approached by two suspiciously healthy-looking Infrareds.

Michael and Gabrielle (the only names the Infrareds will give) are the expected recruiting agents. To say they are healthy-looking is a ridiculous understatement. They positively ooze health and happiness. Their hair is blond, their muscles firm, their teeth gleamingly white, and their smiles fixed and fulsome. Everything about them is odiously squeaky-clean. Imagine them as a blond version of Donny and Marie Osmond.

Everything that they say about Omega Complex sounds too good to be true, and it is obvious that they believe it.

A Brief Lesson

Those of you who don't know anything about The Foundation obviously haven't read *Acute Paranoia*. Take 20 Treason Points and present yourselves for immediate Termination. The rest of you are about to learn a little bit more.

This particular Foundation (for there are at least as many of them as there are Alpha Complexes, if not more) has been active for many generations and is pretty well set up. Now, a crash is just what Foundationists everywhere have predicted, planned and hoped for. And it has happened. And they were prepared (well, sort of). Oh, boy!

The object of The Foundation, as laid down in society folklore and diligently taught to all new recruits, is to create a new Alpha Complex. The new Complex should be free from Paranoia. (Yes, really, you can see why they are the Bad Guys, can't you.) It would have computers, but they would be sane and useful. There will be no Treason, no Internal Security, no summary terminations. Sounds like Utopia, doesn't it. And what do we know about Utopias? Yep, they are impossible.

Unfortunately, getting to Omega Complex does involve a certain amount of discomfort. To be exact it involves a short trip through The Outside. Hardened Troubleshooters are, of course, used to such discomfort, but for the other recruits it could be less fun. Among the party being escorted by Michael and Gabrielle are a few Sierra Clubbers and some members of Corpore Metal. It takes all the tact and diplomacy that the guides can muster to keep the two sides apart. Or does it? Aw, heck, let's have a fight. And we'll throw in a small herd of wild pigs just for good measure. And a giant, mutant, flesh-eating bunny. Use your imagination.

After making it through that lot of critters, even Alpha Complex would seem like Paradise.

Hey, but Michael and Gabrielle say that Omega Complex is a Utopia. And they believe it. Well, maybe for them it does work. Maybe it will for the Troubleshooters too. But there's no such thing as a free lunch, not

even in Utopia. The Troubleshooters may find this out as well.

Having arrived in Omega Complex they find themselves asked to undertake a few routine tests.

Part I, the Physical. Get the players on their feet, running on the spot, one-two, one-two, one-two. Keep them going. Five minutes please. Now, push-ups, sit-ups, back on them feet. Keep going, keep going.

Now for some mental tests. Have them recite their 23 times table, backwards from 230. Some simple long division — six figure numbers and no recourse to pencil and paper. A little problem-solving — if one clone can eat 15 tons of Cold Fun in nine daycycles, how many scrubots does it take to clear up the mess when he's finished?

All the time this is happening, the Omega Complex staff are going around with clipboards making careful notes on the progress of each of the new citizens. Anyone who demands to know why the tests are necessary is politely asked to come and have a personal chat with the supervisor — and is never seen again.

Unfortunately a substantial number of the new recruits are going to fail these tests and be deemed unsuitable for life in the new Utopia. You see, someone has to do the work, and without enough bots to go round, the Foundationists have to look elsewhere for labor elsewhere. Fortunately, citizens of Alpha Complex are only too willing to come forward and ask for a new home. Once they have been lured into Omega Complex, most of them soon end up in abject slavery.

Most of the Troubleshooters will end up like that. Manacled to their workbenches, fed only when they are about to collapse from starvation, they will soon be wishing for the life of luxury that they knew back in the Infrared barracks at Alpha Complex. It wouldn't be too bad if their captors weren't so damned efficient. Omega Complex works, and escape seems impossible.

Some of the Troubleshooters, however, (be fair, those who did best in the tests) will be considered good enough specimens to be admitted to full membership in Omega Complex. For these lucky few life will be quite different.

To begin with they get the cosmetic treatment, and when it is over they will feel and look wonderful. Clean, blond hair, bright teeth, new white jump suits, and no

tired muscles. Welcome to Omega Complex, Citizens.

The food is good, there is plenty of time to relax, sex is freely practiced and sometimes even perfected. You don't have to do any work at all, although it is expected that all loyal citizens will devote a certain amount of their time to projects that benefit the community. Most people don't mind — life would be very boring otherwise — but there is always the knowledge of what goes on in the slave pits and the ever present risk of being consigned there yourself.

So what happens now? Half of the Troubleshooter team is stuck in the slave pits with no way out, the rest of them are living lives of luxury that no citizen in his right mind would want to leave. Well, almost ...

You see, the Troubleshooters who have been accepted into Omega Complex have two things preying on their minds. First, their colleagues might, just might, manage to get out somehow (hint that this is possible. Ask what they think their former friends would do to them). Second, Formaj-U-NTA has almost certainly had them tracked. The full might of Alpha Complex's Armed Forces could arrive at any moment. They can't even warn anyone. After all, what would you do if someone walked up and confessed to you that he was a spy for the enemy, but he'd like to switch sides now, no, really?

Sad as it may seem to some of them, the Troubleshooters have little choice but to complete their mission. How they choose to do this could vary enormously, and you'll have to balance things appropriately. If the group that was accepted is being lazy or stupid, you can actually allow the others to escape. If the free group is hatching an exciting escape plot, go with it. Whatever happens, make sure you get the group back together again so that they can compare their respective fates.

From here the Troubleshooters can wrap things up their own way. They can escape and fight their way across the Outside; they can find the communications centre and call for help; or they can find the power plant and some explosives and blow the place (and probably themselves) sky high.

And finally, having arrived safely home in good old Alpha Complex, they may care to tell their friends how much worse life might have been if only The Computer hadn't been so incompetent.

Letters of Marque IV

by Edward S. Bolme

Background

As we hope you recall, the Warbot model 425 Mark IV, the biggest and most powerful engine of destruction ever to roam the Earth, was first seen being guarded by laughable Troubleshooters in *Acute Paranoia*. When last we left the hapless Mark IV, it was stranded in a field Outside after having its head blown clean off by some other reckless Troubleshooters in *Alpha Complexities*. A multi-trillion credit war machine cannot be left in the rain to rust, so The Computer sent approximately 500,000 tractorbots and assorted Infrared volunteers Outside to tow the decapitated Mark IV back into its garage for some "trivial maintenance." After some months of negligible progress, a passing High Programmer released the Mark IV's parking brakes, greatly increasing towing efficiency.

Shortly after the Mark IV's reassembly, The Computer went down for the count. For a brief time, Alpha Complex was even more chaotic and turbulent than usual. Then, the Alpha Simplexes started appearing, Service Groups and Not-So-Secret Societies began consolidating power, and things generally started becoming regular for a change. And once the initial scramble for survival ended, all these power blocs began hunting for powerful recruits and allies. Allies like the Mark IV.

Getting Started

Well, that's pretty easy if all your PCs are members of the same Not-So-Secret Society or Alpha Simplex. An officer tells them, "We need you to go to these garbled coordinates printed illegibly on this soggy shred of paper and use any means necessary to convince a certain personage therein to join our organization. It's for the good of our cause." Standing behind the official is a group of bludgeon-toting, sloping-foreheaded ex-Vultures who look like Schwarzenegger on steroids. They earnestly advise the PCs to "refuse the mission. We haven't had any fun all day."

If your players are a marauding Troubleshooter Team, then there are several options for getting them going: They can be hired by some group after the Mark IV, just like above, but motivated with a crass bribe instead of a thinly veiled threat. They can be hired by the Information Brokers, a group of sages who control the access to the local library subsystem. The Information Brokers simply want to know (in excruciating detail) what the Mark IV's status is.

Or the Troubleshooters can be hired by, say, the Illuminati or some other group that wants the Mark IV to stay disinterested. Or perhaps the employers are a group of hackers who simply need to buy some time to download a new program into the Mark IV's CPU. Or the Troubleshooters are hired by PURGE saboteurs. This option is sort of the opposite of the first.

Markie's Room

If you ran your players through Me and My Shadow, Mark IV in *Acute Paranoia*, go ahead and dig out the old map of Hangar 139. If not, well, you need a place to put the beast. Draw a big box, fill it with fuel tanks, cranes, giant overhead magnets, shaky catwalks, and a confession booth. Liberally sprinkle the walls with doors and air duct vents. And put in a big garage door (with an opener lost somewhere around here) so the Mark IV can go Outside if things get a little stuffy in the hangar or Markie gets tired of the smell of burnt flesh. Wedged tightly inside this hangar is the mammoth Mark IV and lots and lots of small groups and individuals each trying to enlist the aid of the mighty warbot.

Dealing With the Mark IV

The Mark IV is, with the passing of The Computer, the single most powerful machine in existence. This has only exacerbated its already swollen ego. In fact, Markie has done nothing but contemplate its invulnerability since the Big C died. To Mark IV, this is perhaps the single most enjoyable activity possible. So much so, that were it not for the sudden arrival of grovelling supplicants to further stroke its supercilious narcissism, it would have done nothing but sit smugly until its reactor ran out of fuel in about 250,000 years, give or take a daycycle. Mark IV only wishes it had more memory, so it could more fully appreciate how wonderful it is.

