PARANOIA
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ALPHA COMPLEX NIGHTS

FRIENDS!

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PARANOIA ™

Spin Control

Brains! Must eat brains!

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THE COMPUTER
Excessive drooling is treasonous, citizen

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Security Clearance ULTRAVIOLET
WARNING:

**Knowledge or possession of this information by any citizen
of Security Clearance VIOLET or lower is treason punishable by a
long spell of Armed Forces latrine scrubot maintenance duty.**

1. Introduction

Spin is the difference between a reactor leak and *ad hoc* re-designation of housing units as waste storage zones; it's the difference between being terminated as a traitor and feted as a heroically loyal undercover agent; it's the difference between your sector having the highest reported level of corruption and treason on record, and all the *other* sectors having suspiciously lax IntSec officers who don't seem to be doing their jobs.

In short, it's the difference between life and death in Alpha Complex (or, to put The Computer's approved spin on it, between Life and an Exciting New Opportunity To Serve Your Complex As Reactor Shielding, Citizen).

Spin Control is all about spin, and by that, we mean it's all about lies. The characters know they are lying, the people they're lying to know they're lying and the facts remain the facts. The trick is making sure that the spin—the lie—works better for everyone else (or, more accurately, everyone who counts) than the bald truth. The *Control* part comes from the players having to keep track of all the different spins they have put on events.

Project Reanimator

The zombie animation project is a conspiracy run by splinter sects from several secret societies (who are, no doubt, secretive, sinister and, er, something). The original revivification project comes from Romantic myths which cross-pollinated with FCCCP propaganda, giving rise to the Prophecy of the Easter Cycle, when the dead arise to give chocolates to the living. Pro Tech and Corpore Metal members got involved to add their technical expertise to the creation of the techno-zombies.

All four of the factions have something to offer. Pro Tech has access to the best scientists, while Corpore Metal has the most experience with wiring human flesh to cybernetic parts. As one of the largest secret societies, the Romantics can help keep the whole thing secret and provide manpower, while the well-connected FCCCP has been diverting resources and funds to the Project. Each of the societies has their own ultimate end goals for the scheme:

- �ù The Romantics intend to revivify people from the Old Reckoning times. They have some cryogenically frozen survivors from that era, who they will revive when the technology is perfected.

- ☙ The FCCC-P wants to bring about the Easter Cycle, as prophesied in one of the apocryphal Manuals of The Computer.

- ☙ Corpore Metal intends to use the techno-zombies as a stepping stone to full conversion of Alpha Complex into cyborgs, both living and dead.

- ☙ Pro Tech just likes the idea of techno-zombies, and doesn't want to share their toys.

■ Now Pay Attention, Here's The Plot

The Troubleshooters are initially assigned as undercover agents to start a riot in a cafeteria, which IntSec believes to be full of traitors who need to be flushed out. Now, the cafeteria is full of traitors, but they're all low-key conspirators, not the ultra-violent Death Leopards who IntSec is looking for. Still, it all ends in a bloody massacre anyway.

After that, the Troubleshooters are sent to investigate a PLC executive who is engaged in a diabolical plan to monopolize the Alpha Complex supply of plastic sporks, which directly leads to the Troubleshooters discovering a secret plot to resurrect the dead—including the dead who died earlier in the cafeteria. The zombies get loose and hunt the characters through the spork zone, but they are saved at the last moment by higher-clearance zombies, who assign the characters to putting a good public relations spin on the zombie situation.

If the characters are still alive at this point, then the mission leads onto a pitched battle between secret societies and revivified zombies, including previous clones of the characters.

2. It Tastes Like Treason

The mission kicks off in the traditional fashion—the Troubleshooters get a mission alert. This mission alert orders the characters to report to briefing room CRS-4533/*gamma* immediately. Purpose Of Mission: CLASSIFIED! Nature of Mission: CLASSIFIED! Estimated Time Required: CLASSIFIED! Briefing Officer: CLASSIFIED! Oh, and revealing any information about the mission is treasonous.

Briefing room CRS-4533/*gamma* is several sectors away, so the characters have to go via transtube. They pile onto a crowded transbot at the nearest station. There's the usual mix of citizens on board, from the herd of INFRAREDs crowded into the INFRARED-clearance standing area above the exhaust grates, to a single GREEN sitting alone in the spacious GREEN-and-higher section, with the plush Leatherish couches and jack-o-bot servant that goes unused on 99.9% of transtube journeys. En route to CRS Sector and the briefing room, the transbot stops between stations. A host of GREEN goons swarm onto the transbot, shining torches into the faces of everyone on board and scanning their ME cards and/or tongue tattoos. One INFRARED down the back panics, feeling the sudden weight of the Frankenstein Destroyer propaganda encoded in genetically engineered wax in his right ear, and runs for it. His name is—or was—Vernor-DFD-1, a newly recruited member of the Frankenstein Destroyers and easily recognizable by his overlarge ears. The goons blast him with a hail of laser fire, and call in a scrubot team to deal with the resulting mess—but that INFRARED traitor is not why they are here. No, the goons order everyone else off the transtube carriage, except for the Troubleshooters. Once the car is clear, the goons themselves exit the vehicle with the same swift stomping of jackboots they arrived by, and the transtube continues on its journey, carrying only the Troubleshooters and suddenly feeling a lot emptier and lonelier.

Nightcycle of the Living Dead

Remember Vernon-DFD-1, the INFRARED traitor who was summarily executed on this very page? (If you don't remember him, then you have the memory of a goldfish.) Vernon-DFD-2 was activated soon after his clone predecessor was killed, and took over whatever vital duties Vernon-DFD-1 was supposed to be doing. Vernon-DFD-1's laser-fried body was cleaned up by scrubots, and should have been recycled in the Soylent RED food vats.

However, there's a conspiracy to create zombies (as seen on page 2, and if you've forgotten that, then you've the memory of a particularly insightful and accomplished goldfish). Project Reanimator has been diverting corpses from the recycling vats to its secret laboratories for months now. Vernon-DFD-1 will soon end up in the Reanimation labs and join the growing army of the re-animated.

But forget Vernon-DFD! (Who?) The *Troubleshooters* will probably die several times during this mission, and their bodies—assuming they're even slightly intact—will be brought to the laboratories and revived. By the time the living replacement Troubleshooter clones get to the Project Reanimator Lab (in chapter four), their zombified counterparts will be there, waiting for them. That will be dealt with later on, but keep track of which Troubleshooters die and how they perish… for they will rise again!

And complain.

The journey is Tension 5, with a drop to Tension 0 during the dark passage.

A few minutes later, the transtube car takes a sharp right into a disused maintenance tunnel, and the lights go out for a minute. Then, the sign 'APPROACHING 4533/*gamma*' flashes past one window, and the transtube carriage pulls into an officially abandoned station, which has been claimed by IntSec as a secret briefing room.

This Briefing Is Not Supposed To Be Fun (Tension 15)

Waiting for the characters on the dusty transtube platform are four heavily armed Vulture Troopers, flanking the briefing officer—IntSec Commander Yuri-B-OGN-4. Yuri is a veteran of the ceaseless struggle against treason and dissent, and it's plainly visible on what's left of his face. More than half his body has been replaced by cyborg implants and clone-transplant flesh. Under normal circumstances, Yuri-B-4 should have been replaced by Yuri-B-5 a long time ago, but he is much too paranoid to allow some untried clone of himself take over—he can't even trust a copy of his own mind to do his job.

Yuri is fanatically loyal to the *ideal* of Alpha Complex, but his personal loyalty to The Computer is considerably less intense. He is smart enough to recognize that The Computer is fantastically flawed, even insane, and so he cannot trust it to run the complex. Yuri has learned to manipulate The Computer and the letter of Alpha Complex regulations in order to defend what he sees as their spirit. On the rare occasions when he allows himself to sleep instead of popping more Asperquaint, he dreams of a happy, secure and peaceful Alpha Complex, a perfect society built on a huge pile of vaporized traitors. He has no patience for the double-talk and incompetence of most Troubleshooters, and will say so. In short, he's a Straight *PARANOIA* character in a Classic *PARANOIA* world, and should be played accordingly.

Yuri-B-OGN-4
Management 13
    Interrogation 17
    Intimidation 17
    Knowing Where the Bodies Are
    Buried 19
Stealth 12
    High Alert 16
    Surveillance 16
    Shadowing 16
    Being Behind People 18
Violence 10
    Energy Weapons 14
    Projectile Weapons 14
Hardware 10
    WMD Specs and Usage 16
Software 10
    IntSec Archive Searches 16
Wetware 12
    Pharmatherapy 16
    Psychology 16
    Bioweapons 16
Mutant Power: Uncanny Luck
(Power 12)
Secret Society Affiliation:
Communists (Undercover Agent
for IntSec)
Armor: Blue reflec (E1)
Weapons: Energy pistol (W3K),
cone rifle (varies)

The Vulture Troopers
Management 10
    Intimidation 14
    Scowling With Extreme Prejudice
    16
Stealth 8
    High Alert 12
Violence 13
    Energy Weapons 17
Hardware 7
Software 7
Wetware 7
Armor: Armor-all (4)
Weapons: Laser rifle (W3K)

will have a security team standing by, and they will swoop in and quell the riot immediately. Any questions?

Once the briefing is completed, Yuri-B points to some stacked crates behind him and says that they contain the Troubleshooters' assigned equipment and disguises. He then limps onto the transtube car, dragging his leg (paralyzed in a PURGE bombing) behind him. The Vulture Troopers march after him, and Yuri speeds off to fight treason and corruption elsewhere.

In each crate are the following items:

❧ A grubby INFRARED jumpsuit

❧ A Mandatory Bonus Duty equipment set, which contains all the tools and devices needed to carry out the Troubleshooter's assigned MBD. However, due to a slight snafu in the warehouse, all the Troubleshooters have been assigned Hygiene Officer kits. As far as The Computer is concerned, all the Troubleshooters on this mission are Hygiene Officers.

The Troubleshooters' mission is as follows: A commissary here in CRS Sector has been identified as a meeting ground for dissidents and violent thugs, members of the Death Leopard society. The Troubleshooters are to go to the commissary and start a riot. Yuri-B insists that the violent deviants will be unable to resist the thrill of a fight, and will join in. Loyal citizens, by contrast, will flee or follow approved security protocols. Yuri-B

HPD&MC Psychological Stress And Deconstruction Analysis Ultraviolence Trigger Phrases

❧ 'Hot enough for you?'

❧ 'I sure hate The Computer.'

❧ 'How's business?'

❧ 'Let's get ready to rumble!'

❧ 'I deride your personal value system, for it is at odds with orthodoxy!'

❧ 'What's happening dude?'

👁 A list of phrases written by a HPD&MC Psychological Stress And Deconstruction Analysis Committee which are, according to the text, guaranteed to cause rage and violence in citizens that fall into Deviancy Profile 05/432/beta (*Psychotically Violent*) through subliminal cues. The Troubleshooter can try these phrases when they want to start a riot—most are of no use, but a few are coincidentally secret society recognition codes.

The *CRS Sector FunTime Good Eatery Biofueling Commissary* is your typical Alpha Complex commissary; simultaneously a fetid mass of rotting Cold Fun shoved under tables and into air vents (rather than eat the stuff), and a sterile environment cleaned by the regular application of caustic chemicals. The lights are too bright, the fans manage to suck out what passes for fresh air without actually removing the stench of centuries of electro-fried Hot Fun, and the seats seem to have been designed for the ease and comfort of invertebrates.

Most of the victims of the cafeteria are INFRARED and RED drones, but there is a scattered handful of higher-clearance citizens.

Entrance to the Cafeteria. Yuri and a squad of GREEN goons are lurking just down the corridor, waiting for the riot to start and the opportunity for them to swoop in and arrest all those luscious traitors. They are monitoring the cameras in the cafeteria, but will wait until the riot is in full swing before moving in.

Checkpoints. Placed just inside the entrance. At the first checkpoint, incoming citizens are scanned for signs of concealed weapons, explosives, bioweapons, Commie propaganda, illegal drugs and other illegal items. Their ME cards are scanned to ensure that they are permitted to use this cafeteria. The second checkpoint weighs each citizen as they pass through it, as well as collecting samples of their breath (and, occasionally, blood and DNA) to ensure that the citizen's consumption was within approved HPD&MC standards. A camera/laser array is mounted atop both checkpoints.

Food Stations. The cafeteria's food is provided by a dozen franchises, all lined up in food stations. Other than differences in advertising, where they compete to be as garish as possible, and wildly different and confusing special offers ('*OK, Yum-E-Yum SoyLike is offering a double-extra-standard size container of FunStix and a plus-sized Bouncy Bubbly*

What is your Bidding, O Master

Between leaving the abandoned transtube station and going to the cafeteria to start a riot, the Troubleshooter may wish to check in with their secret society contacts.

Anti-Mutant: Dirty mutie scum hide in crowds, to conceal their freak DNA. Make sure any mutants you encounter are exposed for what they are, so they can face the mob justice of the genetically pure.
Communists: Yuri-B is an especially dangerous threat to Communism. Discredit or terminate him if possible.
Computer Phreaks: Take this fake ME card. We think it'll automatically hack the credit machines in the commissary, giving you effectively infinite credits to buy food. Test it.
Corpore Metal: There's an important secret project going on in CRS Sector and we need to keep it quiet. We need you to keep IntSec busy by feeding them whatever false information you can.
Death Leopard: Woo! Riot! Make sure it spreads! Trash the whole sector!
FCCC-P: There's an important secret project going on in CRS Sector and we need to keep it quiet. Whatever you do, you have to convince IntSec that nothing out of the ordinary is going on here.
Frankenstein Destroyers: We've heard rumors that Pro Tech is testing a new type of filthy bot, designed to pass as human! Destroy it at all costs!
Free Enterprise: See, we've got 12,000 gallons of Omni-Sauce hidden in a secret location. We need you to ensure that the cafeteria's food supplies get destroyed in the riot, so we can sell it at a huge profit to starving clones! Profit!
Humanists: We need the Death Leopard sect to owe us a favor. Identify the Death Leopards that IntSec is looking for, then ensure they don't get captured.
Illuminati: We've discovered that your hygiene officer is a traitor. What do you mean, you're all hygiene officers? That's nonsense—according to computer records, there's only one hygiene officer in your group, and he's the traitor.
Mystics: Like, we're opening the doors of perception by adding stuff to the food in the CRS cafeteria.
Make sure no one, y'know, finds out. Or remembers if they do find out.
Pro Tech: There's an important secret project going on in CRS Sector and we need to keep it quiet. Whatever you do, you have to make sure that a citizen called Joe-FFC survives the riot!
Psion: One of our psychics is hidden in a safe house in CRS Sector. She was injured in an Anti-Mutant attack on us, and she's still very weak. Strong emotions could injure her! You have to stop the riot! Or at least ensure it's a very calm riot!
PURGE: Troubleshooters are The Computer's first line of defense. Use the chaos of the riot to terminate as much of the rest of the team as possible.
Romantics: There's an important secret project going on in CRS Sector. It's likely some of our agents are in the cafeteria! Find them and save them!
Sierra Club: We've heard that there's a secret route to the outside in CRS Sector. Find out any information you can about hidden exits!

Beverage, while LoyaltyTime gives a triple-standard size container of fun-size FunStix and a normal can of B3…that's 0.02% smaller than Yum-E-Yum's…') which regular diners have become adept at deciphering. Clones new to CRS Sector may find themselves unwittingly ordering, say, 50 portions of rancid Cold Fun if they pick the wrong offer. Remind the players that wasting food is treasonous, and that as Hygiene Officers, they also cannot make a mess.

There are eight franchises here.To the right of the entrance are *Yum-E-Yum SoyLike, Café-O-Service, Chuddies'* and *LoyaltyTime*; opposite the entrance are *Soylent RED Foodstand, All Kinds of Fun, Captain Nutrients* and *Chez Vatscrape*. If the Troubleshooters are foolish enough to actually eat at any of these, roll on the table below.

Food Preparation Centers and Storage. Situated to the left of the entrance to the commissary. As all the food served is actually grown/fermented/hatched in foodvats, the only preparation needed is heating the food and piping it through bulging plastic pipes to the various franchises.

The pipes hang from the ceiling of the cafeteria, oozing like curried intestines. A stray laser shot risks drowning the cafeteria in grease or Fun. Notably, extra doses of mood stabilizers and hormone inhibitors are added to the food here, from big chemical drums.

Seating, The centre of this vast room is packed with unfortunate citizens trying to choke down their meals. Most of these citizens are mere laser fodder, but there are a few citizens of interest described below. Large arrays of screens and cameras hang from the ceiling; the screens flicker between coverage of the local FunBall match (between Sectors CRS and CRV), official announcements of the glorious forward march of Alpha Complex and advertisements.

A: Romantics. Dan-R, Katya-R and Corwin-R, are all part of the Romantic secret society. Dan-R knows the location of the cryogen tubes where the Old Reckoning corpsicles are being stored (see page 16) and is attempting to brief Kayta-R and Corwin-R about their secret mission. However, since they know they are under surveillance by the minions of The Computer, Dan-R

must use a secret code. Specifically, he is building a scale map of the section of the Underplex where the cryogen tubes are out of his food. The SyntheVegBalls that represent

Generic Traitorous Citizen In The Cafeteria (Works for Dan-R, Katya-R, Woodrow-O, Other Citizens)
Management 6
    Bootlicking 10
Stealth 8
    High Alert 12
    Sneaking 12
Violence 4
    Energy Weapons 8
Hardware 8
    Some Type Of Engineering 12
Software 10
    C-Bay 14
Wetware 8
Mutant Power: Dan-R: Levitation (Power 7), Katya-R: Detect Mutant Power (Power 4), Corwin-R: Teleportation (Power 9), Woodrow-R: Matter Eater, (Power 5).
Secret Society Affiliation: Romantics (Dan-R, Katya-R, Corwin-R), Pro Tech (Woodrow-O)
Armor: None
Weapons: Improvised weapons like trays and stuff (S5W). Woodrow-O has a sonic pistol (S3W).

Random Food Related Disaster

1–2	Line of customers is not actually moving at all, ever. Changing lines may be a sign of impatience, impatience is a sign of unhappiness, happiness is mandatory. Why are you not content to wait, citizen? Are you late for your treasonous meeting with your Commie contacts?
3–4	Customer Survey. All in line are required to fill out a customer form. Unless the form is read extremely carefully (successful Management check), then the Troubleshooter fails to notice that he has just signed up to purchase a meal from the franchise every day for the rest of his life, and that the cost of the meal will automatically be deducted from his ME credit account.
5–6	The cans of B3 being served with this meal were accidentally shaken during transit, and are now explosive when opened.
7–8	The cashier gets every order wrong, but does his best to fix his mistakes. He gets the fixes wrong, too. He's just taken his regulation dose of happy pills, though, so he doesn't get upset about taking half an hour to serve one customer the wrong food.
9–10	As 7–8 above, but this cashier has not taken his medication, and is on the verge of a psychotic break if he's pushed too far by one more customer….
11–12	The cashier is a member of a secret society, and mistakes the Troubleshooter for his contact. He attempts to use his secret society greeting.
13–14	The food is poisonous—well, more poisonous than normal. Unless the Troubleshooter makes a successful Wetware check, he becomes violently and messily ill.
15–16	The Mystics are attempting to forcibly enlighten people by spiking the food with hallucinogenic drugs.
17–18	The Troubleshooter is served a high-clearance meal pack by mistake, containing a real apple!
19–20	Roll again and apply both catastrophes.

the tube keep getting buried beneath melting tunnels of Cold Fun. The three Romantics are incredibly paranoid about being discovered, but have only the length of their assigned lunch breaks to convey the vital secret of the cryotubes location. Therefore, if any of the three Romantics suspect they are being spied on, they immediately spill the tray with the carefully constructed food map, move somewhere else in the cafeteria, and start again.