In other words, the Mark IV has the demeanor of an overfed tomcat napping in a sunny window. Mark IV is arrogant, snide, and knows it holds all the cards. It only condescends to deal with the miserable organic peons because doing so further inflates its pride.

There are two obvious ways for PCs to communicate with the Mark IV. The most obvious is to stand in front of the warbot and yell. Actually, yelling is not necessary, since Markie has remarkably sensitive audio

receptors, for a warbot. The disadvantage of this method lies in its visibility. It's very high profile. The PCs will be standing in the open, waving their arms and yelling, and Markie will reply with its awesome PA system. Responses like, "OH? WHY SHOULD I, THE MARK IV, JOIN YOUR PUNY GROUP OF INTERNAL SECURITY REFUGEES?" are sure to attract undesired attention. The other option for Mark IV communication is to go inside the warbot.

Yep. Inside. When the Mark IV was captured in *Alpha Complexities* (a fine adventure, if I do say so myself), it was refitted for manual control. While the central nexus of this refit was obliterated when Markie's head exploded, the peripheral sections remain basically untouched. Catwalks and crawlways are woven amongst Mark IV's internal machinery, and many manual overrides are still in place. (Internal maps are also provided in *Alpha Complexities*.) The intercom system is still there, as are security cams and monitors. These are all now hooked into Mark IV's CPU, and since the internal speakers are quieter than the PA, you can talk to Markie with some semblance of privacy.

PC: ... and that's why we would like your assistance in wiping out the Sierra Clubbers.

Mark IV: That's funny. The Sierra Clubbers on sublevel 7 say you're all secretly Commies.

PC: They're lying swine!

Mark IV: That's what they said about you when I let them listen to our conversation.

Fighting with the Kids from the Next Bloc

Groups from all sorts of power blocs are here presenting their cases to the Mark IV. Don't overdo it; have only one to three other groups running around at a time. That'll be enough of a distraction to keep the players from presenting Mark IV with a logical and coherent argument. And when the PCs finally chase down and terminate those pesky Sierra Clubbers on sublevel 7, well, what do you know! A Corpore Metal scrubot zooms into the hangar or some TechServ flunkies sneak in through the ventilation system. Or if the PCs actually do kill everyone else in the hangar they find a door suspiciously ajar ...

Any other groups in the area will be presenting their very lucid cases to the

Mark IV and doing everything in their power to discredit the PCs, sabotage their communications or flat-out kill them. And they'll be doing all this at just the wrong time, so the players can never wrap up a clean case for the Mark IV to consider.

Other Things to Think About

Weapons. Mark IV's got lots of weapons. Some with manual overrides. Anyone on the hangar floor talking to Mark IV? ZZZAP!

Wandering Monsters. Aside from the bevy of diplomatic bozos running around, Markie's got loads of internal maintenance bots (like scrubot STP-76). Or, maybe there's

a refugee crewman left over from Enemy Complex ...

Exercise. You never know when Mark IV might want to "stretch its legs" as it meditates on its omnipotence. Maybe it's remembering a battle or something. Maybe Markie will stroll back and forth across the hangar, absently squooshing panic-stricken ambassadors. (Markie doesn't believe in diplomatic immunity.) Or maybe Markie will take a constitutional Outside. You know, meander down and submerge itself for a much-needed bath in the nearest lake.

Sabotage. Laughable as it is, there might still be some fanatic Frankenstein Destroyers who wish to annihilate the Mark IV. This can be unnerving for the more fragile creatures in the area.

Ending the Adventure

Run out of clones.

Seriously, the Mark IV will never degrade himself by joining with some simpering humans. Sure, Markie will tease them and tempt them, but will ultimately remain neutral to all. Well, I suppose that there're ways the players could sort of succeed ... They could craftily paint Mark IV with their Not-So-Secret Society logo and slogans while one scapegoat distracts Markie by paying him servile and fawning lip service. They could maybe build an inflatable Mark IV, with rubber or very old food vat gruel. It would sure save on space during peacetime. They could flood the hangar with PCBs and radon gas, thereby denying Mark IV to anyone else. Best have their own evacuation plans ready, though.

Whatever Happened to the Creche of Sector FOR?

A Post-Crash Mini-Adventure & Murder Mystery
by Jonatha Ariadne Caspian

Adventure Background

Teela-O isn't the only clone from her Sector Creche to make it big in Alpha Complex, but the other citizens from her decantation are more commonly found behind the scenes, as it were. There's Donpard-O, the Voice of The Computer; Heraald-O, Champion of the Infrareds; Tymfor-O-PRA, the Gab-queen of the Microwaves; even Betteeker-O-KER, the Mistress of Swill! All of these stellar attestations to the infinite wisdom of The Computer and its superlative Vat — uh, Creche — programming serve Alpha Complex to the utmost of their talents.

That is, they did. Unfortunately, the crash has wrought some changes in their lives.

The Cast

As the Voice of the Computer, Donpard-O has one of the toughest jobs in Alpha — he has to personalize the voice of "God." He has to resonate trust, competence, and calm. He has to record hundreds of standard messages that will be repeated throughout Alpha Complex, stuff like "Hygiene and Happiness Go Hand In Hand," and "Please Approach the Tongue-printer, Citizen." He has to project the benevolent sincerity of the world's greatest machine.

For many who encounter The Computer only as a Voice in the Darkness, Donpard-O is The Computer. As you might imagine,

it's tough for a fella like this not to be noticed post-MegaWhoops.

Tymfor-O has a similarly grand impact on the viewing masses. Actually a fugitive from FOR Sector at one time, Tymfor-O stained her skin with treasonous cosmetic substances in two to four hours, with or without sun, drank nothing but Bouncy Bubble Beverage until she was a mere shadow of her former clone, and escaped into the Entertainment Net of PRA Sector.

She was a hit! And her disguise was successful, too. Even when Tymfor-O-PRA was assigned a special guest appearance on the Teela-O show, her former creche-mate was none the wiser.

The Computer knew that a little creative whistle-blowing on its part could lull the citizens of Alpha into the warm sense of security that one gets when one thinks someone is watchdogging society. So, The Computer decanted Heraald-O-FOR, a hard-hitting clone advocate, and gave him his own vidshow. Heraald-O did hugely entertaining and hyperbolic exposés of scrubot maladjustment, bureaucratic time wasting, and other treasonous activities. His termination rate for clones exposed in these scandals is well over 100 percent, and his audience share is second only to his creche-mates'.

Betteeker-O-KER is the best swill-maker ever to stir Alpha's vats. She knows just how to proportion the varieties of algae and mycelia for solid vat-brewed taste, just how often to reheat to kill off toxic microbes. And she makes the job look so effortless, too.

Teela-O-MLY — well, you know all

about her exploits if you're a *Paranoia* fan. She was last seen, pre-Whoops, in BRG Sector, shooting the vidshow to end all vidshows.

The Plot

Each of these Orange clones from Sector FOR is being stalked by a mad killer. And now that they are without the benevolent sponsorship of the Computer, they find themselves vulnerable to the killer's attacks. And in turn, they each hunt up the PCs for help.

Who would go through the trouble of tracking down creche-mates to terminate? Why, the jealous Betteeker-O-KER. Betteeker-O has always felt that her fellow Sector FOR alums were given preferential treatment by The Computer. She's right, of course. But she's wrong in thinking that being Mistress of Swill in Sector KER is somehow less elevated than being worshipped by thousands of Infrareds for her part in an inane and improbable vidshow.

Nevertheless, Betteeker-O has conceived a grand plan for eliminating her supposed competitors.

Day-Oh, Day-ay-ay-Oh

Daycycle dawned, post MegaWhoops, on pandemonium — and me wan' go home. Ever had one of those days? The PCs are about to. As they amble down the corridor to the briefing room to check the bulletin board for a mission that strikes their fancies, they hear:

Attention, Friend Troubleshooters, an Orange citizen has requested your —

We're not even going to complete that read-aloud, because in post-crash Alpha, when your Troubleshooters hear The Voice of The Computer, they'll most likely do both of two things: first, shoot the heebiejeebies out of every monitor, speaker, speaker-like object, recessed grate and fire alarm in the corridor; and second, skedaddle faster than you can say scrubot. It won't matter that nothing's pursuing them. It won't happen that they find the culprit responsible for this heinous practical joke ('cause you're not going to let them, understood?). When they reach the old AXR stroke 37 stroke E4K briefing room, no one will believe them if they babble about hearing The Computer's voice in the corridor — the other Troubleshooters in the room all just move away real slow, clear the bulletin board of missions, and leave the PCs alone.

So they're sitting, waiting for a new mission to be posted. And in walks this very unexceptional looking Orange (Donpard-O, if you want to know). He starts to gesture wildly from himself to the PCs.

Charades, this is. Six words. First word: point to your eye. Second Word: Sounds like — point to your calf ... the phrase you want the players to get is "I Have A Mission For You." Donpard-O has realized he can't speak out loud if he wants to survive the interview process. Eventually, you can supply him with paper and a writing implement, so that he can tell the Troubleshooters:

I'm being stalked by a cold-blooded killer, and I need your protection. I can pay handsomely.