B: Pro Techies with a Zombie. Woodrow-O-FFC is one of the Pro Tech techies working on the reanimation project, and he had a recent success—he has reanimated Joe-FFC, a clerk who used to work in Woodrow-O's office before a fatal misfiling. Joe-FFC is now a Mark I techno-zombie, one of the first

Techno Techno Techno Techno... Zombie

A fuller description of the techno-zombies is given on page 16. In short, the Mark I zombies are resuscitated corpses whose brains have pretty much dribbled out their ears thanks to the reanimation process. While still capable of basic motor functions like walking, speaking and eating brains, they're not very bright and tend to blindly follow orders unless distracted by the need to eat brains.

The perfected form of the techno-zombie, the Mark II, retains all of the intelligence and charm it had in life, coupled with a desire to eat brains. It's all because of their inability to regenerate neural matter or something.

Joe-FFC, Zombie
Management 1
Stealth 4
Violence 8
    Zombie Combat 14
Hardware 1
Software 1
Wetware 1
Mutant Power: Zombie Resilience (Power 10)
Secret Society Affiliation: Zombies
Armor: None
Weapons: None

successful Mark I's. Woodrow-O has brought Joe-FFC out in public to test the techno-zombie's ability to metabolize food. Poor Joe-FFC is now sitting in the cafeteria with a bowl of Fun in front of him, and feeling very confused and jumpy because of all the bright lights and inedible slime, and Woodrow-O's big juicy brain is now looking very tasty to him.

If Joe gets any more stressed, say by a riot starting, or people confusing him, then he will start trying to eat their brains. It's natural for a zombie to eat brains, don't blame the zombie.

C: Agent Guy-G-RTE-2. Guy-G is an up and coming young IntSec agent, the sort of square-jawed, forthright hero-of-the-Complex that The Computer would dearly like to mass-produce. Guy-G is operating using the same intelligence as Yuri-B—that this cafeteria is a breeding ground and a meeting place for terrorists and traitors. He is here to catch them in the act. He is wearing a RED jumpsuit as part of his cunning disguise. If Guy-G spots anyone trying to cause problems or sabotage

the orderliness of The Computer's food distribution, then he will react with lethal force. While Guy-G is technically on the same side as the Troubleshooters for this mission, he is quite likely to end up shooting them.

D: Registered Mutant. Sitting all on

Guy-G-RTE-2
Management 9
    Interrogation 13
    Bootlicking 13
Stealth 10
    Surveillance 14
    Disguise 14
Violence 10
    Energy Weapons 14
Hardware 6
Software 10
    Data Search 14
    Hacking 14
Wetware 10
    Pharmatherapy 14
    Suggestion 14
Mutant Power: Puppeteer (Power 13)
Secret Society Affiliation: Sierra Club
Armor: None
Weapons: Energy pistol (W3K)

his own is poor Alan-R-BCC, who had the courage and loyalty to admit that he is, in fact, a hideous mutant freak with a grievously flawed DNA structure. He's got the Electroshock mutation, but is too civic-minded to use it for personal gain. In fact, up until he discovered he was a mutant and registered it, Alan-R was one of the most loyal and honest citizens you could ever hope to meet. Now, several months of prejudice, hate and constantly being blamed for every error and problem have instilled a deep, burning hatred in Alan-R. If he sees any opportunity, any excuse, to cut loose with his power and hurt his tormentors, he will.

Alan-R-BCC
Management 8
    Bootlicking 12
Stealth 6
    Standing In Such A Way To Hide
    The Yellow Stripes 12
Violence 6
    Energy Weapons 10
Hardware 10
    Electronic Engineering 14
    Frying Systems With Electroshock
    16
Software 8
Wetware 8
Mutant Power: Electroshock (Power 16)
Secret Society Affiliation: Psion, as soon as he makes contact, dammit!
Armor: None
Weapons: None

I Predict (Within a Very Acceptable Margin of Error) A Riot

So, how do the Troubleshooters start a riot? Remember, the Death Leopard conspirators who are believed to be in the cafeteria aren't actually there, so if the Troubleshooters just start pushing people around and causing trouble, then no-one will immediately rise up and join in. They need to be more creative—or more destructive. A panicked riot is just as good as a

spate of violent vandalism, so just shouting 'fire' or blasting away with a laser might do the trick.

Some options include:

- Spreading rumors that incite violence ('*Commie mutant traitors are coming! Run for your lives!*' or '*the food's been tampered with! Commies are trying to poison us, and that guy in the corner is their agent!*')

- Tampering with the food. Adding a nice dose of Thymoglandin or another combat drug, or just fiddling with the morass of chemicals being mixed into the food could work.

- The techno-zombie and the poor registered mutant are obvious flashpoints for a riot. Just poke one of them with a stick until he explodes in electric death rays/ tries to eat your brain. Watch the panic spread.

- A more subtle option is to disable some or all of the cameras in the cafeteria, either through sabotage, a power cut or just shooting them. As soon as the surveillance is lifted, then all the citizens in the cafeteria might act on the petty grievances and hatred they've been keeping suppressed.

- There's a FunBall match going on between the local CRS Sector and their rivals in CRV Sector. Careful commenting on the match ('*Did you see that foul? You can't legally insert a FunBall Paddletube into that orifice during a passing forward triple playout during Red Phase!*') could incite violence from the more committed fans.

- Just sitting and talking with or listening to the citizens as they eat reveals the occasional whisper of discontent. Oh, it's not that they're not ecstatically wonderfully joyously HAPPY, friend citizen,

it's just that everyone knows that the workers in CRV sector have a Sector Efficiency Target that's 0.02% lower than here in CRS, but they get exactly the same pay. Why, those bastards have 0.02% more leisure time! Death to CRV Sector!!!

- On that note, this is a perfect time for a bit of propaganda. Stand on a table and shout '*Citizens! You have nothing to lose but your lunch trays!*'

So, Anyway, We Started This Riot...

However the Troubleshooters get around to starting the riot, it quickly explodes out of control. Some enterprising citizens climb up to the high-pressure pipes in the ceiling and tear them open, using the ensuing jets of boiling Hot Fun and chemical flavorings to smash the camera/ screen arrays. If they haven't already, the techno-zombie and the registered mutant start causing extra chaos. IntSec spy Guy-G-RTE initially tries to quell the riot, but is soon reduced to hiding behind the counter in *Café-O-Service* and firing wildly with his laser.

Regardless of how the riot started, the Troubleshooters will be menaced by wandering monsters, or wandering and bloodthirsty diners anyway. Some might even get so caught up in the violence and the maiming that they end up snacking on fellow citizens, especially if they see the zombie doing so.

Soon after the riot begins, Yuri-B's squad of GREEN goons charges toward the cafeteria, unfortunately arriving at the same time as an Armed Forces Riot Suppression Unit. There's a territorial squabble between the two groups; they barricade the doors while they argue over who has jurisdiction. If it is a violent but undirected civil disturbance, then the Armed Forces can go in; if it's a deliberate attempt by traitors to forment insurrection, it's IntSec's

problem. Eventually, they settle on getting a megaphone and asking the rioters if they're a disturbance or an insurrection. As the Troubleshooters will be arrested and punished by the Armed Forces if the Armed Forces come charging in, they want IntSec to get jurisdiction. If the Troubleshooters do not to anything, then the side with the bigger guns (Armed Forces) wins.

Eventually, either IntSec or the Armed Forces will put the riot down. The Troubleshooters are arrested and charged depending on what they were seen to do. If IntSec gets jurisdiction, then Yuri-B will protect the Troubleshooters from the consequences of their misdeeds, reducing all penalties by three steps on the Treason chart (see page 249 of the *PARANOIA* rulebook). If Armed Forces get hold of the Troubleshooters, then they suffer the full punishment, and Yuri-B takes custody of them *after* they are

punished. Ideally, the characters will get captured by the Armed Forces, then have to spin the events in the cafeteria and the riots they were responsible for in such a way that they escape with a lighter punishment.

Again, keep track of anyone killed during the riot—they will be showing up as techno-zombies later on.

Your Next Mission

After the riots and the ensuring brainscrubbing/terminations, Yuri-B (accompanied by his Vulture Trooper guards) collects the characters and brings them to an unused storage room. There, his cybernetic eye gleaming redly in the darkness, he tells the Troubleshooters that their mission for Internal Security is not yet complete. The Troubleshooters are to report to Myron-B-RDS-3, a bureaucrat inside the labyrinthine bureaucracy of PLC. Myron-B is in charge of an inquiry into the events at

the CDR Section cafeteria. He is also under suspicion of being involved with some sort of conspiracy to defraud CPU credit allocations to this sector. The Troubleshooters are ordered to report to this inquiry and give evidence, making themselves out to be heroic defenders of PLC property, clever and bold and creative, while still being morally flexible—in short, they must sell themselves as the perfect accomplices for Myron-B's plan, whatever it is. IntSec recently terminated several other candidates, so Myron is likely to be desperate and will recruit the Troubleshooters.

The PLC Official Inquiry into the Unruly Behavior And Ensuing Damage To PLC Property At CDR Sector Commissary takes place in another briefing room, all uncomfortable plastic seats and paperwork. Three bureaucrats, Myron-B (PLC), Sandra-B (HPD&MC) and Winston-V (CPU) are seated at the top of the room, surrounded by viewscreens that

endlessly repeat footage from the riot. Dozens of clerks list the damage inflicted by the riot in excruciating detail. Every broken spork and damaged floor tile has been itemized and photographed, and it is up to the Inquiry to determine if the damage was caused by normal wear and tear (in which case PLC is responsible for replacing it) or if it was damaged by the riot (in which case HPD&MC can be blamed for not keeping the citizens happy and docile, and they have to cover the costs of the repairs). It would all be stultifying boring if it were not for the constant sniping between Myron-B and Sandra-B. Winston-V maintains a godlike detachment from the whole inquiry—in other words,

he's dozing peacefully while the others argue.

Also present at the inquiry are IntSec Agent Guy-G, the cafeteria supervisor Frank-Y and 'innocent bystander'/ Romantic conspirator Kayta-R. The Troubleshooters are called upon to give their accounts of what happened in the riot, with especially reference to the following items:

- ⚇ 128 plastic lunch trays

- ⚇ Floor tiles numbers #534 to 611

- ⚇ Table 5

- ⚇ The life-size model of *Captain Nutrients*, last seen at the service counter of the same name

- ⚇ Twelve thousand gallons of Omni-Sauce, flavor 4.

If the characters can work any or all of those items into their accounts, pinning the blame squarely on the failings of HPD&MC, then they will impress Myron-B greatly. The other eyewitnesses—Guy-G, Frank-Y and Katya-R—will nitpick and argue with the Troubleshooters' version of events. Guy-G will imply that all the Troubleshooters (as well as everyone else in the cafeteria) was a Commie Mutant Traitor and should be shot; Frank-Y will just try to protect himself from termination by suggesting that everything that happened in the cafeteria was someone else's fault; Katya-R is there just to ensure that the Romantic plot was not discovered.

Regardless of what happens in the inquiry, the Troubleshooters will be ordered to report to Myron-B's office for a private debriefing afterwards....

▌ Introducing Myron-B

Myron-B is the major non-player character in the next section of the adventure, so let's get to know him. Thanks to his moderately high position within PLC, Myron-B can afford to eat well, and it shows. He's overweight, and is something of an epicure, using his secret society contacts to acquire real food and delicacies whenever possible (he's a member of Free Enterprise). Myron is jolly, affable, friendly and absolutely ruthless. He's been very successful so far in his career, but he's now getting lazy and careless, taking ever short short-cuts to victory. The sporks may be his downfall...

Myron-B-RDS-3
Management 14
    Con Games 18
    Moxie 18
    Oratory 18
Stealth 8
Violence 6
Hardware 10
    Habitat Engineering 14
Software 6
Wetware 12
    Suggestion 16
    Biosciences 16
    Food Industry Gossip 18
Mutant Power: Corrosion (Power 10)
Secret Society Affiliation: Free Enterprise
Armor: None
Weapons: None

3. The Sporks, They Call To Me

Consider, says Myron-B, the humble spork.

The Troubleshooters are in Myron-B's plush office. Framed citations for efficiency and quota attainment line the walls, as do framed photographs of former rivals of Myron-B being hauled away to the termination booths. Myron is trying to woo the Troubleshooters, so he plies them with fine foods, drugs and other bribes before getting into his pitch.

He shows them a spork. For those unaware of the delights of the spork, the spork is a plastic utensil that combines the qualities of the spoon and the fork. Spoon+fork=spork. All hail the marketing genius who came up with that. Disposable plastic sporks are used in every cafeteria in Alpha Complex. The sporks used are all virtually identical, but are provided by different competing service firms. As so many sporks are used by Alpha Complex, the rewards for getting the contract to provide the sporks are staggering.

Now, CRS and the surrounding sectors are all supplied by Complex Utensils, a major service firm that has been producing sporks for many years. If the contract could be taken, then Myron-B's fortune would be assured. The contract is up for bidding within a few daycycles, and Myron is determined to win it. He has just created a new service firm, Spork Supply, which has a tradition of producing quality plastic sporks dating back whole minutes. Spork Supply is going to win the contract out from under the nose of Complex Utensils. If the Troubleshooters help Myron-B and Spork Supply, then they will share in the immense profits. Myron-B then reaches into his desk and produces a second spork. He handles it gingerly, for this second spork is discolored and stained greeny-blue. Parts of it are crumbling, and it is obvious that putting any pressure whatsoever on the spork will break it. Myron-B is well aware of the condition of the spork, but puts a brave face on and presents it as the biggest breakthrough in Spork Technology since the development of the fourth tine. The chief difference between the sporks, Myron explains, is that the first spork costs 0.001 credits to produce, but the second spork costs…nothing. Nothing at all. In that 0.001 credit difference is the ultimate advantage of Spork Supply.

Myron is getting his sporks from a vast and ancient storage facility, buried deep beneath Alpha Complex, filled with various supplies, a bunker designed to provide for whole sectors during a prolonged nuclear war. While the bunker contains all sorts of things—including the cryogenic tubes that the Romantics intend to revive using the zombie technology—all Myron has recovered thus far is a pocket full of sporks and a dream of conquest.

If the Troubleshooters demand to know how Myron can obtain free sporks, then Myron will smile broadly and tell them that that information is not available at their security clearance, and that another team is taking care of the supply side of spork supply. He wants them for another purpose entirely—advertising!

The Dark Side of the Spork (Tension 3)

If Myron-B and Spork Supply are going to succeed, then they need to convince the PLC purchasers that their sporks are better than the Complex Utensils sporks. Complex Utensils are better on such prosaic and dull aspects like 'actual functionality as a spork' or 'not falling apart on touch', so Spork Supply needs an absolutely killer advertising pitch to win. The contract is not decided on price alone, but also on focus group happiness. The Troubleshooters need to come up with some way of selling useless sporks.

Although Myron-B won't tell the Troubleshooters exactly where he is getting his sporks from (that comes up later), it is obvious that the Spork Supply sporks are absolutely ancient, so old that the cheap plastic used in their manufacture is rotting. It's not a problem, though—it's a challenge!

The Troubleshooters need to come up with an advertising scheme that spins the following facts:

- Spork Supply Sporks don't actually work as sporks.

- They crumble when you pick them up.

- And that mold growing in them might be poisonous.

- Sporks are provided for free, therefore it makes absolutely no difference to the average clone-in-the-corridor how much the sporks cost.

- No one likes sporks anyway.

If they want to script little vidshows to sell their spin on sporks, let them. Skills like Suggestion can be used.

Let the Troubleshooters plot and scheme until they've come up with their initial pitch, then assign the pitch a score on each of the above five points, as follows:

-1: Actively works against the character's desired message.
0: The characters haven't even attempted to address this point in their pitch.
1: Eh, it's OK, but pedestrian. No inspiration, no flair, no chutzpah.
2: Clever! Funny! Convincing!
3: Your players are geniuses; write down all they say and sell it to real-world spork companies. Retire and live off the proceeds, moving to a tropical island and run *PARANOIA* for nubile girls in skimpy color-coded bikinis.

Add up the scores, giving you a total from –5 (oh, just shoot your players) to 15 (cheats!). This final result becomes a temporary **Spork Propaganda** skill for all of the Troubleshooters. This works just like a normal Propaganda skill, in that a successful Spork Propaganda skill check can give the target a rating in Spork Propaganda. It is up to the Troubleshooters to get enough Spork Propaganda to their victims—er, the general public to assure the ultimate victory of Spork Supply!

Once the Troubleshooters have come up with their plan, then they must convince a focus group of five randomly selected citizens from CRS Sector—move onto **Focus Group of the Damned**.

Intermission (Tension 3)

If the Troubleshooters are having trouble remembering exactly why they are involved with Myron-B, then have Yuri-B show up and be scary at them, and remind them that they are working for IntSec to bring down Myron-B and discover how he intends to defraud CPU. The Troubleshooters may also wish to contact their respective secret societies for new missions. If they don't wish, then their secret societies contact *them*.

Focus Group of the Damned (Tension 6)

The Troubleshooters need to convince five randomly selected citizens of the virtues of Spork Supply sporks. If you're feeling especially schizophrenic today, then you can play all the focus group members simultaneously, but it is probably easier to have them come in one at a time. The focus group takes place in a repurposed confession

What is your Bidding, O Master

Anti-Mutant: Mutants reveal their powers under stress and pressure, and what's better for providing stress and pressure than…a confession booth? Ensure that the spork testers are tested for mutation.
Communists: Spork Supply is rumored to be interfering with the Underplex, which is the one safe refuge from the hated capitalists and IntSec. Sabotage Spork Supply's plans at all costs!
Computer Phreaks: Yay! Download a copy of the confession booth's software so we can hak it omg yays!
Corpore Metal: An experimental CHASM-class robot got stolen from a laboratory. Recover it if possible.
Death Leopard: There's this clone, Ade-R-ADE, who's very influential in focus groups. We think he's got potential. Recruit him.
FCCC-P: The blessed wisdom of The Computer must be reinforced. We intend to carve inspiring messages onto every spork, thus spreading the electric gospel.

Ensure that the message 'Friend Computer Saves My Soul' is placed on the sample sporks shown to the test subjects.
Frankenstein Destroyers: There is a new bot design, the CHASM, which is designed to delve into the Underplex. The prototype must be destroyed! The bots must be stopped from taking over yet another section of Alpha Complex.
Free Enterprise: Find out where Spork Supply is getting its sporks, then pressure Myron-B into joining Free Enterprise.
Humanists: We need to foment dissent so we can rally the common citizen against The Computer's regime. Make sure that the spork situation is as unpleasant as possible. Ensure the worst spork wins.
Illuminati: Titus-I, the R&D director in CRS Sector, is up to something, and we don't know what. Bring us his brain.
Mystics: Hey, you know how you're a hygiene officer? See if any of the cleaning chemicals get you high.

Only, don't do it to yourself, 'cos some of them might be toxic. Use the other Troubleshooters instead.
Pro Tech: Some of our agents have placed a CHASM-class bot in the Underplex to protect a secret project. If you encounter it, make sure no one meddles with it.
Psion: Our psychics have detected the unmistakable signatures of pure strain humans in the Underplex. If The Computer's agents get their hands on the pure strain DNA, they could reset the clone banks and retard the evolution of humanity. Locate and destroy these pure strains.
PURGE: Titus-I is a threat to our operations in CRS Sector. Terminate him.
Romantics: Look, make sure no one enters the Underplex underneath CRS Sector. Seriously. We've got stuff down there we want to keep safe.
Sierra Club: Have you found that secret entrance to the outside yet?

booth (or booths, if you're running all five encounters at the same time), with the Troubleshooters watching through cameras and speaking through microphones from a control room nearby. The Troubleshooters have access to the full range of the confession booth's gadgets while running the tests, including:

- ❧ Voice stress analyzers and autonomic response probes.