Donpard-O steers the Troubleshooters back to his own barracks, deserted foottube, whatever. He writes that he was nearly terminated yesterday by a speeding snackbot, loaded beyond its carrying capacity with Algae Roll-ups. He's sure the attack was intentional because the bot had unrolled one of the sticky, leather-like taste treats and tried to adhere it to his face, thus attempting to suffocate him. It would have worked if the bot had stayed to finish the job.

Whether the PCs believe the attack was deliberate or random, they're probably interested in the generous retainer (think of something your Troubleshooters are hungering for. Promise them the moon, as it were. Do you think they'll actually collect?) Donpard-O is offering for their services. All he wants is to stay alive. All he asks is that they guard him.

To help them in their task, Donpard has made a list of suspects: his old creche-mates from Sector FOR. Show the PCs this list:

(Winnfree-O-FOR) Tymfor-O-PRA
Heraald-O-FOR
(Betteeker-O-FOR) Betteeker-O-KER
(Wuttсан-O-FOR) Teela-O-MLY

Donpard-O suspects one of his creche-mates because they all used to play giggleputty with their swillgum, and flattening it out to stick on someone's face was the preferred revenge for just about anything. It's obvious the killer instructed the bot on how to use Algae Roll-ups the same way.

And Checking it Twice

So they've got a list. If this were a whole adventure, we'd describe intricate convolutions of plot and logic so rococo as to make your brain hurt — but in this small space, we'll have to sketch the basic figure, and let you embellish as you like.

1. They can investigate clone back-grounds if they can find working terminals. Maybe each clone on the list has a working terminal. Maybe the PCs think that has something to do with the motive. Saps.

2. They can try to talk to all the clones on the list — which involves finding each in a different Simplex or in a service group you're fond of.

3. They can scour the murder sites for clues, red herrings, and hygiene officers, like hardboiled detectives from another genre.

Did we say murder sites? Why, yes, we let that slip. The Troubleshooters should get more involved when they discover that some of the clones on their list are dead. You could even add a coupla more clones, to make the conspiracy bigger — Jakkie-O and Eeyieeyi-O sound like suitable corpses if you want lotsa bodies.

Their mission, now that the Troubleshooters have chosen to accept it, is to catch the murderer — and while doing so, figure out why he or she has turned to murder in the first place. Find-the-motive.

Now, your PCs may have a little difficulty with the concept of murder as a heinous crime in Alpha Complex, but remember: clones are much harder to come by, nigh unto impossible, in post-crash society. It takes luck, connections, and loot to convince the Clone Priests to let you have another self. Suddenly, life is no longer cheap.

Troubleshooters: For Hire

Meanwhile, back at the story — you've shown Donpard's list to the PCs. They want to start investigating. They head into the corridors of Alpha Complex.

Ever had the feeling that someone was watching you? That's how the PCs feel. Someone is just behind them. Something tickles the backs of their necks. But they can't quite catch the shadowy figure.

They might go on with their investigations, or they might start chasing their tail. If they're clever, they might actually catch it — him — rather than just toasting him. He turns out to be an emissary from the Clone Rangers. Teela wants protection, too.

Now they've got a dilemma. Should they split up and guard both? Is this a distraction to get past them to Donpard? Should they refuse?

We can see great possibilities for *Paranoia*-like paranoia from your players as each troubled FOR Sector clone comes out of the woodwork (plastiform?) and asks for protection. What if the new client is actually planning a hit on a previous one? We suspect that player groups who guard too many subjects at once will lose one or two clients by being spread too thinly.

And of course, we also suspect any potential client who is refused service will turn up with a Roll-up glued to his or her blue face. Blue is not a good color for Orange level clones, and wearing your skin this shade would be grounds for termination, if you and The Computer weren't already dead.

Herring Off in the Wrong Directions

The key to the clues the players turn up is misdirection. Remember your Agatha Christie novels and your *Murder, She Wrote* plots. For instance, did you know that Teela-O once did an advertisement endorsing Algae Roll-ups? Did you know that Heraald-O once did an exposé on the treasonous use of Algae Roll-ups as tempoary transbot patching compound? Did you know that Donpard-O did the voice-over for the price and availability of Algae Roll-ups for the HPD&MC Commisary? And did you know Tymfor-O swears that Algae Roll-ups are what keep her dieting on the straight and narrow?

Bet you'll never guess who invented Algae Roll-ups in the first place.

See, that's what makes Betteeker-O so mad. Every clone has heard Algae Roll-ups mentioned by the stars of Alpha Complex. But they just take such culinary delights for granted (or even worse, associate them with another one of her creche-mates!) She'll fix them, and she'll fix them good!

Keep the clues and the red herrings running at a feverish pitch until your players look dazed and disgusted. Then you need to give them something to blast. Probably Betteeker-O is beginning to get antsy about the investigators (no matter how successful they aren't). So, she'll send the snackbot to attack them. Maybe several snackbots. What the heck, make it a whole horde. It'll give the Troubleshooters plenty of target practice, and get out their aggressions. Or kill them. Or both.

Regroup!

In the acrid, smoking aftermath, the players may want to sort out what they actually know. Donpard and company, however many are left, may start accusing each other (we should have mentioned, we recommend keeping Donpard-O alive — kill off Heraald-O first, then Tymfor-O. Donpard-O and Teela-O have the most campaign potential). Everybody gets suspicious of everything. But Betteeker-O has slipped in revealing her invention. Perhaps it's the maniacal light in her eyes, or perhaps it's her unscathed existence, but the clues suddenly start pointing to her.

I mean who would have access to snack-bots, kitchen knives, and cake batter as implements of destruction? And those Algae Roll-ups — sure, everybody had a connection, but who actually has access to unlimited quantities? As with the last segment of any TV mystery, now's the time to know your enemy and start figuring out how to get her before she gets you (the Troubleshooters) first.

Beware the X-Clones

by Pete Tamlyn

Many cycles ago, before the crash, an Ultraviolet named Jim-U-STR-3 came up with a wonderful idea. Jim-U was an important man: he was in charge of the Clone Banks. He was also a member of the Eugenicists' secret society (see *Acute Paranoia*). A dangerous combination.

For some time, Jim-U had been playing about with methods of controlling mutation, but the big problem was that the experiments took a long time. Many mutations only developed fully at puberty (much to the relief of the childminders) so it took about 14 yearcycles to find out whether an experiment had been successful. Jim-U got some of the Eugenicists' R&D people to try to speed things up a bit. They quickly came up with some new clone-growing techniques. Much to everyone's surprise, they worked!

Jim-U now had a technique for growing clones straight to maturity in a matter of months. He could introduce whatever mutations he liked and have an adult clone with the new power available for testing in just under a year.

Straight away, Jim-U started to produce a whole batch of new, interesting mutants. He experimented with a wide range of variables: new powers, magnifying known powers, clones with multiple powers. A race of super beings was in production.

Then the world changed.

Most of the new mutants perished in the few cycles of anarchy that followed the crash. Jim-U got into business selling clones

1812 Overture with Cannons

We'd recommend a splash-slash-fry finish on a catwalk above the mega-mixer, deep in the food vats, but we don't like to repeat ourselves (see *More Songs About Food Vats* for some nifty staging tips if you don't mind repeating yourself). There are lots of great culinary appliances near or on which to take a last stand. And Betteeker-O should make a spectacular last stand. Just when they thought they had it all figured out, the PCs find they're not dealing with some humble hausfrau of hash. She's mean, she's lean, and she's got a loyal service group on her side.

Betteeker-O won't mind wasting good swill in her attempts to take out the PCs and her remaining creche-mates. She'll flood chambers, spill silos full of Cruncheetym Chips, wind up the old loaf-slicers for clone-sized baguettes. She'll cackle and rant about The Computer's injustice to her. She'll pull out a surprise twist at the very end to try and turn the tables — hey, wait.

Are the Troubleshooters in the maze of

(and a very profitable business it is too) and temporarily shelved his plans. But in the confusion of the crash many secrets were discovered. Jim-U was more careful than most, but it is not easy to hide things from the ... Illuminati.

Your Mission ...

The adventure begins with the players being approached by agents of the Illuminati. The players are offered a very large number of credits and a mouth-watering collection of zap-bang gadgets if they can break into the Clone Banks and kidnap Jim-U and his chief technicians. If the PCs refuse, they will be terminated. Well, with an offer like that ...

Getting into the Clone Banks is rather like one of us trying to get into Fort Knox. Jim-U has done a deal with an Armed Forces Simplex, and the place is surrounded by heavily armed Vulture goons and warbots. Fortunately for the players, the Illuminati have come up with a cunning plan. They have managed to assassinate several of the clone childminders. As expected, Jim-U has put out feelers for a group of Troubleshooters to take over while he trains some new staff. Guess who the Illuminati have arranged to be interviewed.

Play this interview as though you are interrogating a prisoner. The interviewer is Nann-Y-MAG-4, the chief childminder. She is tough, no-nonsense, and dangerous in a

motherly sort of way. She asks rapid-fire questions and expects rapid answers. Anyone who says anything bad about babies gets a slap in the face from a 16 fist. Losing your temper and insulting Nann-Y is a very bad idea.

Let the players stew for a while, answering questions about childrearing as though they knew something about it. Unless they are really terrible (in which case an Illuminating fate awaits them), allow them to get the job. Their Illuminati contact is pleased, and several high-power weapons may be

Weird Stuff

Can you imagine what sort of things there are in the Clone Bank labs? Nasty chemicals, for example. Chemicals that make you turn green, or cause you to grow an extra limb out of any open wound. Wouldn't it be fun if some of the Troubleshooters had to get through the rest of the adventure with three legs, or two heads, one of which is an NPC?

Then there are the Things in the tanks. The experiments. The *failed experiments!* Things the like of which clones were not meant to see, not even in their wildest nightcyclemares. No sir, Things that should never be set free, unless of course some careless oaf with a laser rifle happens to rupture their tanks and let them loose in the laboratory. Oh dear ...

handed out to the players.

Clone Bank childminders are proud, professional people. The rest of Alpha Complex might think that it is a soft job looking after a bunch of baby clones, but the childminders know differently. And they are sure not going to let a group of Troubleshooters show them up by being able to cope easily with the little tykes.

The Troubleshooters are welcomed to their new job by Nann-Y. Here, they are introduced to their task and also to the main principle of childminding: Nann-Y knows best. Troubleshooters who misbehave are liable to be put over Nann-Y's knee and spanked, with a specially modified, high-energy repeating slipper. This, they are told, is how they should treat their charges.

In order for the Troubleshooters to have as difficult a time as possible, Nann-Y has arranged for them to be put in charge of the small group of small clones who have manifested their mutant powers before puberty. They are aged from five to 10 years, have a wide range of really useful powers, and are quite uncontrollable.

Fortunately their vigorous play tires them out quickly. (Think of Dennis the Menace with mutant powers, for this scene.) If the Troubleshooters can survive for a few hours it will be time to put their charges to bed and get to work.

First stop is the laboratory to pick up the technicians. This is fairly heavily guarded, but the Troubleshooters have been well equipped. Unfortunately a fight in any room is liable to damage some of the furniture. In this case, it will also damage a few clone tanks.

The technicians are a friendly and docile lot. They are also hugely proud of their work. It isn't often that R&D people come up with anything good, and when they do they want the world to know about it. Scientists are a bit childish like that. The surviving Troubleshooters will therefore get the full lowdown on the superfast clone-growing techniques before the final stage of their mission.

Although Jim-U has temporarily abandoned his mutant-creating project, he did keep a small group of the best mutants as a personal bodyguard. These, Jim-U felt, would be the forerunners of a new master race of clones. In keeping with the old color-coding system, Jim-U searched the electromagnetic spectrum (Ultraviolets get to learn about such things) for something with a frequency greater than Ultraviolet. He chose X-Rays. His bodyguard is therefore composed of the first X-Clones. Because X-rays are invisible, the X-Clones wear black clothes. Because they are mutants and proud of it, they wear a big yellow cross on their chests.

As I said, Jim-U kept the best mutants for

himself. The powers of the X-Clones are phenomenal. I mean, they are awesome. They are the sort of guys who could have the Mark IV Warbot quaking on his caterpillar tracks. Terrifying. In order to get to Jim-U, the Troubleshooters have to get past these guys.

A catch, there has to be a catch. We wouldn't give players an impossible mission, would we? Of course we would, but not today. You see, there was a small problem with Jim-U's new mutants. Because they grew from babyhood to puberty in under a year they never went through the stages of personality development that are an important part of human behavior. As a result they are still quite childish and have the most awful personality problems. Like this:

They worry. They worry about their powers, and about what people will think of them. They worry that they might sneeze and kill 50 people by accident. They worry that they won't be able to find a friend. They worry that they might be social outcasts, just because they are blue and furry. They worry that they won't be able to get a job. They worry that if they ask Teela O'Malley for her autograph she will scream and run. They worry that if they don't learn to control their powers Jim-U will cut off their rations of cold fun.

There are two possible solutions to the Troubleshooters' problem. One is that they talk the X-Clones into such a state of ... paranoia ... that they break down in tears. The other is that they get the X-Clones so angry that they blast off at random and knock each other out (X-Clones are incredibly tough and cannot normally be reduced below incapacitated, even if hit by a TacNuke). The sidebar gives an example of the sort of conversation that may take place.

Sample Conversation

PC 1: Hey look, that one's got an extra leg sticking out of its bottom!

X-Clone: That's not a leg, it's a tail, and it's supposed to be there. There's nothing wrong with it. Just 'cuz you haven't got one.

PC 1: Er, sorry, really I am. It's just that I've never seen anyone with a, er, "tail" before.

X-Clone: What? Nobody? Not ever?

PC 2: I went Outside once, and I saw a monster that had something like that.

X-Clone: Oh, no, this is terrible! I'll be a laughing stock! I think I'll go hide.

PC 1: Aw, look, don't cry. You look quite normal, really. Well, compared to your pal with the skin like concrete ...

By now, the troubleshooters should have Jim-U at their mercy. Sure, he has a few vulture guards, but after what our heroes have been through that should be no problem. Besides, if they've done their job properly in the last scene, they should have the X-Clones eating out of their hands. So, all they have to do now is walk out and claim their reward, yes? Well, not quite ...

Jim-U is now happy to go quietly. He has become rather attached to "his children," as he calls the X-Clones, and he doesn't want any harm to come to them. So, everything goes smoothly. The PCs, Jim-U, the X-Clones, and the technicians all head off into Alpha Complex to report a mission successfully completed. Unfortunately, a group like that is a little difficult to hide.

And somehow, someone got a message to Psion: A group of young mutants is being kidnapped by Troubleshooters. They must be rescued, quickly. One of Psion's best groups of masked avengers is sent to investigate.

Oh, boy, two groups of phenomenally powerful mutants battling it out, with the Troubleshooters in the middle! This could wreck the entire complex.

A few points to remember:

1) If the PCs used the "kindness method" instead of the "anger method," the X-Clones should now be friends with the Troubleshooters and will try to protect them.

2) The X-Clones are more powerful than their opponents, but much less organized. They need the Troubleshooters to tell them what to do and to keep their morale up. Otherwise, the enemy might use the same trick the Troubleshooters did to win the day.

3) The X-Clones and their Psion opponents never die, even if a nuclear plasma bolt knocks them backwards through several walls. It is the ordinary folks in the way that get killed.

4) No one is looking out for the technicians. They have to get killed. We don't want knowledge like theirs available to others, do we?

Probably the best end to all this is for the Psion group to be driven off and for the X-Clones to run away and hide, taking Jim-U with them. Then, the Psion group can come back with reinforcements. And the Illuminati can turn up to collect their prize. And once the noise of the fight has died down, everyone else in the neighbourhood will turn up to see what was going on....

Goop is Good Food

by Nancy Flowers and Allen Varney

"Excuse me, Citizen. This is Dean in Power Services. Sorry to wake you, but we seem to have a teensy-tinsy little problem here. You know, ever since The Computer went down, we're all feeling our way around the equipment. This red light over the door keeps blinking on and off. The control panel monitor says 'Evacuate.' Could you come take a look at it?"

After MegaWhoops, clones had to take on new responsibilities and learn new skills. But some information, locked up in the depths of The Computer's memory, is just gone. Vanished. No descriptions of replacement parts needed for local nuclear power plant repair. No location index for anti-radiation suits to be used during the ensuing meltdown.

Many PCs find the imminent end of their lives sufficient motivation for obtaining Power Services' needed spare parts. Use the above scene (or an appropriate variant thereof) to start your adventure; the PCs don't have much time before everything starts glowing, so let them know right away that the best lead lies in nearby KFC Sector.

KFC Sector: rumor has it that The Computer is still up over there. Maybe the PCs can get a schematic, a new fuse, or just some good advice from their old friend The Computer, who kept things operating so faultlessly before.

Here's your chance to push some buttons. Do the PCs want to go back to the daycycles when everything was treason and punishable by death? To the cycles when their secret society membership and mutant powers got them killed at every turn? Allow the players to meditate on this for a while.

And when the sweat begins to bead on their foreheads, be sure to mention that Armed Forces members from KFC are taking potshots at other Sectors. Attacking? Defending themselves? No one is sure. What's confusing is that wild giggling.

Background

Is The Computer really still up in KFC Sector? Not on your six clone lives.

The truth is that Phil-R-RUP, a minor functionary in Power Services, was using a new, illegal long-distance access code when The Computer Closed the Last Relay. Phil-R, new to this computer phreaking, felt sure he had caused it. Panic!

How would you cover up such a colossal mistake? Phil-R called on his fellow Mystics in the Food Vats of KFC sector to harbor him. Together they cooked up a scheme to take over and impersonate the

downed Computer!

Unbelievable? Of course. So, they brought out the Mystics' hidden supply of Quaternine, a high-grade hypnotic, and gave everyone's Hot Fun dinner a healthy dose of belief.

Everyone in KFC Sector ate well that nightcycle. Phil-R whispered sweet nothings in their sleep: "The Computer is still up. Everything works. Eat your food. Don't worry about Phil-R and his long-distance codes."

Now, the Armed Forces, Internal Security, and everybody else around the KFC Food Vats is convinced that The Computer is alive and well. Everyone is also stoned out of his or her gourd.