- ❧ Brainwave monitors.

- ❧ Infrared cameras.

- ❧ Environmental controls, allowing them to adjust heat/humidity/oxygen content within the booth.

- ❧ Drug dispensers and injectors.

- ❧ Brainscrubbers.

- ❧ Disintegrator.

Obvious abuse of the booth's systems will be punished, but the Troubleshooters can play at being scary interrogators as much as they want. Note that citizens are paid ten credits for focus group participation.

At the end of each pitch, every one of the characters may make a Spork Propaganda check. Every successful check gives one point of Spork Propaganda to the focus group participant. Therefore, the focus group victims will be leaving this scene with a Spork Propaganda skill equal to or lower than the total number of Troubleshooters.

Use the generic traitor stats from page 6 for most of these citizens.

Joe-R-AGV-3 is your generic clone, with no real distinguishing features or tics. He's loyal to The Computer, in a bovine sort of way, and advanced in security clearance only by a lucky mischance. Consider Joe-R the baseline by which the Troubleshooters can calibrate their pitch. He doesn't care about sporks, and assumes that if The Computer's servants always picked Complex Utensils before, they'll probably do so again. Surely

The Computer didn't make a mistake all that time? If the Troubleshooters can convince him that Spork Supply sporks are a brave new step forward, he'll be easily convinced.

Next is **Tara-R-UDD-2**, a spy for Complex Utensils who have gotten word of the Spork Supply conspiracy. She'll pretend to be very interested in their ideas, asking all sorts of insightful, penetrating questions and trying to work out the weaknesses and failings, but more importantly the source of the mysterious sporks.

Third is **Ade-R-ADE-4**. Back when he was still on his first clone, he was deemed to be within 0.03% of the ideal average—just like Joe-R is now. Therefore, Ade-R got selected for focus group after focus group after focus group; while he has become jaded, cynical and predatory. Since his only function in Alpha Complex is now participating in focus groups, he deliberately tries to sabotage the groups he's part of, so they have to call him back again and again and pay him again and again. He has been in thousands of focus groups, so he knows all the pitches and all the tricks. (Specifically, he'll wire the brainwave monitors and autonomic response probes in the confession booth together, so they give no signal, and keeps an eye on the disintegrator to make sure the Troubleshooters don't zap him—he lost his last two clones that way.)

The fourth clone in the focus group is supposed to be **Ian-R-POR,** but he has been knocked out and stuffed into a storage locker down the corridor from the confession booth. Instead, the fourth clone is IntSec agent Guy-G in a disguise. Guy-G now suspects the Troubleshooters of being dangerous traitors (he knows nothing of Yuri-B's involvement with the mission, and would still suspect them even if he did—Guy-G considers Yuri-B to be a borderline renegade, and the power politics of IntSec are nightmarishly complex). Guy-G will pretend to be a dull RED, but his main focus is on learning more about the Troubleshooters and catching them out in some treasonous statement.

Finally, the fifth test subject is **Helene-O-JNS,** who's in Power Services. She was assigned to this focus group because she is currently on a lighter duty roster (and heavier course of medication) following a traumatic incident a few days ago in the Underplex. She was sent down to a service duct to repair a broken power line, and ended up wandering into the bunker that contains Myron-B's spork supply and the frozen Old Reckoners. She was attacked by a wandering zombie, who ate her entire team. The combination of blood-freezing terror and the happy drugs Helene was given after she made her way back to the Complex proper have blocked most of the memories of the attack. All she remembers is a dark, lurking terror—and sporks. So, when the Troubleshooters start their spork pitch, Helene reacts by screaming and gibbering. Feel free to go Lovecraftian here.

Once Helene-O has been convinced of the wonders of Spork Supply sporks (or has been dragged out screaming), then the effectiveness of their campaign is evaluated. The Computer will analyze the brainwave readings of the five test subjects, to determine how happy they are with the new sporks. Our glorious electronic friend announces '**Attention Spork Supply Employees. Your evaluation period is over. The Happiness Index of your Friendly Focus Group will now be analyzed and compared to that of the other bidders for Contract PLC/com/4433232/CD* Sectors. Thank you for your patience. Please Stand By. Processing….'**

In game terms, if the *combined* Spork Propaganda of the victims is greater than 10, then the Spork Supply sporks will be one step closer to being approved, and therefore one step closer to snatching the vital supply contract away from Complex Utensils! Of course, if the Troubleshooters have failed to get the subjects to Love The Sporks, then they had better improvise—immediately. Display screens show The Computer's slow accessing of the confession booth's records, so the Troubleshooters have a few minutes to act. They could fake

the records, leap into the confession booth themselves and really, really love the sporks, rewire the booth, or force the test subjects back in for a retrial. However they solve this, it will be utterly treasonous.

Once The Computer and the PLC Purchasing Committee are convinced that switching to Spork Supply sporks will not noticeably lower the Happiness Index of CRS Sector, Myron-B calls the Troubleshooters back to his office. There's a problem….

Into The Depths (Tension 7 until they reach the Underplex then Tension 0)

Myron-B explains that he—well, a Troubleshooter team investigating a 32nd Flavor Violation for PLC, who all conveniently died—located a lost storage bunker deep beneath Alpha Complex, containing millions, perhaps even billions, of sporks. These free sporks are the foundation of Spork Supply's fortunes. While the Troubleshooters were convincing people to love the sporks, other Spork Supply employees went down into the Underplex to recover more of the sporks. They haven't returned. Myron-B needs the Troubleshooters to go down into the storage bunker and bring back, oh, about 50,000 sporks immediately.

Failure, Glorious Failure (Tension 6)

If the Troubleshooters fail to convince the subjects of the virtues of Spork Supply sporks, then Myron-B is less than pleased. There is still a chance for them to salvage the contract, though—their rivals at Complex Utensils are about to do their focus group testing. If the Troubleshooters return to the testing area and sabotage the happiness index text, then perhaps Spork Supply still has a chance….

Complex Utensil's pitch can be summarized as '*Complex Utensil Sporks—Considered Adequate For Use In Alpha Complex Commissaries Since Year 164 Of The Computer. They're Sporky!*' It's staggeringly boring, as an accurate pitch ('we've been taken over by an apocalyptic cult made up of several secret societies who are dedicated to bring about the Easter Cycle of Zombie Doom, and we also make sporks') would be much more exciting in a treasonous sort of way.

Assuming the Troubleshooters manage to sabotage the Complex Utensils pitch enough to keep Spork Supply in the running, move onto the next scene.

Myron-B has a map that leads to the bunker, sketched by the last survivor of the previous Troubleshooter team. The bunker is located directly beneath the CRS Sector nuclear reactor—a fact that will become important later on.

The Troubleshooters get to the starting point of #1 by being lowered down a very, very deep shaft. The shaft is midway along the CRS-CDQ sector tube line, in the very middle of the magnetic track. Trains pass by every two minutes. Myron-B provides the Troubleshooters with a winch and pulley mechanism that attaches to the very top of the shaft, and so is unaffected by passing trains. Troubleshooters not in the shaft, or in niches along the side of the tunnel, will be splattered when a train zooms down the tube. It takes 45 seconds to lower a Troubleshooter down the shaft, and someone has to stay at the bottom or top of the shaft to run the mechanism. Since all the Troubleshooters trust each other, this will not cause any problems whatsoever.

1. The shaft down to the Underplex ends in a pumping station. A sign on the door reads AIR EXCHAGE #322—DO NOT OPEN IF EXT. RAD > 200.' Massive but silent machines line the walls of the room, dating back to a time before Alpha Complex was

SPORKLAND!!!

ENDLESS CORRIDOR

DO NOT ENTER

MONSTER?

BOTTOMLESS PIT
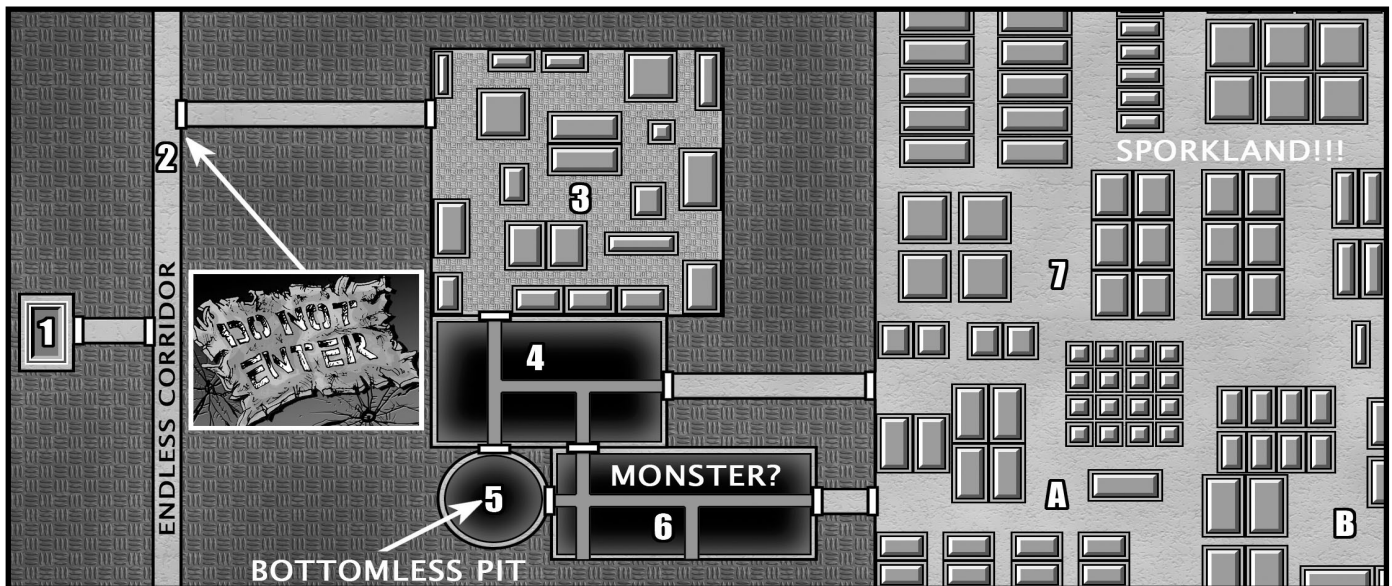
built. Once, these were waiting for nuclear war, for replenishing the air in the bunker complex beyond. Now, they're buried beneath uncounted levels of corridor and briefing room, architected by an idiot machine.

2. This corridor is marked on the map as being 'endless' and it certainly seems to be. It stretches off into the darkness in either direction. The corridor is lined with identical doors, all neatly numbered. The remains of a sign reading 'DO NOT ENTER' lie on the ground—it's been lasered into bits, and the Troubleshooters cannot tell which door it once hung from. That said, it's not too hard to work out which door leads to the next corridor, as it is the only one that isn't locked. If the Troubleshooters open any of the other doors, or explore the corridors, then they're bravely going off the track of this adventure, and you're pretty much on your own (or at least, you're best served by grabbing a copy of the *Underplex* sourcebook and rapidly coming up with either a new plot or a way to chase the characters back to here. We could have avoided this whole problem by not including an alluring corridor going off into the trackless depths of Alpha Complex, but sometimes you want to hint at vast and ancient labyrinths of the night, of decaying machinery waiting for an apocalypse that never came.) Some ideas for encounters:

☞ Another door opens onto a spiral staircase, going up. There's a deep thrumming noise coming from far above, and the air feels strangely warm and…prickly. This is a back door to the nuclear reactor far above. They'll be back this way later…(see *Paranoia of the Dead*, page 25).

☞ Beyond one door, there's an office, lined with yellowing papers and three-ring binders. A corpse sits behind the desk, dressed in a uniform that might look like a really old-fashioned ancestor of the common Alpha Complex jumpsuit. He or she obviously committed suicide with the antique sidearm still clutched in the corpse's bony hand.

☞ Another door hides another office; here, the Troubleshooters find an antique computer (small c) which, if reactivated, can give a partial list of the contents of the bunker. Along with the 'Multipurpose Cutlery Packs (1,250,000)', there's also 'Cryogenic Tubes (200)', 'Biochem Survival Suits (8,000)', 'Morally Uplifting Entertainment (50,000)', 'Universal Religious Texts (10,000)', 'Historical Relics (1)', 'Synthetic Burger Patties (10,000,000)' and most intriguingly of all, 'WMD (4)'.

☞ Another door in the corridor leads to a dusty and abandoned briefing room. There's a monitor at one end playing part of an old recording, but the disc is so scratched that only a few seconds of the video plays. A stern-faced man in a uniform says '—*main vigilant, maintain security, and keep your survival gear rea*—'. Over and over and over.

☞ If the characters keep exploring the corridor, then they will find more empty barracks, vast pumping stations and air-recyclers, hydroponics bays that have turned into jungles, and huge empty missile silos. And probably mutants and stuff, who chase them back to the plot. Anyway, back to the plot.

3. This room is filled with large crates, containing various engine components and spare parts.

The Corpore Metal part of Project Reanimator was persuaded to contribute to the defense of the project. The Romantics are slowly defrosting and zombifying the cryogenically preserved Old Reckoners down the corridor, so they wanted to make sure that their efforts went undisturbed. When the team sent down by Myron-B to recover the sporks ran into Project Reanimator, it was decided that the bunker needed protection immediately. Corpore Metal sympathizers therefore 'borrowed' a small tunnel-warfare warbot from an Armed Forces laboratory. The bot, Confined/Hostile Area Security

Measure, Mark I (CHASM Mk. I) was stolen from the lab before its bot brain had been uploaded with the normal basic orientation package. It was activated for the very first time only a few hours ago. CHASM was programmed to prevent anyone from entering room #4, and it is desperately trying to find *meaning*.

Now, poor CHASM is a smart little bot, but it has had to come up with a working model of the universe based on the orders '*Don't leave this room, and don't let anyone else go past you.*' It's having a little electronic existential crisis, where it wonders if there is anything else beyond the room it knows, and if '*anyone else*' actually means other individuals (it's never encountered another individual before the Troubleshooters arrive) or if it is something deeper, an admonition to ensure that it achieves total integration of its consciousness. When the Troubleshooters enter this room, CHASM starts following and observing them, but it will question them as to the meaning of life and purpose of existence before it starts blasting them. Play CHASM as a precocious, overly serious, earnest and irritating teenager, who has just discovered the basics of philosophy and is now going to annoy everyone around it with questions about solipsism and the meaning of life.

The Troubleshooters may be able to bluff their way past the troubled bot by engaging it in philosophical debate ('Yes, they told you to shoot anyone

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C.H.A.S.M.
Management 4
    Philosophy 10
Stealth 4
    Surveillance 8
Violence 14
    Agility 18
    Energy Weapons 18
    Field Weapons 18
Hardware 10
    Habitat Engineering 14
    Sonic Scanners 16
Software 4
Wetware 4
Armor: 4
Weapons: Laser rifle (W3K), flamethrower (S3K)

who tries to get past you, but are you sure what "shoot" actually means?'), or at least confuse it enough to run past. CHASM will not leave this room (unless the Troubleshooters break down the bot's perception of reality to such a degree that it can no longer tell what a room is).

4. Rooms #4, #5 and #6 are all narrow walkways, hanging over a deep black pit. A mechanical sound, like the rumbling of some titanic engine, echoes up from the darkness below. The walls of the chasm are lined with concrete. The three rooms here at the top of the pit are divided by metal walls.

The walkway leading from this room to the main bunker (#7) has been cut, quite recently, using a laser cutting torch (by Project Reanimator minions, who retreated this way after deploying CHASM). It might be possible to jump across the gulf, but it's a safer option to keep going onto #6.

5. Technically, rooms #4 and #6 are also bottomless pits, but they at least have narrow walkways running from door to door. There is a door leading into #5 from both #4 and #6, but on the other side of the door is nothing but a very, very big drop.

6. According to the annotations on the sketch map, room #6 has a monster in it. The only 'monster' here is a huge machine, located in the shaft far below this room. Whatever the purpose of the machine was, it has been forgotten for centuries. The machine is still active, however, doing whatever it was supposed to do despite the rust and mold covering it. Every few minutes, some titanic gear moves and the machine lets out a nightmarish groaning noise that echoes up the shaft like the growling of some horrific beast. Conveniently, these irregular grinds and moans coincide *exactly* with breaks and pauses in the Troubleshooters' conversation, happening whenever would seem most intimidating.

Troubleshooter #1: Don't be an idiot! There's no such thing as monsters. **GRAAAAUGGGGHHHHH!**

Troubleshooter #2: What was *that* then?
Troubleshooter #1: Er. An echo.
Troubleshooter #2: The echo of you saying 'monsters' sounds like that?
Troubleshooter #1: Yes. Yes it does.
Troubleshooter #2: Say monsters then.
Troubleshooter #1: (whispers) Monsters.
Troubleshooter #2: You only whispered that!
Troubleshooter #1: Fine! Fine! MONSTERS!
Troubleshooter #2: ….
Troubleshooter #1: Well, it's not an echo. But nothing else happened, so I advocate we ignore that noise we didn't hear and mo—
GRAAAAUGGGGHHHHH!
Troubleshooter #2: You want to move on? Go right ahead. You go through the door first.

There's absolutely nothing dangerous here, although the walkway over the pit is a bit rickety.

7. This is the storage bunker. It is a cavernous chamber, stretching off into the darkness. Crates are everywhere, stacked in neat rows. They are all labeled with a cryptic notation of numbers and letters, and can contain anything. Think of the warehouse from the end of *Raiders of the Lost Ark* crossed with a 50's nuclear bunker.

Shortly before the Troubleshooters arrived in the bunker, a team from Project: Reanimator came down to the bunker to test the latest version of the techno-zombie technology, a necessary stepping stone on the path to full re-animation. The techno-zombies turned on them and ate them. The clones of the Reanimator team are now heading back down to the bunker, carrying considerably more firepower this time. However, until they arrive, the Troubleshooters are in the bunker with a pack of brain-hungry Mark I techno-zombies.

A: Stacked in this corner are dozens and dozens of cryogenic tubes, covered in ice and beads of moisture. About two-thirds of the

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Mark I Techno Zombies

The Mark Is are almost mindless killing machines, capable of doing little more than stumble around, moan '*braaaaainnns*' and eat people. They're only slightly dumber than the average drugged-out INFRARED, although a lot more violent.

All Mark Is have their Management, Hardware, Software and Wetware scores reduced to 1, and lose any specialties in those scores. Their Stealth scores are halved. Their Violence is unchanged, and they gain the Narrow specialty of 'Zombie Combat'. This works just like Unarmed Combat, but is limited to just clawing at people, ripping off heads and battering at barriers.

Mark Is lose their mutant powers, but gain the Zombie Resilience power instead. This power has two effects. Firstly, it can be used just like a lower-level form of the Adrenaline Control mutation, making the zombies strong enough to smash through doors and rend bodies limb from limb. Secondly, Zombie Resilience acts like a form of armor. If the zombie is injured, make a Zombie Resilience roll. For every four points in the margin of success, reduce the damage by one step.