Exploring KFC

When The Computer was around, the transbots ran on time. Or if they didn't, you didn't say so. In KFC Sector, the PCs find corridors littered with trash. Every atrium is cluttered with broken bots, and half the lights are out. And everyone is going around as though nothing is wrong.

Maybe the PCs ask a citizen what's going on. This is like talking to a Hare Krishna at the airport. "Wrong? Nothing's wrong, citizen. Look at the Loyalty Day Parade coming down the corridor." The citizen blithely points to a blank wall.

If the PCs think the citizens are no help, just wait until they run into a squad of Armed Forces goons, all strung out and ready to kill. They could drag the PCs into the rifle range just for the fun of it, but think about it: to a zonked Vulture, the world is his rifle range. He fires at anything that moves.

The PCs might go straight to the top, enter a confession booth, and call The Computer. They get Phil-R, doing as good an impersonation as you'd expect:

PC: Friend Computer?

Phil-R: Huh?

PC: May I have a map of KFC Sector?

Phil-R: Uh, map. Oh, yeah! Sure, I've got some maps around here. Won't be a minute. Why don't you try a little Hot Fun dinner while you wait? Yum yum!

Perhaps the PCs start to realize what's wrong. Just then, *deedle-deedle-deedle-deedle-ding-dong-ding*, it's dinner time! Everyone files into the mess hall. Not to do so is treasonous. (Bring in more zonked Vultures to remedy this disloyalty. Just like the old days, eh?)

At first glance this mess hall is like all the

rest the PCs have seen. Infrareds are ladling out food as usual. But wait — it's filthy! And what's that whispering over the intercom? Sounds like, "Mmm-mm good, mmm-mm good. That's what Hot Fun dinner is, mmm-mm good!"

Interrogating citizens is useless (Hare Krishnas, remember?). Exploring the mess hall provokes suspicion among the Infrareds (Phil-R's Mystic buddies). Maybe they force-feed a PC or signal to Phil-R, who shouts over the loudspeaker, "Traitors in our midst! Get them!" Legions of Quaternine zombies haul the PCs downstairs to the Food Vats.

Or, maybe the PCs devise a clever diversion while they look around. Reward them by letting them follow the trail downstairs themselves. Then have a squad of Infrareds jump them. Isn't GMing fun?

The Food Vats

In that long, long room, among the familiar algae-covered, slime-filled vats, Phil-R has been hiding out since that fateful Day of the Going Down. The Infrareds (unsure of what to do with the PCs) bring them to meet Phil-R.

Stage this finale as a pop-culture parody of *The Wizard of Oz*. When the infrareds free them, the PCs stumble into the Food Vat area. They see, looming gigantically on the far wall, a colossal Computer monitor screen. From beneath it erupt gouts of flame (jets of methane gas produced in Food Vat processes).

"Step forward, [PC names]!" says Phil-R, alias The Computer. If they don't step forward, either turn this into a firefight or just have the Infrareds push them forward. If they do go forward, Phil-R tells them everything is under control, and they should scurry on home.

Well, your players have seen *The Wizard of Oz* as many times as you have; they'll be looking for tricks. Given enough Moxie, they can spot a power cord leading behind a Food Vat (tougher to do during the aforementioned firefight). Following it leads them right to Phil-R and a jakey microphone setup. "Come back here!" he says, as The Computer. "Pay no attention to the man behind the Food Vat." And so on. Fit in as many allusions to the movie as anyone can stand.

The Wrap-Up

Whatever way you stage this finale, have Phil-R break down and surrender; he's no arch-villain. Then comes the obligatory Info Dump, where the PCs learn about

his phone phreaking and the lengths the Infrareds went to in order to protect him. Then the PCs decide what to do next.

So what are the possibilities here?

- The PCs brazenly threaten to blow the whistle on Phil-R and the Infrareds. Incredibly stupid move. Shoot them all and let the zonked Vultures sort it out.

- The PCs explain their mission. They tell about MegaWhoops. The Mystics pay attention. After all, things are getting pretty tense around here, what with covering up

Phil-R's mistakes and blitzing everyone with an ever-dwindling supply of Quaternine. To tell the truth, these guys would be glad to dump him.

As a Power Services flunky, Phil-R can help with the crisis in Power Services. He knows where the parts are kept (three doors down from the nuclear power plant). Mission accomplished. Now PCs know life has *really* changed!

P.S. A variant of this ending might also come about if the PCs fall for "The Computer" hook, line, and sinkerbot. In that

case, The Big Monitor tells them where to find the parts and they return home, mission accomplished ... and *still believing* The Computer is up in KFC.

- The hell with the mission. PCs decide to stay and help rule the sector. The Mystics want a little time off and are more than willing to share in the responsibility — er, *fun* of running the show. In a week the drugs will run out. Have a good time gaming KFC Sector as Detox Central.

And of course, the home sector melts into slag. But hey, accidents happen, right? *Paranoia* like it used to be!

After the Collapsatron

by Edward S. Bolme

When last we left the notorious Transdimensional Collapsatron, it was sitting innocently among a group of haggard Troubleshooter-6's on Gilla C'Anse Island (see *Orcbusters*, in *The Computer Always Shoots Twice*). The Team decided hanging around Gilla C'Anse Island, getting sand in their britches, was even less enjoyable than life in Alpha Complex, where there was always at least the guarantee of sudden adrenal stimulation. Like breakfast, for example; now there's an experience of raw terror. Well, not raw, but definitely undercooked. But I digress.

So, the Team (along with a starfish and a hermit crab taken against their wishes) transdimensionally collapsed their trons back to Alpha Complex, and were promptly rounded up by loyal IntSec agents for a number of violations that resulted in numerous terminations for every Team member. The IntSecs were then executed for having touched such delinquent citizens, etc., etc. And, stuck in a room somewhere deep in Alpha Complex, the forgotten Transdimensional Collapsatron sighed. Alone again.

So?

So, after the crash, there's a group of High Programmers who wants the Transdimensional Collapsatron (aka the TC) for [deleted for security reasons], and they want it NOW. How long after the crash this takes place is up to you; it may take the Ultraviolets a while to track down the few scattered tidbits of information to reassure themselves that the TC exists, let alone find out where it is. How to motivate the players is largely dependent on how they're handling the crash. If things are too weird for them (or you), then the High Programmers appeal to them in the name of The Computer, Who needs to be rebooted. (How often does a PC get to give The Computer a boot?) If the players are happy

with Their Friend's recent demise, then promise them megacredits or threaten to blackmail them with something like broadcasting all their Team's mission records complex-wide, making them an immediate target for assassination. Few citizens forget old debts, especially these days. Or, if your players are cocky and egotistical and make themselves out to be the baddest mercs this side of Pluto, just tell them it's an impossible mission, clearly requiring more skill and imagination than they've ever displayed.

Regardless, all negotiations are conducted by a scrawny little former PLC clerk named Gogh-B-TWN-4. He is as ruthless as they come in PLC, which puts his negotiating ability and willingness to compromise on par with that of a Great White Shark. When the players finally consent to the mission (which Gogh-B merely says is being issued at the request of "some important people"), go ahead and brief them. What to tell them? How 'bout this:

Gogh-B does his best impression of a smile and licks the teeth in his prognathic jaw. "So glad you agree," he says, cracking his knuckles one by one. "You will not live to regret this." As if on cue, two Vampire Bots swoop over your group, landing behind you. One of them in absently munching on what looks like a ... do you really want to know? I didn't think so.

Gogh-B motions for you to follow him, then leads you through dark and twisting passageways, while chewing on a recalcitrant thumbnail. The munching noises behind you stop, and the bot starts drumming on its still empty reserve organic fuel cell. Eventually, Gogh-B leads you to a largish room, done entirely in dazzling white. Video monitors line the walls, but display only static. A single citizen is sitting behind a large armored desk. She's wearing a white robe, though it is torn and soiled. She smiles and gestures for you to sit.

"Good day, Troubleshooters, and allow me to congratulate you on being chosen for this assignment. It's a sign of the esteem and respect I have for your abilities, and I am happy that your skill is matched by your bravery in accepting this small task.

"Ah, but I'm forgetting my manners. My name is Cindy-U-BAK-4, late of Internal Security, working undercover in Research and Development. I need you to recover an experimental device for me, which is, at last report, in QST sector, on the eighth sublevel beneath the biorecycling plant.

"The device is called the Transdimensional Collapsatron. It looks like a box with a video screen on each of its six sides, and has a lot of fragile wiring that must not be damaged. It is a very dangerous device; you would be fools to attempt to activate it. I don't even want to tell you what happened to the last set of Troubleshooters who messed around with it.

"Recover this for me, and I shall have even greater and more rewarding tasks for you. Good luck."

The Gauntlet (Warrior ... is about to die)

First, the players have to get to the general area of the TC's location. This is left to your own fertile, twisted imagination. Go ahead and run your players through everything in this book, *DOA Sector*, and whatever other adventures you have. Really drag them through the muck. After all, they've got to cross half the complex, which has never been an easy trek, even when the ORI Express was running. Then they've got to deal with the biorecycling plant.