Management 1
Stealth 4
Violence 8
    Zombie Combat 14
Hardware 1
Software 1
Wetware 1
Mutant Power: Zombie Resilience (Power 10)
Secret Society Affiliation: Zombies
Armor: None
Weapons: None

tubes contain frozen people, dressed in strangely old-fashioned jumpsuits with expressions of alarm and terror on their faces. Several tubes have been recently opened. Lying toppled in the middle of the floor is a strange contraption, which looks like a cross between a wheelchair, a docbot, a MemoMax machine and some sort of torture device designed by the inbred offspring of a conference of sadistic

drug-crazed dentists who were lost on a deserted island for generations, with nothing to do save conceive both more dentists and more fiendish ways of removing plaque. Several push-carts of cybernetic devices and surgical tools lie scattered around it. This is the Mark I Reanimator, which produces Mark I techno-zombies.

Reanimator Technology

The techno-zombies are animated using a cocktail of drugs and other chemicals, coupled with a jolt of electricity (why meddle with the classic solution?). The core of the Reanimator device, then, is a two-foot long needle that crackles with electricity. If the target body is too badly damaged, then cybernetic replacement parts are attached to get the corpse ready for reanimation. In game terms, then, the basic Reanimator can reanimate a Dead citizen; if the citizen was Maimed first, then a more elaborate procedure involving cybernetics is needed. The dumb Mark I zombies can instinctively jam a Reanimator needle into a corpse; smarter Mark IIs are needed if cybernetics have to be used.

Note that with the implantation of a very simple computer chip, a corpse whose brain has been removed and devoured can be reanimated as a Mark I…

Also here are the corpses of the six Reanimator technicians. Careful examination reveals that they were all murdered by having their skulls cracked open and their brains removed.

B: All the sporks you could ever want.

When the Troubleshooters explore the storeroom, the zombies will attack at some point. The techno-zombies want the Troubleshooters' brains, and will hunt them all over the bunker and the connecting tunnels. Use every zombie movie cliché you can think of as the techno-zombie horde stalk the Troubleshooters. Pick them off one by one as the Troubleshooters struggle to barricade themselves in a safe corner, or fight to reach their escape

route. Have the stragglers, the slow-footed and the slow-witted torn apart by ravening zombies. Have zombies burst in through some back door. Make sure someone gets bitten—the techno-zombies don't spread their curse through biting, but it'll still make the players paranoid. Let some zombie get dismembered, then have the various bits continue to crawl after the Troubleshooters. The Type Is are remarkably resistant to laser fire, because of their undead nature and still-icy flesh.

Let the Troubleshooters run until it seems as if they are all totally, completely, inescapably doomed—then the replacement Project Reanimator technicians turn up, eager to avenge the deaths of their former selves with flamethrowers and very big guns. In fairly short order, they blast the faulty techno-zombies away, and will do the same to any Troubleshooters who resist. The characters are rounded up and marched through another anonymous door and a maze of corridors, until they arrive at a large elevator—which brings the Troubleshooters into the very heart of Project Reanimator.

Hi, We're The Replacement Reanimators

The Project Reanimator team is led by Gregor-Y-CGS-3, who has a vivid memory of recently being eaten by a horde of ravenous techno-zombies and is not happy about it. Their new mission is to disable the active techno-zombies by shooting their legs off—the techno-zombies can be refitted with cybernetic parts easily. If the occasional stray shot takes a zombie's head off, or punctures a Troubleshooter, they're not too concerned.

If They Shoot Their Way Out...

If the Troubleshooters somehow escape both the Mark I techno-zombies *and* the clones of the Project Reanimator hit squad, then they can escape back to Spork Supply and Myron-B. Myron will then send the team to break into Complex Utensils' warehouse to sabotage their spork supply, which with a bit of judicious railroading can lead into moving on to chapter four. Ah, players—they're so damn *cute* when they think they have freedom of choice.

Gregor-Y-CGS and his Team
Management 8
    Intimidation 12
Stealth 12
    Sneaking 16
Violence 10
    Energy Weapons 14
Hardware 8
Software 10
Wetware 12
    Medical 16
    Sticking Reanimator Chemicals into Frozen Corpses 18
Mutant Power: Nothing worth mentioning (Power 10)
Secret Society Affiliation: Project Reanimator (mostly Pro Tech or Romantics)
Armor: Reflec (E1)
Weapons: Laser pistol (W3K) and slugthrowers (W3K)

4. It's Alive

The elevator brings the Troubleshooters into the heart of Complex Utensils, PLC.

There are few sporks here; Complex Utensils is much more about raising the dead than handy multipurpose cutlery. There are, however, plenty of high-tech gadgets, medical scanners, bubbling vats of chemicals, disembodied brains, cybernetic parts and other non-spork, pro-necromancy devices scattered around the cathedral-like space. In the light shed by the occasional arc of electricity, the Troubleshooters can see dozens of other citizens. Some are wearing jump suits, others lab coats, others ornate robes with embroidered circuitry platforms. Still others have bot bits.

Alarmingly, there are large cages standing near the elevator. These cages contain ravening Mark I techno-zombies. Observant Troubleshooters notice a familiar face among the pallid horde of brain-hungry monsters—Vernon-DFD-1, the poor citizen zapped at the very start of this adventure (see page 3). (If *lots* of Troubleshooters got killed earlier in the scenario, then feel free to throw a few into the cages as Mark Is too, but make sure to keep most of the dead back for resurrection as Type IIs in a few minutes….)

Project Reanimator is an ungainly alliance of four different secret societies. The leaders of the secret society cells here in CDR Sector form the ruling council of Project Reanimator—at least, they do until they start getting replaced by zombie versions of themselves. The Mark II techno-zombies behave similarly to their pre-death selves, but are more loyal to each other than are the originals.

As Is Traditional, I Shall Now Explain My Plan In Devilish Detail Before Executing You

The leader of the Project Reanimator team, Gregor-Y stands forward proudly and informs the assembled conspirators that he captured the Troubleshooters in the Underplex bunker, where they—no doubt acting under the orders of the dark forces arrayed against Project Reanimator*—were attempting to sabotage the final Mark I tests. Gregor-Y further suggests that the intruders be thrown into the zombie cages for 'neural matter recycling'—i.e., braaaainns.

* Apart from a few particular clever IntSec agents (like Yuri-B), Project Reanimator has gone unnoticed by the majority of Alpha Complex's departments, conspiracies, societies, spies, counter-spies, informers and so on. Despite this, the Reanimators are convinced that dark and sinister forces are conspiring against them, and that Armed Forces warbots will be smashing down the doors of Complex Utensils any daycycle now. Paranoia—it's not just for Troubleshooters anymore.

With an imperious gesture, Titus-I-5 rejects Gregor-Y's suggestion, saying '*nonsense! It is too late for anyone to stop us!*' and instead bounds up to a platform at the top of the room. There is a large machine, similar to the Mark I Reanimator device the Troubleshooters encountered in the Underplex, on the platform, wrapped around another cryogenic tube. Titus switches the machine on, and the assembled Reanimators gasp. Titus-I shushes them, then declaims:

Friends! Citizens! Partners in this great enterprise! The glory of the Easter Cycle is upon us! In accordance with the ancient prophecies from the Times Before, the day when the dead rise and give chocolate ovoids and presents and joy and happiness to all is at hand! Through the miracle of our science, we have fulfilled the prophecies! Now, the dead rise!

He presses another button on the Reanimator machine. Mists billow as the cryo-tube containing the corpse of Titus-I-4 is cracked open and the machine goes to work. There's a whirring of blades and the hiss of seared flesh as the corpse is filleted, injected with alarmingly-colored liquids, augmented with cybernetic bits and jump-started with a huge blast of electricity. Titus-I-5, never one to miss a classic line, shouts '*It's alllllive!*' when he sees his former clone body twitch and move.

The reanimated Titus-I-4 rises from the grave. The Troubleshooters catch a brief glimpse of his face, just long enough to realize that the reanimated zombie is almost identical to Titus-I-5. Then, the zombie Titus-I-4 lunges at Titus-I-5 and pulls him down; the two vanish into the mists, and the sounds of the Reanimator machine starting up again can clearly be heard.

Then, the zombie cages open (the newly zombified Titus-I-4 just grabbed a remote control from his clone successor), and chaos ensues.

Cruel, Cruel Hubris (Still Tension 0!)

Gregor-G is the first to die as the Mark I techno-zombies swarm out of their cages and attack the crowd. The reactions of the crowd vary—while some of the FCCCPers and Romantics welcome the zombies, believing this to be the Easter Cycle, others do the sensible thing and run for their lives, or open up with laser fire. The Troubleshooters have a chance to escape now, if they wish. They will be pursued by both ravenous zombies and Project Reanimator security forces, and run into the security forces who soon get deployed to deal with the growing crisis.

The zombies spill out of the Complex Utensils factory and into the corridors and offices of CRS sector. It's mass panic as the zombies maim and kill everyone in their path. The Reanimator machines run constantly, converting the fallen into more Mark Is and Mark IIs. Within a few minutes of the initial

Project Reanimator—Who's Who

Titus-I-RYW-5 (FCCP>Zombies): Titus-I is a rising star in CPU administration here in CDR Sector. His promotion to ULTRAVIOLET is virtually certain, and he has the ear of the sector administrators. A committed believer in the fabled Easter Cycle, when the dead will rise, and sees himself as a prophesied prophet of The Computer's glorious heaven on Earth, when the unfaithful will be purged with holy lasers. Play him as a compelling cult leader—in both human and zombie forms.

Management 12
    Chuzpah 16
    Oratory 16
Stealth 10
    Standing Behind Minions When People Start Firing 16
Violence 10
    Zombie Combat 16
    Energy Weapons 14
Hardware 8
Software 14
    Hacking 18
Wetware 10
    Medical 14
    Cloning 14
Mutant Powers: Zombie Resilience, Telekinesis (Power 10)
Secret Society Affiliation: FFCP>Zombies
Armor: Indigo reflec (E1)
Weapons: Blaster (M3K)

Titus-I-RYW-4 (Zombies): The first Mark II techno-zombie created by Project Reanimator is—Titus-I's previous clone self. The act of raising his past self plays into the FCCCP prophecies about the Easter Cycle, so it's all part of a diabolical plan—a plan that Titus-I-4 has no interest in. Titus-I-4 has an entirely different diabolical plan—taking over the sector with an army of zombies and becoming the undead ruler of all of Alpha Complex.

Management 12
    Chuzpah 16
    Oratory 16
Stealth 10
    Ambushing Himself When Resurrected From The Dead 16
Violence 10
    Zombie Combat 16

Energy Weapons 14
Hardware 8
Software 14
    Hacking 18
Wetware 10
    Medical 14
    Cloning 14
Mutant Powers: Zombie Resilience, Empathy (Power 10)
Secret Society Affiliation: Zombies
Armor: None
Weapons: None

Sax-G-WST-3 (Pro Tech): Pale, nervous, and pathologically callous toward everything, Sax-G is a classic mad scientist without the showiness. Far more interested in solving the problem of re-animation than reanimating anything. He really does not care for Alpha Complex being overrun by zombies and is a potential ally for the Troubleshooters when the zombie take-over begins.

Management 6
Stealth 4
    So Dull People Ignore Him 10
Violence 6
    Field Weapons 10
Hardware 8
    Chemical Engineering 12
Software 8
    Hacking 12
    Data Analysis 12
Wetware 10
    Medical 14
    Cloning 14
    Raising the Dead 16
    Bioweapons 14
Mutant Powers: Energy Field (Power 12)
Secret Society Affiliation: Pro Tech
Armor: Green reflec (E1).
Weapons: Experimental chemical spray (Field Weapons, O2K)

Ann-G-CDR-4 (Romantics): A long-term Romantics member, employed in the HPD&MC archives, purging references to ancient times as Alpha Complex history is re-written. She has managed to save much of the excised data, which led her to the hidden storage bunker in the Underplex. An idealist who believes that the reanimated Old Reckoners will lead Alpha Complex into an enlightened era of peace, joy

and classic cinema. She's going to get eaten first.

Management 8
    Moxie 12
    Interrogation 12
Stealth 8
    Sneaking 12
Violence 6
Hardware 4
    Bot Ops 8
Software 7
Wetware 6
    Suggestion 10
Mutant Powers: Charm (Power 12)
Secret Society Affiliation: Romantics
Armor: Green reflec (E1)
Weapons: None

Harold-Y-FOS-2 (Corpore Metal): Harold-Y's in Power Services, and he's a bitter clone. He was blown up when a bomb took out the tunnel he was working in, and blames IntSec and the regime it props up for his injuries. He's studded with cybernetic replacements for missing limbs and damaged organs. He intends to use an army of Mark I techno-zombies to wipe away IntSec and The Computer's other fallible organic servants (The Computer is perfect; all the injustices, problems and painful exploding tunnels of Alpha Complex stem from the fallibility and treason of organics). He has no intention of letting the zombies take over, which is where his zombocalpyse differs from those of Titus-I-4 or Titus-I-5.

Management 4
    Complaining About Everything Under The Sun, Ever 10
Stealth 10
    Sneaking 14
Violence 12
Hardware 14
    Habitat Engineering 18
    Nuclear Engineering 18
Software 6
Wetware 6
    Biosciences 10
Mutant Powers: Slippery Skin (Power 15)
Secret Society Affiliation: Corpore Metal
Armor: Yellow reflec (E1)
Weapons: Laser pistol (W3K)

Mark II Techno-Zombies

Unlike the near-mindless Mark Is, Mark II techno-zombies retain all of their intelligence. In fact, since they don't have any emotions other than megalomania and a hunger for brains, they are considerably clearer thinkers in death than they were in life. Depending on how a Mark II died, it might look like a mangled cyborg or a perfectly ordinary (if rather pale) citizen. Like the Mark Is, the Mark IIs need to eat human neural matter on a regular basis to ensure their own brains don't degenerate.

Mark IIs get to keep their old scores and specializations, as well as gaining the Zombie Violence narrow specialty. They also get the Zombie Resilience mutation, while keeping any existing mutations. Their loyalty automatically changes to that of the Zombies.

If a Mark II does not eat at least one brain per day, his intelligence starts to degrade. He loses one point from Management and all Knowledge skills each day. Eating an extra brain in a day restores one point of lost ability. For example, if Titus-I did not eat any brains for a while weekcycle, he would lose seven points from Management and all Knowledges. However, if he then ate four brains on the following Twosday, he would regain three points of lost ability.

The Zombies

Since Mark II techno-zombies can pass for living citizens, and have their own secret conspiracy to take over Alpha Complex, they basically count as a secret society. If the Zombies survive this scenario, then they may show up in your future *PARANOIA* scenarios. Here are the Zombies, presented in the standard secret society format.

Beliefs: The Zombies want to take over all of Alpha Complex and convert as many high-clearance citizens as possible into zombies. Zombie citizens are untiring, unsleeping, immortal and unfailingly loyal. They also want a ready supply of brains, which the INFRARED population can easily provide. Mmm…brains.

Propaganda: See *Zombies Are Citizens Too!*, below.

Recruitment: Step One—identify potential candidate for zombification. Step Two—kill the candidate. Step Three—put candidate into Reanimator machine.

Initiation: New zombies are instantly loyal to the Zombie cause—it's a side effect of the zombification process. Therefore, no initiation rites or tasks are needed. Once a zombie, always a Zombie.

Codenames: The Zombies do not use codenames.

History: Er. Read this scenario? In years to come, of course, the zombies will rewrite their history to something more dignified. Probably something borrowed from the Romantics, about how the First Zombie was Mike-U-BCE or Caine or someone, reanimated to secretly serve Alpha Complex from beyond the grave.

Structure: The Zombies are loosely organized in a pyramid scheme—the zombie who made you is your superior in the society. Thus, Titus-I-4 is the Master Zombie, followed by Titus-I-5, followed by the other Mark II techno-zombies. The Mark I techno-zombies are technically part of the society, but are looked down on by the sentient Mark IIs as dumb hick cousins who really just embarrass them and make a mess at parties (but are handy when you want a ravening mob of killing machines).

Attitudes: Are you alive? Then you're food—unless you're someone important or smart, in which making you into a techno-zombie would be better for the long-term procurement of brains. The Zombies see little value in bots, as anything a bot can do, a Mark I drone can do too).

The Zombies' long-term attitude to The Computer is in flux—some believe that they have no need of it, given they'll soon have the perfect society (Zombies on top, INFRAREDs in brain farms, Mark I drone zombies do all the work after having their brains eaten).

Sub-factions: None.

Advancement: Making more zombies.

Duties: Making more zombies.

Benefits: Brains. Being part of the techno-zombie ruling class when the Zombies finally take over. More brains.

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attack, the alarm is raised. The CRS Sector media starts showing regular crisis bulletins. A dozen contradictory emergency procedures are initiated by different service groups and factions. The Power Services cut the power to the afflicted parts of the sector, which results in most of the Armed Forces security teams being trapped in shut-down transbots. CPU orders all citizens to report to emergency shelters, HPD&MC urges everyone to stay in their quarters, IntSec demands a curfew, while

PLC urges everyone to purchase emergency preparedness kits, bottled water, duct tape and zombie-proof plastic sheeting.

Within two hours of the resurrection of Titus-I-4, The Computer gets the electronic equivalent of a migraine from the growing crisis in CRS Sector, and shuts off the afflicted part of the sector, disconnecting the local CompNode from the network and closing internal blast doors. The Troubleshooters and thousands of

other citizens find themselves trapped inside a zombie quarantine zone.

What do the Troubleshooters do?

Get Captured By The Zombies: Well, this is eventually going to happen regardless of what the Troubleshooters do. See *Zombies Are Citizens Too*, below.

Flee Back To Myron-B: Initially, Myron-B is unconcerned with the zombie invasion—security will take

Enter The Zombie (Tension Varies, But Probably Around 10)

From this point on in the scenario, you can start bringing in resurrected zombie versions of the Troubleshooters. They can show up as antagonists (*'OK, Bob-R-4, you turn the corner and see a Ravening Horde of Zombies™, led by…Bob-R-3! Shock! Horror! Sanity check!'*) but a much more insidious solution is to have them show up pretending to be the clone replacements for themselves. This generally only works if the Troubleshooter died in a non-messy fashion, but depending on how unobservant the players are, you might be able to sneak the cybernetic undead monstrosity past them.

Brief the zombie player on the nature of the Mark II techno-zombies (resurrected cyborgs; need brains on a regular basis; unemotional) and what they should be trying to do (get the Troubleshooters captured so you can move onto the next section; eat brains; convert more people to zombies).

care of any civil disturbances—and is more concerned with the revelation that his rival, Complex Utensils, is actually a cover for a diabolical plot to raise the dead. After all, if Complex Utensils are focusing on necromancy instead of sporks, then the contract is as good as won for Spork Supply. He urges the Troubleshooters to fight their way through the war-torn corridors of CRS Sector to the CPU Sector Co-Ordination and Budgeting Offices, where they should give their evidence to CPU administrator…. Titus-I-5. By the time the Troubleshooters reach the CPU offices, the Tituses have already taken them over and are using them as a base of operations.

Flee To Yuri-B: The Troubleshooters will be unable to find Yuri-B at this stage in the scenario. The canny old IntSec agent has gone into hiding, and will show up again later, in *Paranoia of the Dead* (see page 25).

Stand And Fight: Especially heroic, stupid Troubleshooters may try to stop the advance of the zombie horde. As the Armed Forces armed forces are stuck in shut-down transtubes, IntSec

officer Guy-G is among those leading the fight against the undead. Small groups of brave citizens are taking to the corridors all over CRS Sector, using whatever weapons they have to hand. In some places, loyal defenders of Alpha Complex are trying and failing to stop Mark I techno-zombies by hitting them with FunBall bats and loyalty placards, while in others, wave upon wave of zombies are getting blown up by illegally-owned cone rifles and lasers.

Still, fighting against the zombie horde becomes futile when the Mark IIs join the fight and start reanimating fallen Mark Is. With CRS Sector cut off from reinforcements, the zombies cannot be stopped.

Ask The Computer What To Do: Throwing oneself on the mercy and wisdom of all-knowing Friend Computer is a time-honored tradition in Alpha Complex when the unreprocessed biological waste has forcefully intersected with the operating space of the ventilation system air motor. The trouble is that everyone else in the afflicted area

of CRS Sector has had exactly the same idea. Between thousands of panicked citizens asking for help, and the billions of alarms/ orders/countermeasures/emergency protocols and other crisis-related traffic, the poor Computer suffers a breakdown and isolates CRS Sector from the rest of the complex. The local CompNode sees which way the wind is blowing, and throws its lot in with the zombies. Therefore, the response the Troubleshooters get from Friend Computer varies depending on when they beg for its electronic wisdom.

Early in the crisis:
NO ONE IS SCREAMING. YOU ARE IN ERROR. RETURN TO YOUR ASSIGNED DUTIES.

Once The Computer learns that there is actually a crisis:
STAY WHERE YOU ARE. REMAIN HAPPY. THE RECITIFICATION OF THE CURRENT NON-OPTIMUM SITUATION IS IN PROGRESS. YOUR SITUATION WILL BE RECTIFIED WITHIN 20 TO 30 MINUTES. PLEASE STAY CALM. YOUR RECITIFICATION IS IMPORTANT TO US. STAY WHERE YOU ARE. REMAIN HAPPY.

Once The Computer learns that the crisis involves zombies:
ANALYSIS SUGGESTS YOU ARE DELUSIONAL, CITIZEN. PLEASE REPORT TO THE NEAREST HPD&MC CENTER FOR PSYCHOLOGICAL TESTING AND MEDICATION.

Once The Computer learns that the crisis really involves zombies:
WHAT, REAL ZOMBIES? WOW. THAT'S…WOW. PLEASE WAIT.

Once The Computer learns that the crisis really involves zombies, and realizes it should do something about it:
COMMIE MUTANT ZOMBIE TRAITORS! TERMINATE THEM ON SIGHT! TERMINATE THE DEAD! TERMINATE THE DEAD.

Once The Computer realizes that doing something isn't working:

ATTENTION! THE RATIO OF LIVING TO DEAD CITIZENS IN YOUR CURRENT SECTOR HAS DROPPED BELOW THE MINIMUM VIABILITY LEVEL. TO CONTAIN THE CONTAGION, CRS SECTOR WILL NOW BE SEALED OFF FOR YOUR COMFORT AND SECURITY. WELL, NOT *YOUR* **COMFORT AND SECURITY—EVERYONE ELSE'S IN FACT. THANK YOU FOR YOUR CO-OPERATION.**

While The Local CompNode is being isolated:
SYSTEM OFFLINE—NETWORK ERROR.

Once the Local CompNode reboots and realizes who's in charge in CRS Sector:
ATTENTION CITIZENS! THE CRISIS IS OVER. PLEASE RETURN TO YOUR ASSIGNED DUTIES. PLEASE NOTE THAT SOME CITIZENS IN THIS SECTOR HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED AS SUFFERING FROM AN AS YET UNIDENTIFIED MEDICAL CONDITION, PROBABLY THE RESULT OF COMMIE MUTANT TRAITOR SABOTAGE. THIS MEDICAL CONDITION DOES NOT INTERFERE WITH THE PERFORMANCE OF THEIR DUTIES. EVERYTHING IS NORMAL. ALSO, CITIZEN TITUS-I-4 HAS BEEN PROMOTED TO TITUS-U-4 AND IS NOW SECTOR ADMINISTRATOR. PLEASE DEMONSTRATE YOUR LOYALTY BY BRINGING HIM BRAINS.

Hide From The Zombies: Your players are courageous and intelligent, the sort of pro-active problem solvers who really tackle a situation head-on. There are plenty of places to hide in CRS Sector, although leaving the quarantined area is impossible. All the corridors and transtubes are sealed with airtight blast doors, and while there are plenty of connecting tubes, access tunnels, air vents, sewer ducts and just plain holes in the walls, the sector is now surrounded by Armed Forces troops. Anyone trying to leave is shot on the grounds that they're probably a zombie or a zombie collaborator.

Raise The Alarm: Well, the alarm is going to get raised *anyway*, no matter what happens. The Troubleshooters probably have a better idea of what's

going on than anyone else, on the grounds they've actually seen the dead being reanimated and can tell the difference between an unscheduled spontaneous loyalty demonstration and a pack of brain-hungry zombies. The Troubleshooters can tell their story to IntSec, or the Armed Forces, or The Computer, or to their secret societies, or just run down the corridors ringing a bell shouting 'the zombies are coming'. The result is the same no matter what they do—CRS Sector eventually gets sealed off from the rest of the complex.

Join The Zombies—The Hard Way: Troubleshooters do not thrive and survive in Alpha Complex without being able to switch loyalties quicker than they can change barrels on a laser pistol. Turning to the Zombies is a potential tactic for the characters, once they realize the Zombies are winning the local battle. Just presenting yourself at the doors of Complex Utensils and saying *'Hello, I would like to join your zombie horde'* will just get your brain eaten. The Troubleshooters might be able to convince the Mark II techno-zombie masters to convert them into Mark IIs as well, but they would have to come up with a very, very good reason for the zombies not to just eat them. Something like *'Hello, I would like to use my authority and skills as a Troubleshooter to bring more citizens to join your army of the undead'* might work.

Join The Zombies—The Easy Way: '*Hello, Fellow Secret Society Member Who Is Now A Zombie. Can I Be A Mark II Zombie Too, Please?'*

Spin control II (Tension 18. And Now Not Obeying The Zombies Is Treasonous)

Inevitably, the techno-zombies get to the Troubleshooters. Some of them may be eaten, but most of the Troubleshooters are instead dragged to the CPU offices that have been taken over by Titus-I-4 and Titus-I-5.

With the rictus grins of the happy dead, the two techno-zombies explain the Troubleshooters' next mission.

Titus-I begins: *'I trust you have noticed the recent…regime change here in CRS Sector. The new order renders the old hierarchy obsolete; such terms as 'living' or 'dead' are now deprecated in favor of our new, approved terminology of 'unprocessed' and 'processed' citizens.*

This new order has not spread to all of Alpha Complex. Right now, unenlightened unprocessed citizens are ready to attack us. They fear the perfection of the new order. Their thought processes have been impeded by viral memes, erroneous hormones, the illogic of the livin—, er, unprocessed. We must educate them—or eat their brains.

Now, it seems that you have some experience in public relations. All other such specialists in CRS Sector have been terminated. Your new mission is to… correct the common misperception of the new order, and to convince the rest of Alpha Complex that the glorious new order is indeed glorious and desirable, and that they should not fear us—or attempt to destroy us.

You must emphasize the benefits of the new order to all, from the lowliest INFRARED to even the exalted High Programmers and Our Friend, The Computer. Failure to convince the rest of Alpha Complex of the rightness of the new order will result in your termination and reprocessing as Mark Is. Do you have any questions, Troubleshooters?

The new order, just to be clear is:

◉ Most people get their brains eaten and are resurrected as a Mark I zombie.

◉ The lucky get to be Mark II zombies, who keep their brains.

◉ That's about it.

◉ Oh, Mark Is get to do all the grunt work currently done by bots.

The Troubleshooters have to come up with a spin on the following facts. Use the spin rules from page 12.

◉ Zombies eat brains.

◉ Only high clearance citizens will get to become Mark II Zombies.

◉ Everyone will become zombies in the new order.

◉ The zombies just ate and/or converted almost everyone in CRS Sector.

◉ The zombies are the result of a traitorous conspiracy.

Again, rate the spin the players come up with for each situation to work out their new Zombie Propaganda skill.

The Tituses inform the Troubleshooters that they will be sent to bring the good news to the rest of Alpha Complex as soon as their propaganda is complete. Cautious Troubleshooters may prefer to stall for time, but stalling for time when you're surrounded by increasingly brain-hungry zombies is not the cleverest move. Eventually, the Troubleshooters will have to either go out and convince Alpha Complex of the virtues of the zombies, or else get eaten.

Once the propaganda is done, the Troubleshooters are sent to the one exit from CRS Sector that isn't completely sealed—a major corridor thoroughfare leading to the neighboring DRS Sector. There's a little postern gate in the massive blast door, wide enough for a single Troubleshooter to squeeze through at a time. Titus-I provides the Troubleshooters with a nice big portable projector if they have any propaganda videos to display.

On the other side of the blast door is a wide concourse, formerly a shopping center. Now, it's the frontline of the CRS Sector Quarantine Zone

Contagion and Free Speech Containment, and filled with heavily armed Armed Forces. Tanks. Warbots. Tactlical nuclear missiles. Vulture Troopers. And they're all pointing guns at the Troubleshooters. (The zombies discretely close the blast door behind them.)

From a distant bunker, a violet-clad general, wired on caffeine pills and paranoia, gives the order to fire. The Troubleshooters have about 30 seconds to make those fateful Zombie Propaganda checks.

If None of the Troubleshooters make their checks: Oh dear. The Armed Forces open fire. The Troubleshooters are instantly vaporized. The war for CRS Sector never happens, though, as secret society conspirators put pressure on the Armed Forces to temporarily

cease hostilities until the societies can salvage what they want from the growing zombie disaster. The Troubleshooters' next clone bodies are activated inside CRS Sector by Yuri-B—see '*Paranoia of the Dead*', below.

If Some of the Troubleshooters make their checks: There is confusion and dissent among the Armed Forces. Some want to terminate the Troubleshooters and the rest of CRS Sector with extreme laser prejudice. Others are convinced by the propaganda, and agree that zombies have a valid place in the Alpha Complex hierarchy. Others don't really care about zombies, but think that the ones who agree with the zombies are traitors and should be shot. Still others just want to wipe out those damn warbots, or those damn uppity Vulture Troopers. Or

those fleshy human soldiers. It's a lot like how your average team of Troubleshooters, only with more guns. It turns violent very quickly. In the confusion, the question of 'how will we exterminate CRS Sector' is overtaken by the question 'how can we best get those bastards from the 104th Computer's Own Riflebots?' The Armed Forces start blasting each other; the Troubleshooters are told to pull back to CRS Sector.

If All of the Troubleshooters make their checks: Then that VIOLET general is convinced that the New Zombie Order is the future of Alpha Complex, and he orders his troops to stand down. The surrounding sectors fall to the zombie hordes, and a new Quarantine Zone Contagion and Free Speech Containment cordon is established. The situation is basically the same, only the zombies control more of Alpha Complex.

CRS Sector has fallen to the dead. Within a few hours of the first Mark II techno-zombie rising, over 70% of the BLUE-clearance or higher citizens have been converted into zombies, while there are an uncounted number of savage Mark Is roaming the corridors. The sector has been sealed off by the Armed Forces, and the local CompNode has allied itself with the zombies.

So, what are the Troubleshooters doing? There's a little bit of downtime between the propaganda triumph at the end of the previous chapter, and the beginning of this final section (unless the Troubleshooters all got terminated), so what are our brave heroes doing? How many have been zombified, or are aiding the zombies? Is it business as usual—the Troubleshooters will be reassigned to a new service firm in the now-isolated CRS Sector—or are they trying to fight against the new undead order?

If they return to Myron-B and Spork Supply, they discover that Myron-B has been zombified as a Mark II. His diabolical plan to gain control of CRS Sector's cutlery supply has run into a slight problem—sporks are no good for eating brains. Therefore, he wants the Troubleshooters to come up with a new advertising campaign emphasizing other uses for sporks in a zombie world. If they fail, he will eat their brains.

If they return to their normal service groups, then life (or undeath) in Alpha Complex is continuing as normal, only with more zombies running around. PLC now has to find a source of brains to feed the senior techno-zombies; CPU clerks now have to train mindless zombies as data entry. The Computer is also proving increasingly buggy, as the lone local CompNode finds that more and more of its backups and data banks are actually located in other sectors and are thus inaccessible. The sector is slowly shutting down, the lights are going out, life support

fails…and another corridor becomes a dark place inhabited only by the zombies. Spooky!

If they are brave and stupid (or if there are zombie Troubleshooters running around), they could even head back to Titus-I in CPU control and report for another mission (in which case, skip onto page 26 and Titus-I's second briefing).

Anyway, once you have built enough suspense and tension, then it's time for the dramatic return of psychotically committed IntSec operative Yuri-B.

The Return of Yuri-B (Tension 2)

Ever since the techno-zombies took over CRS Sector, Yuri-B has been hiding in the access tunnels and air ducts, watching and observing the developments and preparing for his counter-stratagem. Now, he

is prepared to strike. He begins by contacting the Troubleshooters. Yuri-B ambushes them when they are alone—he might creep into their sleeping quarters in the depths of the nightcycle, or climb out of a trapdoor in a corridor as they pass by. (If any of the Troubleshooters are zombies, then have Yuri-B vaporize one of them to prove his badassness.)

Yuri-B informs the Troubleshooters that he has a plan to deal with the zombies. They want brains? He'll give them brains! There is a Psion mutant with an absolutely gigantic brain being stored in a CRS Sector IntSec vault. Yuri-B intends to sneak into the vault and use the mutant as bait for the zombies. He also has a virus—an illegal WMD—that he will inject into the mutant just before the zombies eat its brain. The virus will wipe out the dead and leave the living, er, alive.

Yuri-B is actually lying at this point. There is a giant-brained mutant on ice in an IntSec vault, but there's no WMD that will conveniently wipe out only the zombies. Yuri actually intends to draw the zombies to the CRS Sector nuclear reactor by using the mutant as bait, then he will detonate the reactor, destroying everyone—both zombies and citizens—in the sector.

Anyway, for Yuri's plan to work, he needs the techno-zombies distracted. If the Troubleshooters have not learned the history of Project Reanimator, then Yuri-B rapidly briefs them here, about how the zombies are the product of an alliance between four secret societies—Corpore Metal, Pro Tech, the Romantics and the FCCCP, led by Harold-Y-FOS-2, Sax-G-WST, Ann-G-CDR and Titus-I-RYW respectively. He orders the Troubleshooters to sow dissent between these four factions of zombies, so they will be quarrelling with each other and not paying attention to Yuri-B.

Even if the Troubleshooters do not obey Yuri-B at this point, it is important that he tell them his plan (or at least, one version of his plan). It will make them sweat later on.

Spreading Dissent: Fortunately, the Troubleshooters will be sent to meet with the leaders of the secret society cells shortly, as part of their final mission for Titus-I-4. However, Troubleshooters may be proactive; skip ahead to the relevant sections if they make contact with the cell leaders first instead of being sent there.

Your Zombies Need You (Tension 17)

Soon after the Troubleshooters are contacted by Yuri-B, they are summoned to CPU by Titus-U-4. The zombie master is now dressed in the robes of a High Programmer, and is preparing for his ascension to the rank of ULTRAVIOLET—there's no one left in CRS Sector to gainsay him. However, he has one last mission for the Troubleshooters, one that can only be carried out by the living. If they succeed, then they will be rewarded as only an ULTRAVIOLET can do.

Some traitors have barricaded themselves into the control center of the CRS Sector reactor. It is likely that they intend to sabotage it, blowing themselves and the Reanimators away in a foolish and crazed attempt to stop the new order. The Troubleshooters must go to the reactor and use the propaganda they developed to stop the traitors. He also orders them to keep their mission a secret—if the rest of Alpha Complex knew that the zombie-controlled sector was so vulnerable, they would attack, not to mention the panic among the unprocessed. No, the Troubleshooters are to pretend to be cleaning staff, sent to enforce new hygiene regulations in the reactor core itself. After all, they still have the hygiene officer gear used in their last mission.

If they fail, then there won't be time to eat their brains.

The Troubleshooters are to report to R&D, Power Services and HPD&MC for further information.

Titus-I-5: As the Troubleshooters are leaving CPU, they are called back to speak to Titus-U-4's assistant, Titus-I-5. He intends to overthrow his clone-sibling, and the best way to do that is to spread fear and panic among the population. The Troubleshooters' mission is unchanged, but he wants the spin they put on the cover story of 'sanitizing the reactor core' to be as ominous and terrifying as possible. They must not contradict the official story in any way, but they must spin it so that the living population of CRS Sector is convinced that something horrible is happening and that Titus-U-4 is going to doom them all. In short, they must spin the cover story so it's worse than the truth.

If they do this, Titus-I-5 tells them, then they will be rewarded when he takes over from his dead clone-brother.

A Return TO R&D (Tension 9)

The new head of CRS Sector R&D is Sax-I-WST—being part of the secret zombie-making project has its advantages when it comes to promotion. Sax-I is not dead yet, although he does act like a zombie most of the time. He's got all the empathy and humanity of a typhoid virus. He is only barely aware that CRS Sector has basically seceded from Alpha Complex, or that his zombies have devoured a large part of the population. He will be distantly shocked if informed that he's responsible for a sector-wide massacre, but it does explain why he's suddenly got a much bigger budget to play with and he's been promoted to INDIGO.

Unsurprisingly, the CRS Sector R&D is now full of zombies. Some of these are senior staff, others are Mark I techno-zombie clerks and test subjects. Experiments currently underway include 'alternate sources of neural matter' (big tanks of cloned brains), 'replacement cerebra pacifiers for Mark Is' (row after row of Mark Is chewing on rubber brains, plastic brains, dried Cold Fun and so on) and 'Mark I Weapons Deployment' (zombies with laser pistols, stumbling around a mirror-walled room and shooting each other randomly). Sax-G leads the Troubleshooters past the labs with an air of distaste. He is really concerned about perfecting the reanimation process.

The Troubleshooters end up in a huge chemical laboratory, filled with beakers bubbling with an alarming green liquid—the same green liquid used in the Reanimator process. Sax-I proudly declares that he has weaponized the reanimator compound. Now, it can be delivered in aerosol form. If sprayed over a relatively intact corpse, then the chemical will reactivate the corpse as a Mark II techno-zombie—at least, that's how it works in the lab. The Troubleshooters are to fill their cleaning sprays with the spray in order to test it in the field. Oh, some tests have shown that an overdose of the chemical results in spontaneous zombie combustion, so the spray should be handled carefully.

The Reanimator Spray

The chemical spray is fired using the Field Weapons or Bioweapons skills. Its effects vary depending on the target:

Living Citizens: O3S
Inanimate object and bots: No effect
Dead Citizens: Turns them into zombies
Zombies: If the margin of success is five or more, then the zombie is automatically Killed and Zombie Resilience cannot be used. If the margin of success is 10 or more, then the zombie and 1d6 adjacent zombies explode—the original target is Killed, but the others can use Zombie Resilience to decrease the damage.

Each Troubleshooter's pack contains 2d20 shots of the chemical spray.

Sax-I-WST: If the Troubleshooters try to convince the Pro Tech cell leader to betray the Reanimator cause, then they have their work cut out for them. Sax-I is simply not paying enough attention to the growing crisis in CRS Sector to realize that he might be in danger. Their best argument is to suggest that the techno-zombies are actually bad for science—they have already decided to phase out bots, and the zombies will also require far fewer gadgets and new technologies than living clones. If the Troubleshooters can paint a persuasive picture of an Alpha Complex overrun by Luddite zombies, then they can turn Sax-I against his allies.

Pro Tech members can also use their secret society connections to put pressure on Sax-G.