Designed to take care of the various wastes of this section of Alpha Complex, the biorecycling plant is hardly a producer of marketable commodities like, say, a shoe factory or weapons warehouse or

whatever, and has thus been abandoned since the crash. Abandoning a huge concentration of organic whatevers in Alpha Complex is Not A Smart Thing. Since no one was there to add the bactericide, fungicide, cyanide, and gobs of other artificial chemicals necessary to preserve life as we know it in Alpha Complex, Things started growing in the biorecycling plant. Nasty Things. Worse than PLC clerks. Semi-sentient mildew spreads its tendrils across tile grout, seeking to ensnare passers-by in a sticky, slimy organic net when they pause to comment on someone's shoddy house-keeping. Insensate globular colonies of yeast, ten feet in diameter and whacked out on drugs flushed by a Mystic during a room search, breakdance to unheard music, plugging hallways, tumbling down stairs, and generally being a nuisance. Giant mutant rats with three tails and automatic slugthrowers (living organic slugs, not the lead kind) defend their food source: artificial cheese byproduct substitute heavily laced with mutagens and growth hormones (but they also feel humans make for good paté). Kamikaze cockroaches who can fly like hummingbirds lurk about in dark recesses, seeking their opportunity to fly down someone's mouth. (Why? Beats me. I'm not gonna open MY mouth to ask 'em.) And wandering around down here somewhere are what remains of a lost and starving band of refugees, who chanced upon a leaking pipe and ate the stuff, changing themselves into something too horrible for words, but not too horrible for the latest *Living Dead* sequel. Weird diseases. Strange spills. Seeping poison rivers. Real bad smells. Magic mushrooms.

The Grand Prize

Evading the pursuing rats who are eagerly looking for something to enhance

their cheese spread, the Troubleshooters nimbly dash past the groping web of quivering slime and down the stairs to the eighth sublevel. A glob of yeast doing the watusi two levels up loses its balance, falls down the stairwell, smushes the last PC in line, and dissolves him in lysergic acid.

Thirty meters away there's a circular hole in the floor grating (the TC teleports everything within its radius of effect, including flooring, air, and earth). Peering down through the hole, the players can see the TC resting on a large pile of sand. Pipes running just under the eighth sublevel grating are likewise cut, spritzing effluent from the biorecycler onto the pile of sand, the giant starfish, and the small glowing hermit crab (the aforementioned shanghaied travelers). The Collapsatron! At last!

The players swoop down and snatch it, no doubt! Ooops, one of them seems to have gotten splashed with the effluent. Probably nothing. The hermit crab and starfish attack, then, suddenly, the air is filled with slugs! Mutant rats surround the party, mutant clones shuffle closer down a side passage, and there's a couple yeast balls limboing near the opening above the PCs! Help! Ooops! Shouldn't have opened your mouth to screammpphh! Ptooie!

Sure hope one of your players is a Machine Empath, because that person hears a little voice say, "Hi! Golly, it's been so long since anyone's hugged me! Can we go now?" If not, maybe someone will be desperate enough to try plugging the TC into a power supply. It immediately pipes up with, "Hi! It's about time! Where would you like to go?" Then it will give the PCs painfully long and precise instructions on exactly how to place its multitude of antennae, dragging the combat on for several more frantic rounds. Force your players to make

dexterity rolls and ignore the results. But, before it's too late,

*** POOF! ***

Back outside Cindy-U's meeting room.

Bet you didn't know the Transdimensional Collapsatron could talk, did you? Well, it was hardly ever given a chance, considering how much time it's spent with its power off. Not to mention that no one ever had the common decency to try to strike up a conversation. Clones can be so rude. Cindy-U receives the TC gratefully, pays the PCs whatever price they agreed on, and begins a long and detailed discussion with the Collapsatron.

Why Does Cindy-U Want the Collapsatron?

To send the players on a Bigger and Better Mission that will knock their socks off.

What Mission Is That?

Alice Through the Mirrorshades, a brand-new post-crash adventure, coming soon! Order yours today!

And with that shameless plug, we bring our magnum opus to a close. Hope you've learned everything you need to know to make your players' lives miserable in totally new and exciting ways. Look for other post-crash adventures and supplements to help you on your way.

And now, as a final farewell, we present the never-before-seen, most treasonous document ever, culled from the files of PURGE, Frankenstein Destroyer, Death Leopard, Romantics, and others: the all-new, all-deadly **101 Uses for The Dead Computer!**

101 Uses For The Dead Computer

Produced by the Coalition of Secret Societies

(Before They Broke Out Into a Fight)

In the wake of The Computer's untimely demise, the Coalition of Secret Societies was formed to determine just what was to be done now that Alpha Complex was Computerless. Well, as little could be agreed upon due to the varied agendas and goals of the various Secret Societies, the Coalition accomplished absolutely nothing.

Well ... next to nothing. The Coalition did break down into fits of laughter when one member suggested that The Computer would now finally be able to serve a useful purpose — as a door stop! That, as they say, was only the beginning. After all, parts is parts, and The Computer has a whole lot of parts still lying around.

If nothing else came out of the Coalition of Secret Societies (and nothing else did), the following document should prove useful to the clones of Alpha Complex. Or at least helpful. Hmm. Would you believe entertaining? Pick one of the above.

Where Did This Treasonous Document Come From?

**Jonatha Caspian, Stephen Crane, Greg Gorden, Rich Hawran, Douglas Kaufman,
Ron Seiden, Bill Slavicsek, Michael Stern, Charles Tramontana**
Unusually High Concepts/Authors

Douglas Kaufman, Bill Slavicsek
The Nitty Gritty/Editors

Sharon Wyckoff
Tactical Engineer/Graphics

Bret Blevins
Interior Decorator/Artist

The Computer
Dead/Real Dead



WARNING: POSSESSION OF THIS TREASONOUS DOCUMENT IS TREASON!

But with The Computer dead, who cares?

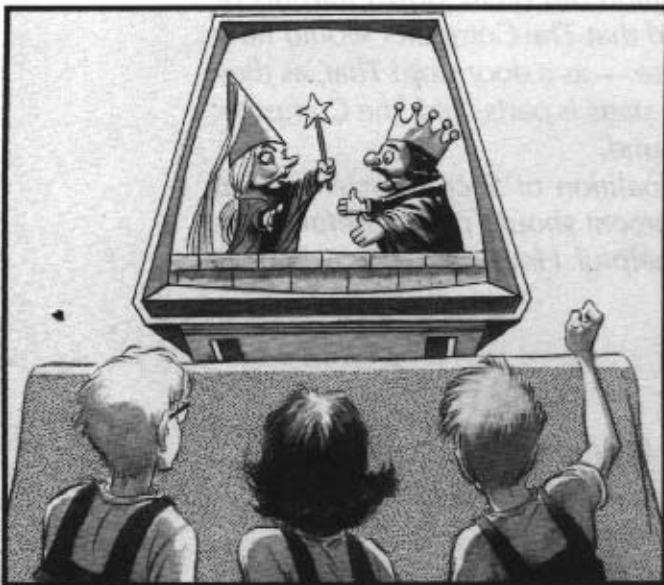
What Can You Do with a Dead Monitor?

1

Fashion Hint Number One: Use the monitor as a hat or helmet.

2

Practical Joke Number One: Hide in the service duct behind a monitor. When a clone passes by, shine a flashlight through the monitor and speak in a deep voice. Now you're The Computer! Of course, if the offended clone doesn't have a sense of humor, he or she may send a tacnuke through the screen to once again "crash" The Computer ...

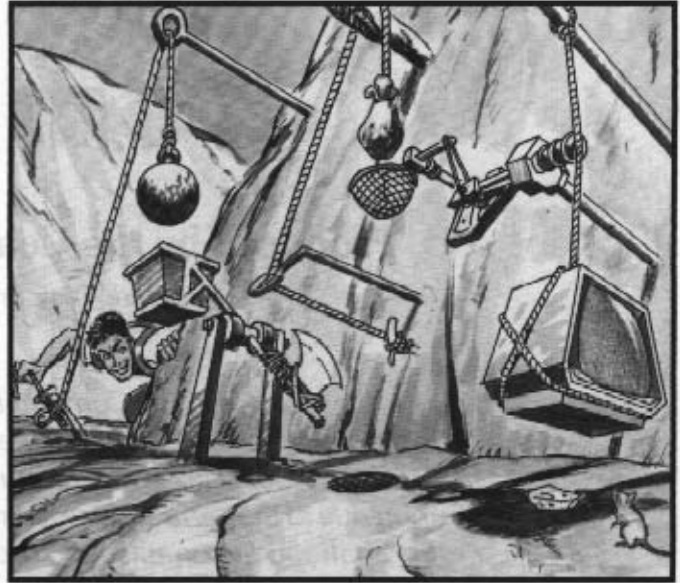


3

Make a puppetbot theater to entertain nature babes.

4

Turn the monitor over, fill it with synthesand, and it becomes a litter box for animalbots (or for real animals now being imported from Outside).



5

To make a killing in the animal-import business, use the monitor as a trap to catch real animals. Other materials needed: string, a stick, and a generous portion of Hot Fun.

6

Fill a monitor with water and cook kelp stew in it.

7

Fill a monitor with crushed ice to keep your Bouncy Bubble Beverage cold and refreshing.

8

Fill a monitor with synthedirt and plant a synthetree or synthebush (or use real ones from Outside).

9

Empty monitors make great serving bowls at Secret Society parties. Use them to hold Cruncheetyme Algae Chips and other snack food favorites.

10

Attach a handle to an empty monitor — it makes a nice attache case.

11

Attach a handle to a smaller monitor and it becomes an overnightcycle bag.

12

Attach a handle to a big monitor (maybe a nice color one) and it becomes a suitcase for those longer trips.

13

Fill a monitor with water, add some shiny pieces of metal and some synthegravel — it's an aquarium! (Now, if you can find some fish from Outside, it works even better.)

14

Monitors come in various sizes and can be used to furnish a modern clone's cubicle. Use them as chairs, table supports, end tables, etc.

15

Social Interaction Idea Number One: Gather a few clone friends, 10 monitors, and a heavy round object. Set the monitors up in a triangular shape at one end of a corridor. Have everyone stand at the other end of the corridor. The

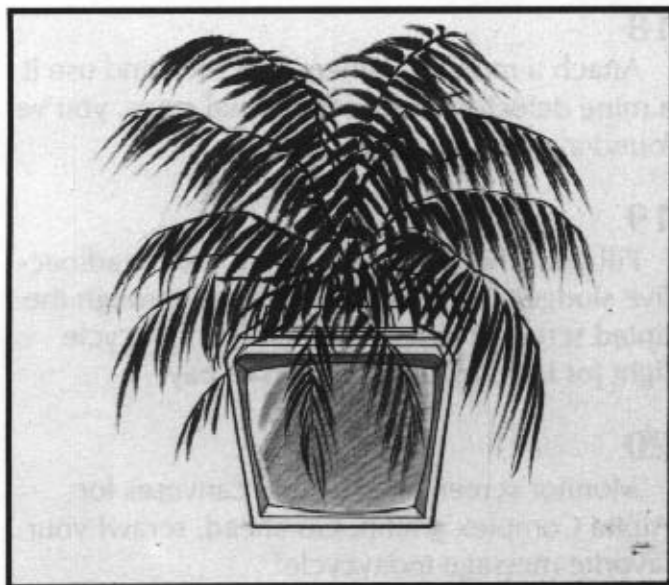


object of this fun activity is to roll the round object toward the monitors. The clone that knocks the most monitors over wins.

Victory Hint for Social Interaction Idea Number One: To guarantee victory, replace your heavy round object with an explodes-on-impact cone rifle projectile. Need to knock over 10 monitors with one roll? Boom! No problem!

16

Use a monitor as a conversation piece. Place one on your living cubicle table, gather some friends around it, and start talking. (Notice how everyone stays away from Treasonous topics when a monitor is present.)

**17**

Social Interaction Idea Number Two: Find a bank of monitors that has at least five screens — the more the better. Take turns tossing small round objects at the monitors (unprimed grenades work best). The winner of this fun event is the clone who smashes the most screens with three throws.

Victory Hint for Social Interaction Idea Number Two: Use primed grenades.



18

Attach a monitor camera to a stick and use it a mine detector. When the signal stops, you've found a mine.

19

Fill your living cubicle monitor with radioactive sludge. The soft glow, diffused through the tinted screen, makes a wonderful nightcycle light for keeping the boggybots at bay.

20

Monitor screens make great canvases for Alpha Complex graffiti. Go ahead, scrawl your favorite message todaycycle!

21

Use a convenient monitor as a bulletin board. Stick all kinds of messages to the smooth surfaces including Secret Society meeting notices, clone personals, and Troubleshooter mission requests. Remember, a message stuck to a Computer monitor carries more authority than one stuck to any old wall or board.

22

Monitors make great weights to keep forms from blowing off of desks and tables.

23

In need of exercise in these daycycles of underindulgence? Heft a monitor over your head 10 times every morningcycle before going out into the corridors.

24

For even better physical fitness, attach a monitor to each end on a lead pipe. Now you have Dead Computer barbells.

25

Sit in front of a Dead Computer monitor and reminisce about the Good Ol' Daycycles.

26

Social Interaction Idea Number Three: Gather a group of friends around a Dead Computer monitor, reminisce about the Good Ol' Daycycles, get into a fight, and shoot each other.

27

Stack monitors atop each other to create new forms of artistic expression.

28

Attach wheels to a large monitor. Now you have a sporty transbot.



29

Attach wheels to a smaller monitor. Now you have an economical transbot that gets good mileage.

30

Tie a string to the monitor and it makes a really bad kite.

31

Set a Dead Computer monitor in the middle of your simplex, put a velvet rope around it, and declare it a tourist attraction. Charge credits to gullible clones and make a fortune.

32

Use a monitor as a stepping stool to reach those high shelves.

33

A monitor tied to your chest makes a somewhat useful protective device — but armor is much better.

34

An empty monitor, filled with air, makes a very good life preserver when you go reservoir swimming.

35

An empty monitor, filled with synthesand, makes a very bad life preserver when you go reservoir swimming.

36

A monitor can be used as a pedestal for your plastiform Teela-O doll.

37

Dropped from a high platform, monitors make loud noises.



38

Attach rockers to the bottom of a monitor. You now have a comfortable rocking Computer.

39

Stack as many monitors as you can find. They make a very nice wall. And remember, good walls make good neighbor clones.

High Security Clearance Humor

"Why did The Dead Computer cross the corridor?"

"Because It was stapled to the Infrared!"
(Failure to laugh is treason.)

Low Security Clearance Humor

"Why did The Dead Computer cross the corridor?"

"Because the High Programmer wouldn't let It go!"
(Laughing is treason.)

What Can You Do with a Dead Keyboard?

40

Anything you want to. (We just had to throw that in.)

41

Fashion Hint Number Two: Pop out the individual keys and you can make all kinds of neat jewelry — necklaces, earrings, bracelets, etc.

42

Fashion Hint Number Three: For those clones with more taste, spell out your name (or the name of some clone you admire) with the keys and create designer jewelry that makes a statement. Wearing "Wanna-U-BOD-2" around your neck in these daycycles of active hormones could prove *extremely* interesting ...

43

Keyboards make practical yet exotic throw pillows.



44

Cosmetic Surgery Idea Number One: Are you one of those clones who's afraid of dentistbots and docbots? Have you recently lost a few teeth in a Bouncy Bubble bar brawl? Then replace them yourself with keys from a Computer keyboard! It's easy, it makes a statement, and it avoids the painful procedures that most dentistbots employ.

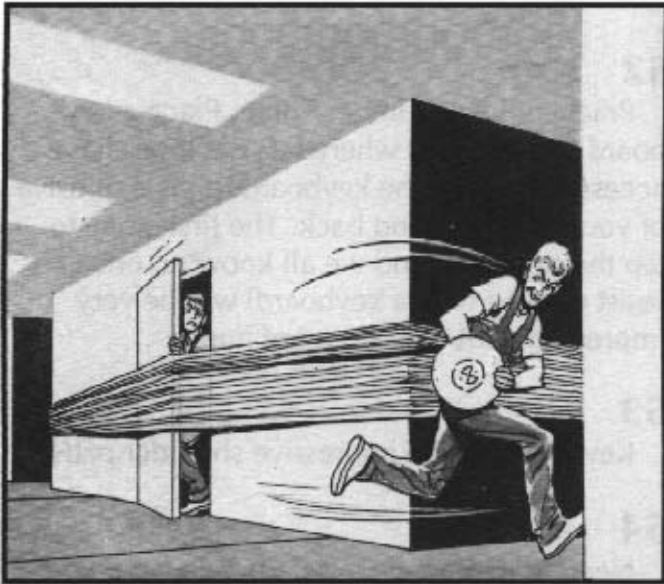
45

In this post-Crash era of clone-made uniforms, loose keys make stylish epaulets, name tags and buttons.

46

Social Interaction Idea Number Four: You and your clone friends can form an Old Reckoning sewing circle, learning to use that ancient art of running a threaded needle through material — by hand! Use your loose keyboard keys as finger protectors until you've mastered not

What Can You Do with a Dead Disk Drive (and Other Storage Media)?



56
Disk Drives can be used as banks. Simply stick credits into the slot. Getting them out again is another matter ...

57*
Disk Drives make nice designer tissue dispensers for your bath cubicle.

58
Need to prop open your cubicle window? Use a spare disk drive.

59
Now that it's not Treasonous, display your stack of Old Reckoning books proudly. A pair of matching disk drives can be used as "book ends" to keep those tomes from toppling.

60
Practical Joke Number Four: Decorate a friend's cubicle with strings of magnetic backup tape. For an added touch of humor, leave the metal reels attached.

61
Hang a handful of tape reels from the ceiling of your cubicle. When the air circulation system comes on, the spools will clang together and make a peaceful chiming sound. If the air circulation system in your sector doesn't work — too bad.

62
Fashion Hint Number Four: Make a jumpsuit out of magnetic storage tape! It's easy, casual, flexible and form fitting. Truly, storage tape suits are a fashion statement in post-Crash Alpha Complex.

63
Social Interaction Idea Number Five: Take a full reel of magnetic tape. Place bets on how far the reel will roll before stopping. Roll 'em!