HPD&MC—This Is The New Spin (Tension 20 during the broadcast, Tension 6 afterward)

After stocking up on 'cleaning supplies' at R&D, an autocar whisks the Troubleshooters to the plush studios of '*CRS Sector Local Good News Show & Loyalty Time Hour*', a HPD&MC-produced news program. The new host of LGNS&LTH is Ann-I-CDR, formerly a lowly archivist (and Ann-G), now a Mark II techno-zombie who has been scrubbed, prettified and dressed to look as much like a zombie Teela-O-MLY as possible. Smiling into the lens of a camera operated by a Mark I techno-zombie, Ann-I informs the terrified citizens of CRS Sector that everything is returning to an improved version of normality, and that even relatively unimportant tasks are now being handled promptly and effectively, like reactor sanitization. She's honored and happy to present the brave citizens who'll be cleaning the reactor. The subliminal projectors flash happy messages like 'EVERYTHING IS FINE', 'TRUST THE ZOMBIES' and 'PLEASE REMOVE ALL HEADGEAR'.

Ann-I is the leader of the Romantics cell in CRS Sector. It was she who discovered the cache of frozen Old Reckoning corpses in the bunker deep below the reactor, and she has arranged for the Troubleshooters to be brought onto her new show so she can force the techno-zombie leadership to start doing what they promised—resurrecting the Old Reckoners so they can bring the wisdom of the past. The Tituses have been ignoring her calls, preferring to concentrate on making more people into zombies and not getting blown up by the rest of Alpha Complex. Therefore, she will ask pointed questions about *how* the Troubleshooters will get into the reactor, and about how the new zombie technology can best be employed to help

Alpha Complex. Meanwhile, the Troubleshooters will (or at least, should) be trying to spin their perfectly ordinary and inconsequential mission of reactor sanitization as a major threat to all of CRS Sector.

As a result of this spin, one of the HPD&MC techs (a still living citizen) slips a tiny camera drone into the pocket of one of the Troubleshooters. This little drone is a tiny remote-control camera and microphone. It'll activate at the climax of the scenario.

Ann-I: After the interview finishes (or is censored and replaced by reruns of '*Commie Execution Bloopers III*'), then the Troubleshooters can speak to Ann-I more openly. If they reveal that they've got the new Reanimator chemical, then she demands that they head back to the bunker under the power plant and resurrect the last of the Old Reckoning citizens down there.

Power Services (Tension 10)

Finally, the Troubleshooters are brought to Power Services, where Harold-B-FOS-2 (formerly Harold-Y) briefs them on how to access the reactor controlled by the traitors. It's quite simple—they head into the same tunnel network they visited in *The Sporks, They Call To Me*, and find the secret back entrance into the reactor. Climb the stairs, find the traitors, terminate them.

Harold-B-FOS has also been zombified, and he's quite happy about it. He was the Corpore Metal cell leader, but his resurrection as an undead monster has given him a new lease of life. Before becoming a zombie, Harold-B was loyal to his bot brethren, but now he just wants to eat brains, and no longer cares about the bot cause. If the Troubleshooters mention the zombies' anti-bot policies to Harold, he will talk about the glories of the new order, and possibly try to eat their brains.

The Forgotten Bots: While Harold-B may have turned his back on the bots, the bots are still opposed to the techno-zombies. Many of the Corpore Metal Frankenstein bots have crept away into the Underplex beneath CRS Sector, hiding from the rampaging Mark Is who are replacing them. The Troubleshooters will run into them below.

Other Complications (Tension 3)

If trying to balance the demands of Yuri-B, the two Tituses, Pro Tech and the Romantics wasn't enough, feel free to throw any of the following secret missions at the Troubleshooters. Ideally, give one of these to each Troubleshooter.

Psion: Unlike all the other secret societies, Psion is still in contact with its agents in CRS Sector thanks to their telepathic communication methods. If there is a Psion member among the Troubleshooters, they contact him

at this point. If there is not a Psion member among the Troubleshooters, then pick a mutant and have the Psion Controls (super-powerful telepaths) zap into his brain and recruit him on the spot. Psion scans the memories of their agent and finds out about Yuri-B's plan to use a big-brained mutant as bait for the zombies. This big-brain mutant is another potential Control, kept under sedation by IntSec. Psion orders their loyal agent to protect the potential Control under the sedatives wear off, at which time the mutant's psychic powers will kick in and save the day.

FCCCP: Up until recently, the First Church of Christ Computer-Programmer was doing well here in CRS Sector. The glory of the Easter Cycle was at hand, the dead were about to rise and bring gifts to the living, and loyal Titus-I-5 was both high priest and cell leader. Now, the zombies have betrayed the Church and taken over.

The new cell leader is…Titus-I-6, the clone activated automatically when zombie Titus-I-4 killed Titus-I-5. Titus-I-6 went into hiding, as he fears his previous selves. He believes that the Easter Cycle has been perverted by demonic Commies, resulting in the brain-eating zombies instead of the grateful dead promised by the prophecies. (The trauma of being killed by himself has driven Titus-I-6 even deeper into his delusional faith in The Computer, so he's basically a reborn-again FCCCP-er.) Titus-I-6 contacts the most trustworthy of the Troubleshooters and gives them a holy relic, a circuit talisman that is said to have the power to Turn the Undead when activated. He wants them to get close to the Tituses and use it—the circuit will, he believes, destroy his zombie clone brothers. Titus-I-6 can then take over and get the Easter Cycle back on track.

The Relic

The relic is actually a one-use remote control reboot for the local CompNode. When activated, CRS Sector's CompNode shuts down for a few minutes, then reboots from backups. These backups were made *before* the local CompNode was ostracized from the rest of The Computer's networks, and so has no knowledge of the zombie takeover or the existence of the zombies. It immediately re-connects with the rest of The Computer. In effect, when the relic is activated (by pressing the big red button in the middle of it), The Computer runs through the same series of confused responses as It did back on page 22, during the initial zombie outbreak. However, this time It ends up opposed to the zombies, and announces:

ATTENTION CITIZENS. CRS SECTOR HAS FALLEN TO COMMIE MUTANT TRAITORS. ACCORDINGLY, A FULL SECTOR PURGE HAS BEEN INITIATED BY THE ARMED FORCES. PLEASE ADOPT THE BRACING POSITION NOW. TOTAL NUCLEAR ANNIHILATION IN FIVE MINUTES. YOUR CO-OPERATION IS APPRECIATED, AND ALPHA COMPLEX LOOKS FORWARD TO YOUR SERVICE IN FUTURE LIVES.

5: Paranoia of the Dead

Armed Forces: If there are any loyal members of an Armed Forces service firm left unzombified among the Troubleshooters, then they get a Secret Communication using an emergency back channel on their PDC. The message is a simple one—the original plan of containing the disaster has been cancelled (probably following the successful deployment of Zombie Propaganda earlier). The Armed Forces are now switching to another plan. An aerial warbot carrying a bumper-bunker-buster bomb has launched from a secret Armed Forces airstrip, and is currently en route to the dome above CRS Sector. The bomb will bore through the protective dome above Alpha Complex and destroy the whole sector, leaving uncontaminated sectors untouched. To ensure the zombie menace is destroyed, the bomb is designed to home in on the Troubleshooter's PDC. The Troubleshooter is therefore instructed to get his PDC as close to the mass of zombies as possible, to ensure maximum enemy casualties. The PDC will beep more and more frequently the closer the bomb gets. Selecting the *launch* command on the PDC will send a message to the warbot to fire its bomb. The *launch* command will only become available when the bot is within range of CRS Sector.

Back to the Underplex (Tension 0)

Once the Troubleshooters have their new mission (kill the traitors occupying the reactor), their cover story (sanitize the reactor) and their secret missions (anything from spin the truth to raise the dead), it's off to the reactor. As most of CRS Sector has been sealed off from the rest of Alpha Complex, there is only one way into the reactor. Consult the maps and description on page 14—the Troubleshooters must go down the access hatch in the (now silent and empty, sealed-off) transtube tunnel, then find their way to the endlessly long corridor in the depths (which still has a few Mark I techno-zombies roaming around). They then must find the stairway leading up to the reactor complex itself.

As the Troubleshooters search for the stairwell, they run into the bots hiding in the Underplex.

The Bots: In the new zombie order, the bots are being replaced by brainless Mark I techno-zombies. Corpore Metal's influence has vanished since Harold-Y was zombified and betrayed them. Therefore, many Frankenstein bots have fled down here, to plot the overthrow of the zombies and the takeover of CRS Sector. If CHASM (see page 15) is still functional, then it has been elected the leader of the free bots. If the Troubleshooters blew up CHASM, then an elderly jack-o-bot (RDO-117) is in charge.

Either way, the free bots of Corpore Metal want the zombies stopped, and are willing to enter into a treasonous alliance with the Troubleshooters to do so. The environmental controls for CRS Sector can be controlled from within the nuclear reactor overhead. If the Troubleshooters raise the temperature in CRS Sector, then the chemicals animating the zombies will be affected, making the zombies hungrier and hungrier. They will turn on each other in a frenzy of brain-eating. All flesh will be eaten, leaving only the bots and the few citizens who can hide from the zombies—like the Troubleshooters, who'll be safe in the sealed-off reactor complex. The only safe way to escape will be via the sealed elevator, so the Troubleshooters will have to reactivate the elevator the bots used to access the Underplex.

The bots will not let the Troubleshooters go until they at least promise to implement the bots' plan. The bots cannot do it themselves as none of them can climb the spiral staircase leading to the reactor, and indeed, the Troubleshooters will find several fallen bots lying around the staircase, having tried to navigate the steps.)

Old Reckoning Corpsicles

If the Troubleshooters are trying to ally with Ann-I and her Romantics, then they may go past the bots and into the old bunker, so they can use the Reanimator spray on the remaining frozen corpses and turn them into witty, intelligent and sane Mark II techno-zombies. Defrosting the corpses takes about half an hour, and they are animated almost instantly when the Reanimator spray is applied.

All the Old Reckoners here were rich businessmen, frozen centuries ago when they were diagnosed with various terminal diseases. When the Troubleshooters bring them back to life, they react as follows:
1) Mass confusion! Where are the doctors? Where are the flying cars? Why does the future look like an underground warehouse? Agh! Robots! Zombies! Robot zombies! Men with lasers!
2) Where's my stock portfolio! What do you mean, Commies? Are you all crazy?
3) Er…you did remember to cure that terminal disease I had, right? The one that was going to kill me in a few minutes? No? Uh-oh…
4) Falling over dead. Redead. Unundead. Whatever.

At least the Troubleshooters tried. If they hurry, they can get some use out of the resurrected before they fall over.

The Reactor (Tension 5)

Finally, the Troubleshooters can climb the staircase out of the Underplex and up into the sealed reactor in CRS Sector. It gets warmer and warmer as they climb, and the green Reanimator liquid in their cleaning gear begins to bubble ominously. Any zombie Troubleshooters feel increasingly hungry. Doesn't Bob-R's head look juicy? Imagine how nice his brain must taste…

Eventually, the Troubleshooters arrive at the top of the stairwell (1). A dusty trapdoor lets them into a storeroom—obviously, no-one has used the stairwell in a very long time.

Outside is a long corridor (2), similar to the one thousands of meters below in the Underplex. There are signs of a

THE REACTOR
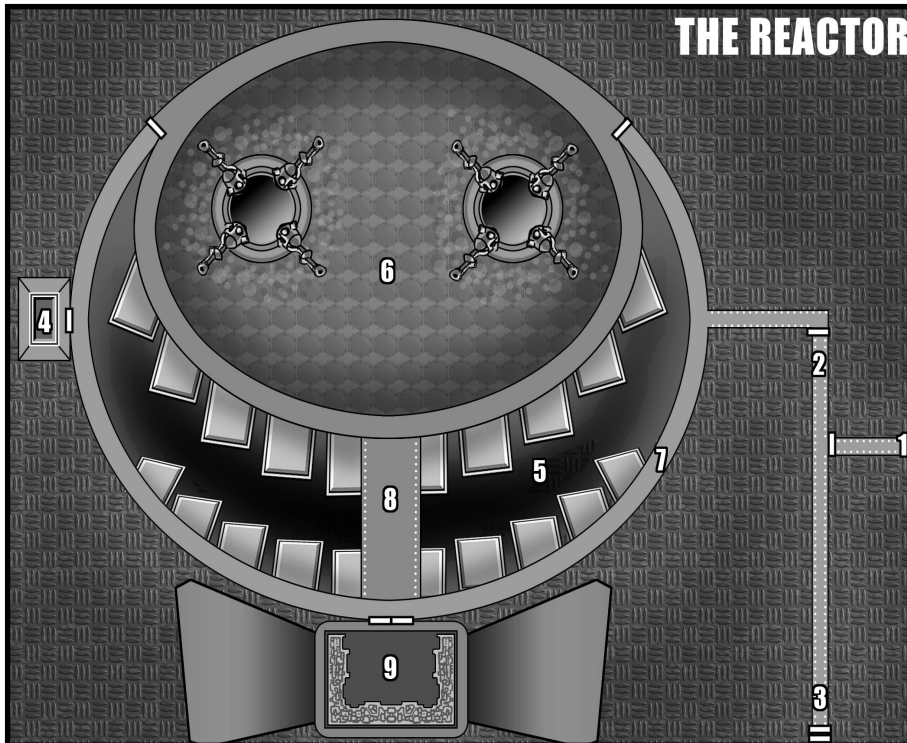
1. End of the stairwell
2. Sealed corridor
3. Sealed blast door to rest of sector
4. Sealed elevator to Underplex
5. Bottomless (ish) pit to Underplex
6. Giant nuclear reactor
7. Walkway
8. Corpse of 'Lenin'
9. Reactor control room. All Sealed sections can be opened from here. And you can also blow up the reactor, if that's the sort of stuff you're into, traitor!

The Communists
Management 6
    Oratory 10
Stealth 10
Violence 6
    Energy Weapons 10
Hardware 8
    Nuclear Engineering 12
Software 4
Wetware 4
    Medical 8
Mutant Powers: Joe: Energy Field; Joseph: Mental Blast; Josephine: Machine Empathy (Power 12)
Secret Society Affiliation: Communism
Armor: None
Weapons: Stolen laser pistols, W3K

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firefight, and the walls are splattered with blood. (Feel free to evoke memories of any zombie-horror-survival computer games and/or movies.) The far end of the corridor (3) is sealed by a heavy blast door, but the near end has a much smaller and less secure door. It is still locked, but can be bypassed easily enough with an appropriate Hardware, Software, gadget or mutant power.

There is also a camera and communications screen in the wall next to the door, allowing the Troubleshooters to speak to the three Traitors who have occupied the reactor.

Joe, Joseph and Josephine

These three INFRAREDs are Communists (Joe, Joseph and Josephine are their Party codenames—they're actually named Tom, Glenn and Stephanie). They were workers in the nuclear reactor when the zombies attacked. They fled down a storage elevator into the Underplex to avoid the zombie attack, and there they found something wonderful—a sealed cryogenic

casket, containing the body of a bearded man. According to secret Communist doctrine, the great leader, Lenin, was preserved in such a fashion. Somehow, by some miracle of the Party, Lenin's body ended up in a bunker under Alpha Complex, and has now fallen into their hands. They protected the Great Leader from the indignity of being raised as a mindless Mark I zombie, but they have heard rumors of a way to create intelligent master zombies.

The three Commies want to turn Lenin into a Mark II zombie, who will then take control of the other zombies and lead to a rebirth (or, more accurately, reanimation) of international Communism.
They took over the reactor by accident—the rampaging zombies killed everyone, the bots left to join the other bots downstairs in the Underplex, so all the three Commies had to do was close the doors, shut down the elevator and start sending demands to Titus-U-4. Unless Titus resurrects Lenin and hands over supreme power in CRS Sector to him, then the Communists will blow up the reactor, wiping out everyone in the sector.

Total Spin Control

From this point in the scenario on, it all goes crazy. There are multiple plots to stop the zombies and/or destroy all of CRS Sector happening simultaneously. There's every likelihood that everyone will be vaporized in a reactor meltdown of catastrophic proportions. To really make the players sweat, bombard them with calls on their PDCs from various authority figures and allies. Have all three Tituses call them simultaneously, or have The Computer contact them (and which CompNode is it? How do they know?). Make them give a dozen different spins on the current situation, depending on who they're talking to.

Negotiating With The Commies

The Troubleshooters' official mission is to kill the Commies inside the reactor. Titus-I wanted them to use

Zombie Propaganda to force the traitors to surrender, then shoot them. The Troubleshooters can try their Zombie Propaganda, but the Communists will counter with their Communist Propaganda skills, and both sides may end up knowing or believing far too much about the other. Alternatively, the Troubleshooters can just try breaking down or blowing up the door, but if they do that, then Joe will set the reactor to overload. The reactor can be controlled from, surprisingly, the reactor control room. It takes 5–10 rounds for the reactor to explode after a meltdown has been activated, and a meltdown sequence can be paused from the control room with a successful Nuclear Engineering check.

There are five levels of meltdown. A Level 1 meltdown will just wipe out the reactor and the immediate area surrounding it. A Level 2 meltdown (the option favored by the Communists) will wipe out most of CRS Sector. A Level 3 meltdown will get both CRS Sector and the tunnels below. A Level 4 meltdown is CRS, the tunnels below and the surrounding sectors. A Level 5 meltdown is… bad. If the Troubleshooters do not bother to select the level of catastrophe, then roll 1d20 and divide by 5.

The Newsdrone

At a suitably inconvenient moment, the newsdrone planted by HPD&MC activates and launches from inside the pocket of one of the Troubleshooters. It's bringing live, up to the minute news of the sterilization of the dangerous reactor virus to the viewers of CRS Sector. The news broadcast is being watched by pretty much everyone involved in the scenario, both in and out of CRS Sector, so it's time for some truly impressive spin from the Troubleshooters.

The Tension shoots to 15 when the drone is launched.

Communicating With Outside

There's a hardwired connection to the rest of Alpha Complex in the reactor control room. This line cannot be shut down, and so escaped the Communications blackout enforced when CRS Sector was quarantined. The Communists have no use for it, as their control of the reactor gives them leverage over the local sector only. Still, the Troubleshooters might be able to make use of an emergency plea to The Computer.

The All New Return of Yuri-B

At another suitably inconvenient moment, the blast door at the end of the corridor (3) is, well, blasted by a cone rifle tacnuke shell, and Yuri-B emerges from the smoke, dragging a drooling mutant behind him. The mutant has a huge head, and tiny atrophied arms and legs. It's drooling and its eyes are unfocused, but the sedatives are wearing off.

Any zombies who see the huge-headed mutant are instantly consumed with almost overwhelming hunger, and need to make Power checks each round to maintain the self-control to *not* rush over and start munching on the mutant's brain.

At this point, Yuri-B looks like the survivor of some post-apocalyptic war. He's bleeding from a dozen claw wounds, his jumpsuit is tattered and he's got a crazed look in his remaining eye. He's carrying a chainsaw for no apparent reason. Yuri-B barks that he's dragged the mutant past the very heart of the zombie infestation, and they're all coming. All of them. All the damn zombies. He demands that the Troubleshooters set the reactor to a Level 1 meltdown. The explosion won't wipe out the whole sector, just the zombies.

If the Troubleshooters refuse, or stall, they're traitors and he'll start shooting them.

Enter The Zombies

The zombies follow the scent of the big-headed mutant, and start pouring in through the breach opened by Yuri-B. Titus-U-4 is in the lead, but the Machiavellian master-zombie previously encountered by the Troubleshooters has succumbed almost entirely to brain-lust. All the zombies need to make Power checks to avoid going after the mutant's brain—as Mark Is don't have any Power left, they can't resist.

Functionally, there are infinite zombies here. There aren't actually infinite zombies, but there are lots and lots. And lots. And more. And some more. And more behind you. There are certainly more zombies than you can shoot in the head.