64

Social Interaction Idea Number Six: An empty tape reel can be used as a "puck" for a variety of new Alpha Simplex sports including commando hockey, shuffle bot, and mine curling.

65

If your simplex is looking for a new form of currency, try micro floppy disks. You can use the memory ratings to determine the value — "Hey, mac! Got change for 800k?"

66

Cosmetic Surgery Idea Number Two: Still afraid of the dentistbot, but you've got a bad toothache? No problem! Tie a piece of magnetic tape around the offending tooth, place the other end of the tape into a disk drive, and turn on the drive. When the tape gets sucked in, the tooth pops out!

67

Social Interaction Idea Number Seven: Challenge a neighboring simplex to a game of "floppy disks." This simple game requires a standing stick of some sort and a stack of floppy disks. The winner is the team that tosses the most floppies onto the stick.

68

Fashion Hint Number Five: Magnetic tape makes a great necktie.

69

Fashion Hint Number Six: Magnetic tape with the reel still attached makes an even greater necktie. Don't pull too tight!

70

Safety Tip Number One: String a line of magnetic tape across the corridor leading from a hostile simplex to your friendly simplex. Angled just right, the tape is invisible. Any hostiles zooming toward you in open transbots might just lose their heads over your safety measure.

71

Safety Tip Number Two: You're never without a weapon in these hostile times if you carry easy-to-flung floppy disks, tape reels and hard floppies. They make great hand-flung projectile weapons.

72

Fashion Hint Number Seven: Short clones can feel and look taller by stuffing their boots with floppy disks so that they stand and walk taller.





73

Fashion Hint Number Eight: Make a jumpsuit out of floppy disks.

Aggressive Bot Humor

"Where does Mark IV park at the end of the daycycle?"

"Anywhere Mark IV wants to."

(We know it has nothing to do with Dead Computers, but we weren't going to tell Mark IV that!)

What Can You Do with Dead Cables, Wires and Other Metal Parts?



74

As communications break down in many parts of Alpha Complex, you can still stay in touch with friends, clone mates, and fellow Troubleshooters. Just attach hollow bowls to each end of a long length of Computer cable. Talk into the bowl. The clone on the other end will hear you! Your range is only limited by how much cable you can dig up.

75

A broken cryo-capacitor can chill your drinks before your buddy screams "AAIIIIIEEE."

76

Slotted cooling grates make fine food processors!

77

By weaving different colored wires together, you can make a decorative floor mat for your living cubicle.

78

Social Interaction Idea Number Eight: Play jump cable! Take a length of cable, have two other clones hold each end and rotate it, then you jump up and down as the cable passes under you. This is particularly great fun when the group sings some Treasonous song to keep time by.

79

Safety Tip Number Three: Build a spring-loaded catapult. Pile it high with Dead Computer parts. Aim it at an unfriendly simplex. Let the parts fly!

80

Put Dead Computer parts in a mega-mixer, set to grind, and sprinkle the ground bits over Hot or Cold Fun. Acts as roughage for a balanced diet.





81

Sell Dead Computer innards as Cruncheetym Chips.

82

Dress up in various Dead Computer parts in order to disguise yourself as a bot. Warning: this use attracts Frankenstein Destroyers.

83

If you're handy, you can turn a keyboard and monitor into a musical instrument — a Dead Computer Piano, for example.

Food Vat Humor

"How do you make a Dead Computer float?"

"One quart Bouncy Bubble Beverage, two scoops of Cold Fun, and a Dead Computer."



What Can You Do with Dead Printers and Other Peripherals?

84

By shorting out the velocity governor on a conveyor belt, you can create a dandy exercise platform.



85

Safety Tip Number Four: Detach a manual input mouse from The Computer. Keep the wire attached. Now you have a bola-type weapon — just for protection, of course.

86

Give a mouse to a nature babe and the kid has a neat pull toy. The kid also has a bola-type weapon, but what the hey!

87

Need to dry your just-washed jumpsuit in a hurry? Run it through your printer. The rollers squeeze out excess water, and the type head adds interesting designs to the garment.

88

Walking around in a strange corridor? Leave a trail of fan-fold Computer paper behind you. When you fold it back up, you'll find your way back.

89

Microchip boards can be used as trivets to protect your cubicle countertops from hot serving bowls.

90

Practical Joke Number Five: Amaze all your friends by pretending to know The Dead Computer's will! Simply pull a circuit board out of a compnode and make up strange pronouncements and omens based upon the patterns in the microchips. Hmm ... maybe this can make you rich and famous, so forget the joke part.

91

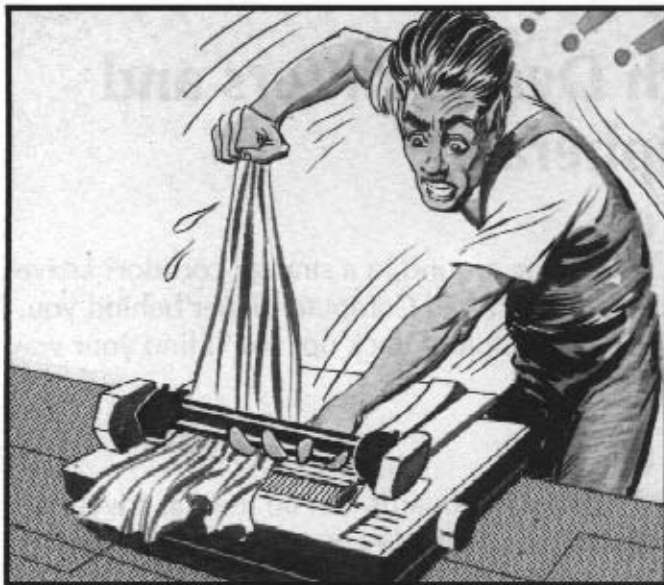
Paint your name or service on a microchip board and it makes a neat calling card. For example, Shad-O-RUN uses these calling cards to hawk his new line of Dead Computer interface programs.

92

Attach a microchip to the end of a stick and use it to scratch those hard-to-reach places.

93

Some Computer parts have internal cooling units (fans). These can be removed and used to dry hair and clothing now that the Integrated Grooming Station has closed down.



94

An abandoned transtube station can be flooded to make a fun ride.

95

Cathode ray tubes from inside The Computer can be attached to wires to serve as floats when clones go reservoir fishing.

96

Cathode ray tubes can also be ground up and sprinkled atop kelp salads as a crunchy addition — you know, CRT-ons.

97

Social Interaction Idea Number Nine: A mix of monitors, disk drives, reels, and other Dead Computer parts can be put together to make a challenging Dead Computer miniature golf course.

98

Social Interaction Idea Number Ten: How many clones can your team fit into an empty compnode with all the parts removed?

99

For even more challenges, see how many you can fit into a compnode still full of parts. Or for the less adventurous, try a deactivated confession booth. Of course, if the termination programs just happen to boot at that moment ...

100

Any piece of the Dead Computer can be traded, bartered or sold to a nostalgic Computer Phreak, Pro-Tech or FCCCP member. Don't throw anything away!

Food Vat Humor

"How can you fit The Dead Computer into a small jar?"

"Le Mega-Mixer."

And Finally ...

101

In a pinch, you can set up a monitor, disk drive, memory board, and printer, making a working personal computer! Nah, too farfetched ...

FCCCP Humor

"What will The Dead Computer do to Treasonous clones when It reboots?"

"Oh, we figure It will think of something ... 101 somethings."

CRASH COURSE MANUAL

Edited by Doug Kaufman, Jonatha Caspian,
and C. J. Tramontana

The Computer is Dead! Long Live ... Anybody?

The Computer has accessed its last microchip; merged its last datafile; blown its last circuit. It doesn't matter why. It doesn't matter how. What matters is what the clones of Alpha Complex are gonna do about it now.

Post MegaWhoops Alpha Complex: dark Computer monitors, corridors dimly illuminated by emergency power, Tech Service and Power Service personnel struggling valiantly to ... do something. Anything. Meanwhile, clones rise up and destroy CPU HQ, while Secret Societies come out of hiding and start taking control. Alpha Simplexes spring up and declare their independence from the rest of the Complex. Somewhere, rumor has it, there are vast stockpiles of supplies, and maybe even a sector where The Computer still works. Mercenary Troubleshooter teams are hired to find out the truth ... THIS IS POST-CRASH PARANOIA!

Crash Course Manual contains:

- 96 pages of gloom, doom, and dark designs — not to mention more info about MegaWhoops Alpha than anyone could ever want to know!
- Paranoia fiction that will knock your jumpsuit off — nearly 40 pages of stories and songs about everything from the "Moment of MegaWhoops" and "Tales From the Vulgar Scrubot" to "The New Fear and Ignorance."
- Capsule adventures, capsule adventures, and more capsule adventures — and a modestly brilliant mini-adventure, "A Passage to NDA Sector" — to get you started in the Post-Crash Complex!
- The most treasonous document ever printed in any Paranoia adventure or supplement (no, really, we mean it this time). At last, "101 Uses for The Dead Computer" can be revealed to the public!

Don't get left behind in The Computer-controlled Alpha Complex!
Come to an exciting new world
where clones are clones and bots
are subservient (except sometimes).
Take this Crash Course and
LEARN something for a change!

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