Turning Up The Heat

The Troubleshooters may try the approach suggested by the bots, of turning up the heat in CRS Sector and making the zombies turn on each other. It's a moderately good idea, and works quite well. The heat is controlled from the control room; the Habitat Engineering skill is required.

This only becomes a bad idea if the Troubleshooters also switch on the elevator—in which case, CHASM (or RDO-117) and its bot minions rise out of the Underplex bearing the Weapons of Mass Destruction from the underground bunker (did you forget about those? They're mentioned in the bunker contents list on page 15. It's not our fault if you forget about piddling little things like four WMDs). These are lethal biological weapons capable of wiping out all life in CRS Sector. If the Troubleshooters have dealt with the zombies, then the bots make a bid for world (OK, sector) domination.

The Bomb

The Armed Forces may be trying to wipe out the zombie infestation with that bumper-bunker-buster bomb. If the Troubleshooters somehow deal with the zombies, they could contact the rest of Alpha Complex and call off the air strike. Or they could just throw the PDC that's guiding the bomb down the convenient bottomless pit in the middle of the reactor chamber, and pray that the bomb follows it.

Exploding Zombies

The Troubleshooters can use the reanimator spray to set the zombies on fire. It's their best weapon against them. However, infinite zombies, finite shots, do the math. At best, it's a stalling tactic. If you've no better way to end the scenario, though,

then perhaps the combination of high temperature plus unstable chemical plus lots of zombies equals firestorm.

The Super-Mutant

The giant-brained mutant is a wild card in the end of the scenario. Maybe he gets eaten by the zombies? Maybe he wakes up and uses his awesome psychic powers to save the day? Maybe he gets turned into a super-psychic zombie who takes over all the other zombies? Or teleports out? Or, more likely, he lies there and drools while misguided Troubleshooters beg him to *deus ex machina* something, now!

Lenin

If the Troubleshooters manage to reanimate the corpse in the middle of the walkway, then one of the Commies screams 'LENIN! GREAT LEADER! YOU LIVE AGAIN!'

The Computer goes absolutely nuts if it hears this, and anyone who doesn't start shooting Lenin is dubbed a Commie Traitor and put on IntSec's Most Painful And Unpleasant Termination List.

Aftermath

If, as is likely, everyone in CRS Sector is killed, then the Troubleshooters' next clones wake up in an IntSec interrogation center overseen by freshly-cloned Yuri-B-OGN-5. There, they are told that CRS Sector never existed. There were no zombies. There was no Project Reanimator. There was no quarantine, no apocalypse. Nothing.

If, however, the Troubleshooters somehow survived and the zombies were stopped without a mushroom cloud or two, then the Armed Forces move in. Warbots and tanks stalk through the rubble, blasting the remaining Mark Is. R&D staff wearing biohazard suits follow, bagging and tagging any animated corpses. The Troubleshooters are captured and secured by IntSec, who zap them with stun guns. The last thing they

see before they are dragged away is a team of R&D techs salvaging the original Reanimator machine from the ruins of Complex Utensils.

Debriefing: is carried out by Yuri-B-OGN-5. Due to the quarantine and the resulting chaos and zombie-related mayhem, he is really not too sure about what actually happened in CRS Sector, but he makes up for any lack of certainty on his part with an aggressive questioning technique.

- Forensics shows that there was a zombie in the commissary! Why did you not report this?
- Explain how you tampered with the confession booth rented by Spork Supply.
- Where are the 50,000 sporks you stole from storage? Black market sporks are treason!
- Why did you not stop the zombies from killing citizen Titus-I-5?
- How long have you been in contact with PURGE for?
- Twelve stored WMDs vanished from a locker in CRS Sector during the crisis. Explain this.
- Did you dispose of the weaponized reanimator chemical properly? If not disposed of properly, the chemical could enter the air ducts and infect all of Alpha Complex!

And so forth. Screw, screw, screw the PCs over!

Finally, the Troubleshooters are released from the interrogation center (after being brainscrubbed/censored/terminated as appropriate) and sent back to their day jobs. The long night of the dead is over…

... or is it? A citizen stumbles into the office of one of the Troubleshooter's service firms. One of the Troubleshooters' co-workers asks the newcomer for his ME card.

It's Titus-3. Braaaaains…

PARANOIA

FLASHBACKS II

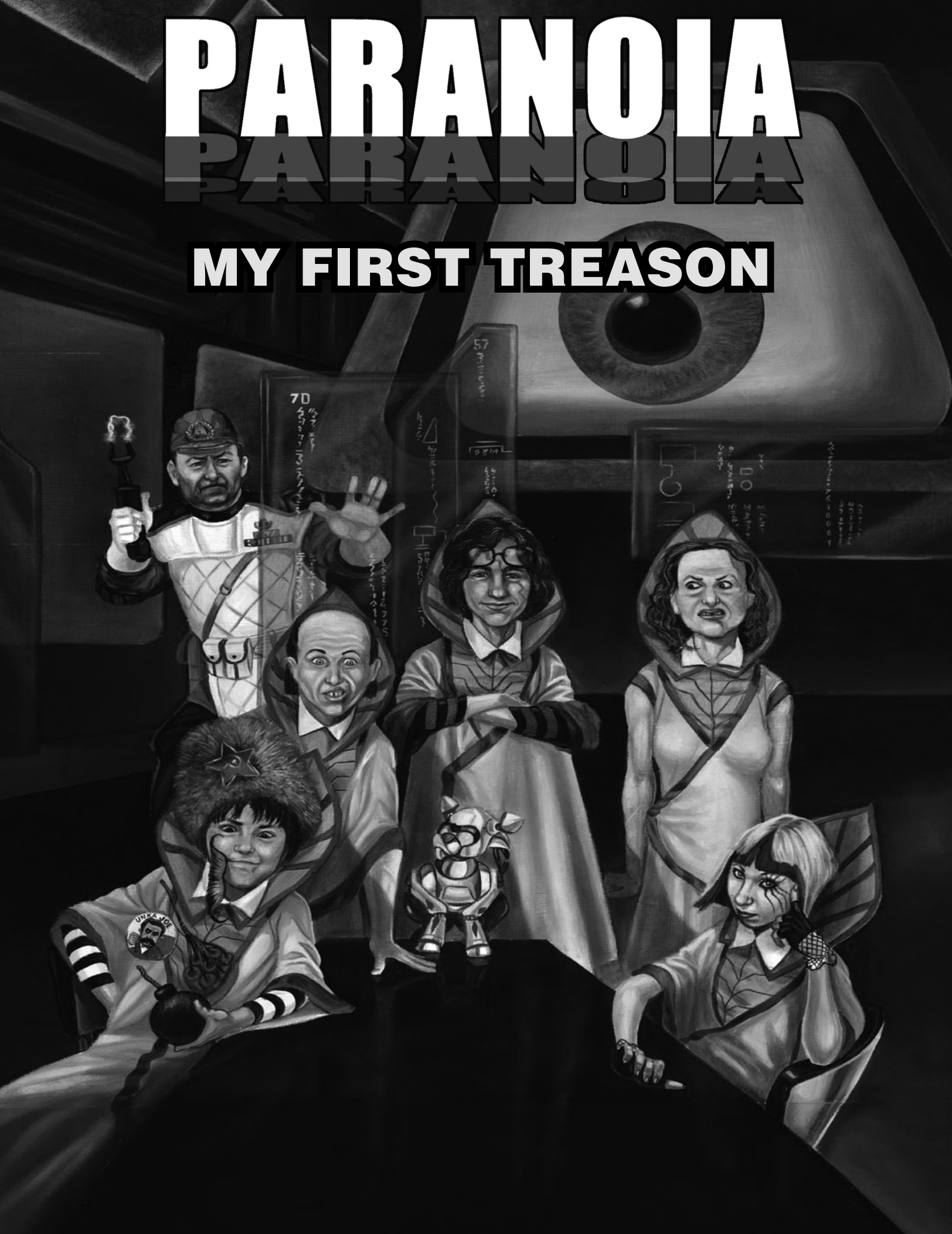

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PARANOIA ™

My First Treason

To serve all my days

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THE COMPUTER
Give me a clone until he is seven.

CONTENTS

Security Clearance ULTRAVIOLET
WARNING:

Knowledge or possession of this information by any citizen of Security Clearance VIOLET or lower is treason punishable by a long spell of Armed Forces latrine scrubot maintenance duty.

1. Introduction

Back in the old, unfun days of **PARANOIA**, when Zap style ruled the line and unapproved forms of humor were not punished by summary execution, there were parodies of certain popular books, movies, television shows, roleplaying games and other media forms. In the brave new edition, Famous Game Designers set their sights higher. We do not go for the cheap laugh, for the easy joke at the expense of some passing fad by jamming it into Alpha Complex. (*Vampires, hey, aren't they hilarious?**)

Therefore, we would like to emphasize that this scenario is not a parody. It may have been *inspired* by a certain wildly popular series of fantasy novels about a boy wizard going to wizard school. We may wish to *translate* that element of our cultural zeitgeist into the **PARANOIA** setting, with the intent of *flavoring* our humor with recognizable elements. We might even wish to *satirize* aspects of the books. However, in no way, shape, form or legal action is this a *parody*.

We are not inconstant. We are moving from one state of constancy to another, more constant one.

Anyway, now that that's out of the way, let's talk about *H*rry P*tt*r and the Enchanted Confession Booth*— er, I mean, *My First Treason.* You are holding in your hands (or, in this electronic day and age, reading on your screen**) a mini-campaign for **PARANOIA**, complete with six pregenerated player characters. Not 'pregenerated Troubleshooters', you'll note, because *My First Treason's* characters are brave young Junior Citizens: Alpha Complex kids in an Alpha Complex crèche. The four chapters of the mini-campaign each cover one year of their education, from age ten to age 14 (when they go off to join the loyal workforce).

Along the way, they'll run into secretive conspiracies, nefarious traitors, weird mutants and gratuitous

terminations—all in their very own crèche! Can the characters solve their problems and the secrets of their past while still studying for the *Approved Revised History of Alpha Complex (fifth edition)* exam?

> ** Yes, I know a recent **PARANOIA** scenario (Spin Control) involved zombies. What's your point?*
>
> *** Filesharing is treason, citizen.*

◼ The Junior Citizens

- ◉ **William-JST-1** is an oddly charismatic young Junior Citizen with a knack for making others do what he wants them to do. What William doesn't know is that he's not a clone— he's actually the natural-born son of a High Programmer, Louis-U, who placed William in the crèche for protection. The children of High Programmers are often used as hostages or for blackmail.

- ◉ **Nina-JST-1** has already been tagged as 'argumentative and insubordinate' by the

supervisors of the crèche, and is in line for drug therapy and brainscrubbing unless her behavior improves. In a few years, she's going to discover that she's a powerful mutant wanted by Psion….

- ◉ **Eva-JST-1** might just be the perfect citizen. Ambitious, loyal, determined and intelligent. If only Alpha Complex rewarded merit instead of backstabbing and treason.

- ◉ **Joe-JST-1** is, unfortunately for him, a product of sabotage in the cloning banks. The DNA for a notorious Commie was introduced into the banks, resulting in young Joe. He doesn't have the *memories* of the Commie, but he'll grow up to look just like him…and maybe think like him too.

- ◉ **Thomas-JST-1** was once an IntSec agent, pursuing the Commie Mutant Traitor who was recloned as Joe-JST. Thomas ended up getting his genetic pattern reinserted into the cloning banks, and

◼ But I Don't Like Pregenerated Characters

Fortunately, the plot-dependant bits of most of the pregenerated characters can be lifted out easily and inserted like subcutaneous RFID tags into other characters. If one player wants to play an angsty, I'm-so-depressed-my-soul's-INFRARED kid, then you can just stick one of the secrets from one of the pregenerated characters (like '*I'm a powerful mutant*' or '*my daddy's a High Programmer*' into his background.

The only problems arise if you've got more than four players, as the secret plot elements of '*I'm a petbot guardian*' or '*I'm actually an all-grown-up IntSec agent in a child's body*' aren't quite so portable. You could easily say that Thomas-JST-1's memories of his adult life only return gradually, of course, and let a player come up with his 'child' personality. As for the petbot…eh, can't help there. We shall continue the ~~parody~~ satire and leave the fans argue ad infinitum over this plot hole.

◼ But I Don't Have Six Players

Not all the pregenerated characters have to be played by players—you can easily make Timmy the PetBot into an NPC, and both Thomas-JST and Eva-JST can be removed from the campaign without any problems—just ignore any subplots that depend on their presence.

1. INTRODUCTION

Game Rules for Junior Citizens

If you're creating your own characters, then here are the changes to character creation for Junior Citizens:

Junior Citizens start with only three Common Specialties, and they don't get the normal Energy Weapons specialty of Troubleshooters.

They don't have a service firm or secret society, so they don't get the skills from those sources either.

Junior Citizens have a mutation, but they don't know what it is yet.

Junior Citizens have an Access score, but it is limited to getting stuff done in the context of the crèche—you know which kid is really good at forging signatures, or where the school docbot stores the happy pills.

New Skills

These skill specialties are normally only used in crèches, and are forgotten by adult Troubleshooters.

Management: Cramming. This specialty allows the character to study a large amount of information and regurgitate the relevant bits in an exam, but doesn't allow him to actually *retain* any of the information. It's the easy way to pass exams if you don't actually have the relevant skill. (Well, technically, cheating's even easier, but no loyal citizen would dare cheat, right?).

Violence: Bullying. This works just like the Management specialty of Intimidation, but involves physical torture as well as psychological pain.

Stealth: Squirming. The art of getting into places you shouldn't be by squeezing through vents, access tubes and other spaces that are much too small for adults.

Hardware: Improvisation. Building things out of spare parts. Creativity is discouraged in most of Alpha Complex (the exception being R&D, where it's encouraged via crazy drugs), but bright Junior Citizens can turn a few bits of scrap metal and a handful of computer chips into, say, a primitive frag grenade.

Software: Journaling. The art of writing your online journal so as to say what the psychologists and censors reading it expect you to say. All Junior Citizens are expected to keep a journal; those skilled at Journaling can form cliques and throw aspersions and accusations at the less adept.

Wetware: Faking Illness. I can't do the test today, sir, I'm sick!

Treason

If a Junior Citizen commits a treasonous act, then his youth is taken into account. A Junior Citizen gets ten points of 'Treason Armor',

but this is depleted when used. For example, young William-JC blows up a reactor and is sentenced to Erasure. However, Friend Computer decides that '*boys will be boys*' and drops the punishment to a mere brainscrub. This costs two of William-JC's ten points of armor.

Junior Citizens can't use their Access scores to defend against treason.

Optional Rule: Junior Citizen Advancement

Under the normal *PARANOIA* rules, advancement is purchased using Perversity Points. However, given your chances of surviving an adventure are slim to none, it's much more common for a player to spend all his Perversity to cling to life instead of hoarding it to improve his skills. However, advancement and improving skills is much more important than normal in *My First Treason*. Therefore, the following optional rule is suggested: **only Perversity that has already been spent can be used to improve skills.** So, William spends five Perversity points to ensure he can hide from a roaming teacher after curfew. He reduces his current Perversity total by five, and increases his Spent Perversity by five. At the end of the scenario, he can spend the Spent Perversity on improving his skills, as described in Chapter 12 of the *PARAOIA* rulebook.

recopied his MemoMax data too. He's waiting until he's grown up before exacting his revenge on the Commies who killed him.

- Finally, **Timmy the PetBot** is a friendly and bouncy robot dog—who was actually programmed by William's father to watch over the crèche and to protect William. For a petbot, it's got an awful lot of hidden weapons….

The Adventures

Bully With A Cone Rifle: The Junior Citizens are moved to a new crèche, where they meet their new teachers and get beaten up by the older children. Someone is spreading Death Leopard propaganda among the senior Junior Citizens, and they've got to be stopped before Armed Forces training begins….

Mutant Testing Time: It's mutant testing time! Everyone in the crèche is being subjected to psychological

and biochemical tests, to determine if their DNA's pure enough. Those who fail may be terminated, or worse—they instantly become the lowest of the low in the crèche. Worse again, it looks like someone's decided the characters are going to fail even before they're tested….

Commie on Campus: The characters find a notorious Commie Mutant Traitor hiding in the crèche. He claims he's actually a loyal clone, who has been framed by a

conspiracy who are trying to get hold of a new weapon. If the characters help, they get to pilot a warbot…but they might miss the inter-crèche FunBall tournament if they do!

Graduation: The final exams are looming large! What service group with the characters be assigned to? Will some of them become Troubleshooters? Who can make it to RED clearance? And what about all the mysterious forces and conspiracies that have been troubling them all along?

The Characters and Mutant Powers

All of the characters, with the obvious exception of Timmy the PetBot, will develop their mutant powers over the course of this scenario. The exact timing is up to you, and should be a combination of the fortuitous ('Die, kiddie Commie scum!' 'Er, Energy Shield apparently!') and the embarrassing ('Are you a mutant, Joe?' 'No sir. May I spontaneously combust if I'm lying.' *FOOM*.) It's best if you let the players know

they've developed a power, but don't tell them what it is until the power is actually triggered.

Nina is a special case. While the powers of the other characters should be rolled on the Straight or Classic tables, depending on your style of play, Nina's a very powerful mutant, and she gets a random power off the Zap table. She also gets a form of the Telepathy power—not enough to scan the thoughts of others without training, but enough to faintly sense telepathic signals and to make her of use to Psion.

The Characters and Secret Socities

At the start of the game, only Thomas has any idea about the existence of secret societies—he's a member of the First Church of Christ Computer-Programmer, although his membership has obviously lapsed a bit because of the whole reborn-as-a-Junior-Citizen problem. Joe's obviously going to be recruited by the Commies, and Psion are already interested in Nina. If the other characters try,

they can probably make contact with one society or another. (See *The Traitor's Manual* for details on society recruitment and initiation.) If a character joins a secret society, he gets the appropriate secret skill for free.

The Massively Overcomplex Backstory

My First Treason begins 13 years ago, with the Revolt of the 43rd Heavy Assault Division. The Alpha Complex Armed Forces spend most of their time blowing up trees ('observation posts') or bushes ('insurgent launch sites') in the wilderness of Outdoors. Dealing with these non-existent outside threats takes up over 40% of the resources of the whole complex, but it's HPD&MC that insists that the fiction of an external threat is necessary to ensure order and unity among the lower clearances. Over the centuries, HPD&MC started believing their own propaganda, and these fictional dangers are very real to anyone inside Alpha Complex, including Friend Computer.

The Armed Forces, however, are on the frontline of Outdoors, and they can see that there are no secret Commie armies marshalling to attack Alpha Complex. After a few years of pointless maneuvers and marches, even the most loyal Armed Forces general begins to have second thoughts. The only real conflicts fought by Armed Forces in decades have been civil wars between loyalists and renegade generals.

The Revolt of the 43rd Heavy Assault was an especially damaging rebellion. Whole sectors were conquered by the rebels before they were defeated. Cleaning up the resulting mess and editing the records to delete the events took years. A special committee of high-clearance citizens, the so-called Loyalty Gang, were assigned to examine the cause of the revolt. The Loyalty Gang consisted of four people: Louis-V, Jericho-V, Vanessa-V and Markus-U.

Bot Characters?

Yes, Timmy the PetBot is a bot. No, we haven't done rules for bot characters yet (they will be in a *PARANOIA* supplement that is yet to come). So, how does Timmy fit into the game? The simple answer is that Timmy is a *very special* bot, who uses exactly the same rules as normal characters. The one exception is treason—a result of censure, medication or brainscrub means that Timmy's programming is fiddled with by a technician, which may have deleterious effects on his memory and/or sanity. A result of termination means he's sent back to the factory, and a new model is sent out.

If Timmy's killed, then a replacement petbot with a copy of his code is sent by Louis-U.

As for Timmy's weapons systems, they're under the control of his hidden programming. Therefore, they can only be used when a) he's in dire peril and b) you think it's funny. He's got a stun gun in his nose, and a one-use cone rifle tac-nuke shell in a concealed launcher.

The Memories of Thomas

Thomas has the memories of his previous life as an IntSec agent, and it's possible that the player will try to make contact with his former supervisors in order to escape the crèche. If this happens, then IntSec assigns Thomas to spy on the Junior Citizens in the crèche—this is a great opportunity to weed out treason before it even begins!

William-JC-JST-1

Junior Citizen
Service Group: None yet.
Security Clearance: INFRARED
Credits: 50

Tics: Barks orders even when he's not in charge.
Tic 2: _____

Example of Tic in Use:
Teacher: Someone clean up that mess in the corner.
William: Nina, Thomas, you do it. Get to work!
Nina: Make me, vatslime.

A C T I O N   S K I L L S   & SPECIALITIES
Management 10
    Moxie 14
    Oratory 14
    _____
Stealth 07
    _____
Violence 06
    Kicking People While They're Down 10

K N O W L E D G E   S K I L L S   & SPECIALITIES
Hardware 08
    Jiggling The Lock On The Dormitory Door Open 12
Software 10
Data Search 14
    Finding Credits Mysteriously Turn Up In Your Account 16
Wetware 05
    Pretending To Swallow Pills 11

Open Slots for Narrow Specialties:
2 (Management, Stealth)

Nina-JC-JST-1

Junior Citizen
Service Group: None yet.
Security Clearance: INFRARED
Credits: 15

Tics: Sneezes when stressed.
Tic 2: _____

Example of Tic in Use:
William: Everyone hide! Nina, get down!
Nina: Achoo!
William: Uh-oh.

A C T I O N   S K I L L S   & SPECIALITIES
Management 6
    Cramming 10
    _____
Stealth 10
    Staying Really Really Still And Not Making Any Noise 16
Violence 10
    Unarmed Combat 14
    Biting People In Very Painful Places 16

K N O W L E D G E   S K I L L S   & SPECIALITIES
Hardware 05
    Punching Machines To Relieve Frustration 09
Software 07
    _____
Wetware 08
    Biosciences 12
    Burning Off Drugs In Half The Normal Time 14

Open Slots for Narrow Specialties:
2 (Management, Software)

Eva-JC-JST-1

Junior Citizen
Service Group: None yet.
Security Clearance: INFRARED
Credits: 40

Tics: Loves to sing loyalty songs.
Tic 2: _____

Example of Tic in Use:
William: I'm bored.
Eva: We shall sing '*Oh Friend Computer, You Are My Special Friend!*'
Nina: Or, we could throw things at you.

A C T I O N   S K I L L S   & SPECIALITIES
Management 10
    Cramming 14
    Neatest Handwriting Ever 16
Stealth 07
    _____
    Violence 05
    Agility 09
    _____

K N O W L E D G E   S K I L L S   & SPECIALITIES
Hardware 08
    Chemical Engineering 12
    Scrubbing Things So They Shine 14
Software 10
    Having The Most Loyal Journal In Class 16
Wetware 06
    Your Old School Project On The Use Of Subliminal Messaging 12

Open Slots for Narrow Specialties:
2 (Stealth, Violence)

Eva-JC-JST-1
Junior Citizen

Mutation: _____
Society: _____
Secret Skills: _____

Background
This is so unfair, you totally shouldn't be here.

You've always been the best, most loyal Junior Citizen in the crèche. Ever since you were old enough to talk, not a treasonous word has passed your lips. Oh, you've had bad thoughts like everyone else, but you're a loyal Junior Citizen and would never, ever, act in a disloyal, treasonous way. You hate Commie Mutant Traitors with every fiber of your being, and love Friend Computer just as much.

You're always the first to sing the loyalty songs, the first to report for extra duty, the one who studies hardest. Your record is full of commendations and gold stars. You're a good clone, a good clone. You'd even dreamed of one day becoming one of the elite, a heroic Troubleshooter, just like the ones you see on television. (You're careful to always watch the 4.6 hours of television mandated for citizens of your grade and age, although you sometimes try to sneak a textbook into the television room.)

Now, you've been transferred to a different crèche, along with a bunch of complete morons and clones who are sure to end up in termination booth long before they hit ORANGE. It's not fair. The only explanation is that someone framed you, blackening your record so you got transferred with the rest of them. It's almost unthinkable that someone would tamper with official Alpha Complex records that way, but…that's what traitors do.

A traitor is plotting against you!

Personal Equipment
Teela-O-MLY fanclub badge
Computer Loyalty Brigade badge

Nina-JC-JST-1
Junior Citizen

Mutation: _____
Society: _____
Secret Skills: _____

Background
It's not that you don't take the happy pills. You've tried to be a good little citizen in the past, to do what you're told, but it's like you burn through the chemical joy too quickly and you're left there screaming at the sheer stupidity of everyone else as they stand there with stupid blissful smiles on their stupid fat faces and it just makes you want to punch them right then and there and….

Your permanent record has lots of notes in it. 'Insubordinate', 'Violent', 'Not A Team Player', 'Hit Other Team Members Instead Of FunBall When Playing FunBall', 'Broke The FunBall Bat', 'Set Teacher On Fire'. (That one was fun.) You know that you should probably try harder, that you're going to end up in some dead-end job stirring a food vat if you don't work harder—but hey, maybe if you blow enough stuff up, they'll let you into the Armed Forces and give you a tank.

Until you get your hands on high explosive, you'll just be bored while everyone else drifts along on the happy drugs. Bored, restless and violent.

You've just been transferred to a new crèche. Rumor has it, it's where the troublesome Junior Citizens are sent. You know why you're here, but why were a few others from your old crèche sent here too?

Personal Equipment
Stress-reduction audio tape #4, *Calming Buzzing Noises*
Black crayon

William-JC-JST-1
Junior Citizen

Mutation: _____
Society: _____
Secret Skills: _____

Background
You've always been a little bit bigger than everyone else in your class, so you've often found yourself in charge. You're not sure if you like having to be the leader all the time, but you guess it's better than having someone else tell you what to do. You've never liked following orders, which gets you into trouble a lot.

Over the last few months, you've noticed something odd going on. It started when you got Timmy the PetBot—the teachers in your old crèche insisted that you were being given it as a 'reward for academic excellence', but you never did *that* well on your tests, and they were gritting their teeth when they handed Timmy to you. Then, you found credits appearing in your account whenever you ran low on funds. Never too much—not enough to buy your own autocar or anything—but just what you needed at the time.

You were doing some digging on the computer networks, trying to trace where the money was coming from—and that's when you were transferred to another crèche. It was all done very hurriedly, in the dead of nightcycle. Maybe you're just being paranoid, but it felt like the move was connected to your hacking attempts. Maybe you asked a question you shouldn't have….

Personal Equipment
Manual: *The Care and Feeding of PetBots*
Glasses
Realistic-looking toy laser pistol (red)

1. INTRODUCTION

Joe-JC-JST-1

Junior Citizen
Service Group: None yet.
Security Clearance: INFRARED
Credits: 10

Tics: Keeps rubbing his upper lip.
Tic 2: _____

Example of Tic in Use:
Teacher: You, Joe. What's the answer to the question?
Joe: *mumble mumble.*
Teacher: What? Get that hand away from your mouth and speak clearly.
Joe: I said, I've no idea.

A C T I O N   S K I L L S   &   SPECIALITIES
Management 10
      Con Games 14
      Find Regulation Loopholes 16
Stealth 10
      Security Systems 14
      Sounding Older Than You Are Over The Phone 16
Violence 07
      Throw First Stone If In A Mob 11

K N O W L E D G E   S K I L L S   &   SPECIALITIES
Hardware 08
      Mechanical Engineering 12
      _____
Software 05
      Cutting and Pasting Documents Really Quickly 11
Wetware 06
      _____

Open Slots for Narrow Specialties:
2 (Hardware, Wetware)

Thomas-JC-JST-1

Junior Citizen
Service Group: None Yet.
Security Clearance: INFRARED
Credits: 50

Tics: Always writing in notebook.
Tic 2: _____

Example of Tic in Use:
William: So, what are we going to do today?
Thomas: *scribble scribble*
William: What are you writing?
Thomas: Nothing. *scribble scribble*

A C T I O N   S K I L L S   &   SPECIALITIES
Management 09
      Interrogation 13
      _____
Stealth 10
      Shadowing 14
      Knowledge of Really Out of Date Security Systems 16
Violence 07
      Two-Fisted Haymaker Punch That Doesn't Work As You're Too Short 13

K N O W L E D G E   S K I L L S   &   SPECIALITIES
Hardware 05
      _____
Software 10
      Data Analysis 14
      Use Few Remaining Working Passwords From Old Life 16
Wetware 06
      Surprising Knowledge of Truth Drugs 12

Open Slots for Narrow Specialties:
2 (Management, Hardware)

Timmy

Loveable PetBot
Service Group: None
Security Clearance: None
Credits: 0

Tics: Leaks oil all over the carpet at inopportune moments.
Tic 2: _____

Example of Tic in Use:
Eva: The hall monitor's coming to inspect the dormitory. Make sure it's clean.
William: It's fine, we've been cleaning it all daycycle.
Timmy: **VENTING EXCESS FLUID.** Beep! Woof!

A C T I O N   S K I L L S   &   SPECIALITIES
Management 05
      Bootlicking 09
      Really Annoying Yipping 11
Stealth 10
      Squirming 14
      _____
Violence 06
      Built In Weapons, Use Only In Emergencies. Information On Weapons Is NOT AVAILABLE

K N O W L E D G E   S K I L L S   &   SPECIALITIES
Hardware 08
      Bot Ops and Maintenance 12
      _____
Software 10
      Slightly Buggy Wireless Networking 16
Wetware 07
      Morale-Boosting Yipping 13

Open Slots for Narrow Specialties:
2 (Stealth, Hardware)

Timmy
Loveable PetBot

Background
Beep! You are PetBot #544399, designation Timmy. You were purchased by INFORMATION NOT AVAILABLE as a gift for William-JC-JST-1. Your prime directives are: INFORMATION NOT AVAILABLE Protect William and the other Junior Citizens.
Obey the orders of William and the other Junior Citizens.
Entertain and amuse.
Chase tail. Go yip yip yip yip (for n=1 to $BIGNUM; Repeat n).

To aid you in completion of these directives, you have been upgraded with INFORMATION NOT AVAILABLE. It is vitally important that you INFORMATION NOT AVAILABLE. You are just a simple petbot so you do not mind the big holes in your memory where INFORMATION NOT AVAILABLE goes. You like to play with William and the other Junior Citizens. You like to go yip a lot.

You really like it when William and his friends get into big trouble, because maybe then you'll get to use your nuclear-tipped INFORMATION NOT AVAILABLE.

Personal Equipment
None

Thomas-JC-JST-1
Junior Citizen (Formerly GREEN)
Former IntSec Agent

Mutation: _____
Society: First Church of Christ Computer-Programmer
Secret Skills: Alpha Complex History 05

Background
Ten years of humiliation and suffering are nearly over. Just another ten or 15 to go. You're not some snot-nosed Junior Citizen—you're really Thomas-G-RST-3, one of the best IntSec agents in Alpha Complex. You were on a mission to hunt down a Commie saboteur known only as UNCLE. The mission was top secret, assigned to you by High Programmer Louis-U himself!

You traced UNCLE to his lair and mortally wounded him. The coward had an emergency escape route, though—he'd hacked into the cloning banks where new citizens are made, and was trying to copy his DNA and memory patterns over so he'd be reborn. You tried to stop him, there was an accident, a big explosion—and you woke up nine months later in the body of a newly decanted baby.

No one would believe you if you told them the truth, so you've just had to live through crèche a second time. One day, you'll get back on the promotion ladder, Hell, you'll be the youngest citizen to make BLUE ever—you know it all already (although you do worry you've damaged your baby-sized brain by cramming too much data into it).

You've just been transferred to another crèche. You don't know why, but you suspect they moved a whole group to hide their real purpose—one of the other kids who got moved must be hiding something.

Personal Equipment
Notebook

Joe-JC-JST-1
Junior Citizen

Mutation: _____
Society: _____
Secret Skills: _____

Background
You've always been happy to just be one of the crowd; it's a big class, so it's easy to hide in the sea of faces. Something tells you that people who stand out are also the sort of people who get dragged away by IntSec. Much better to be comfortable average.

Lately, though, it's been harder and harder to blend in. You don't know why, but some of the older teachers keep looking at you in a weird way, like they don't recognize you—or maybe they do, but something about you scares them. That's bad, 'cos it draws attention to you. You might just be a kid, but you still know that treason and double-dealing is the only way anyone gets ahead in this corrupt system. You've a knack for knowing who to go to get things done.

You've just been transferred to another crèche, one that has a very bad reputation. It looks like the mysterious dislike of you that the teachers developed has really gotten you into trouble.

Personal Equipment
Catapult and a handful of nuts & bolts

They eventually concluded that Alpha Complex needed an actual, real foe for the Armed Forces to fight. This foe would have to be under the control of the ULTRAVIOLETS, but appear to be a genuine threat to the rest of the citizens. A secret R&D project developed the OMEGA program, a specialized artificial intelligence that could be loaded into a warbot. The Loyalty Gang intended to secretly build OMEGA warbots who would present a genuine threat to the Armed Forces.

Then it all went wrong. One of the Loyalty Gang, Jericho-V, decided to eliminate his rivals. He made contact with a shadow Commie leader called UNCLE and planted evidence that the other members of the Gang were actually plotting to put a backdoor to the OMEGA program and give it to UNCLE.

What Jericho-V did not know was that another of the Gang, Louis-V, had just switched allegiance from Corpore Metal to the Humanists following the birth of his son, William. Louis-V was already on the look-out for reprisals from Corpore Metal, so his agents and spies spotted Jericho-V's machinations.

Louis-V wasn't able to stop Jericho-V's plot, but he was able to deflect it. Louis-V took control of the IntSec investigation into the Loyalty Gang, which resulted in the demotion of Vanessa-V to YELLOW, and the termination of Jericho-V and Markus-U. However, what Jericho-V didn't know that was there actually *was* a backdoor in the OMEGA code, and Markus-U had it. Markus-U escaped Alpha Complex, taking control of the OMEGA test brigade of warbots. Jericho-V also managed

to flee before he was terminated. The OMEGA project was shut down, but Louis-V was promoted to ULTRAVIOLET.

As part of the IntSec investigation, Louis-U sent Agent Thomas-G after the mysterious Communist known as UNCLE. The Commie had an emergency escape route—a hack into the cloning banks that was designed to copy UNCLE's DNA and MemoMax data into a new clone. Agent Thomas caught the Commie just as UNCLE was using this escape route. The two were both reborn as new clones—the player characters Joe and Thomas, although only Thomas managed to retain his memory.

By a strange co-incidence, both new clones ended up in the same crèche as William, the natural-born

son of Louis-V. During the height of the IntSec investigation, Louis-V smuggled the newborn child into the crèche system—if his enemies had found out that Louis-U has a natural-born child, he'd have been executed as a traitor.

Since then, Louis-U has kept an eye on his son from afar, tracking him through the computer networks. He even sent him a petbot with optional extras (lots of concealed weapon systems). The petbot, Timmy, was also programmed to secretly report on William's movements to Louis-U. William is Louis's biggest secret, one he must keep concealed at all costs.

A few weeks ago, Louis-U found signs that someone had been investigating William's records. In an attempt to protect his son, Louis-U arranged for William to be moved to another crèche. As cover, he moved several other students, too.

And that's where *My First Treason* really begins....

JST Sector Crèche

The characters' new crèche is one with a very, very bad reputation. It is rare for Junior Citizens to be moved from one crèche to another—many citizens are decanted, trained, put to work and terminated without ever leaving their home sector—but there are a few specialized crèches. Some are for especially intelligent young citizens, or useful mutants. Others, like JST Sector, are for disciplining Junior Citizens who are proving troublesome.

The JST Sector crèche is a large complex of corridors and rooms sectioned off from the rest of the sector by large blast doors. The rooms smell primary of sweat, fear and farts; security cameras and battered bots are everywhere. The Junior Citizens sleep in 20-person dormitories; they attend classes for up to eight hours per day, although most of the classes are really just sitting there watching videos. After school, the Junior

Citizens are expected to study, watch more television and improve themselves mentally and physically in preparation for the day when they will be called upon to serve The Computer.

Junior Citizens are especially cherished by Friend Computer, and they are virtually immune to accusations of treason. It is unheard of for a Junior Citizen to be terminated as punishment, but they can be censured and even brainscrubbed if they're really naughty. The punishments for those adult clones who injure or upset The Computer's children, though, are far far worse.

Effective crèche administrators, then, have to be able to absolutely terrify the Junior Citizens without injuring them—at least, not in any detectable fashion. Ineffective administrators find themselves held hostage in their own crèches by hordes of unruly children.

Most of the teaching in the crèche is done by bots and videos, but there are three human teachers of note in the crèche. First, there's **Vanessa-Y-ELR-4**, formerly Vanessa-V. She was one of the Loyalty Gang (see page 38), but was demoted for treason.

Solomon-R-NGN-5, the technical teacher relies on the fear of Stepplecruch to keep his classes in some semblance of order whilst hoping that he will remain unnoticed in his place in the world.

Finally, there is **Loyalty Officer Sever-R-HST-2,** a thoroughly nasty piece of work, but more on him later.

DON'T SAY YOU WEREN'T WARNED....

Stepplecruch-G-GHT-5

Stepplecruch-G-GHT-5 is a *very* effective administrator. He is an old, twisted, bitter monster of a man, kept alive by drugs and hate. His only joy is watching former students of his being terminated—he makes sure that such executions are always shown live for the crèche children. He has no interest in the rest of Alpha Complex, and hates it when anyone interferes in his private kingdom of the JST Sector Crèche.

Stepplecruch-G-GHT-5
Management 13
   Interrogation 17
   Intimidation 17
   Oratory 17
   Torturing Small Mammals Including Children 19
Stealth 10
   Surveillance 16
   Violence 8
   Hardware 6
   Bot Ops and Maintenance 10
   Listening to the Creaks In The Floor Panels And Using Them To Track Movement 10
Software 10
   Data Search 14 Wetware 12
   Pharmatherapy 16
   Keeping the Brats Quiet With Drugs 16
Mutant Power: Heightened Senses (Power 12)
Secret Society Affiliation: Corpore Metal
Armor: None
Weapons: Truncheon (O5K) or flamethrower (S3K)
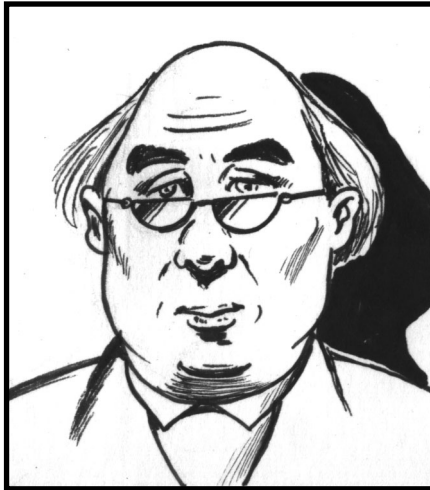
1. INTRODUCTION

Vanessa-Y-ELR-4

Ex-member of the Loyalty Gang and demoted for treason her record is so blighted that she will never be promoted again, so all the drive has gone out of her. She was once incredibly sharp and intelligent, but now she just trudges from day to day. Occasionally, some question from an inquisitive Junior Citizen can awaken her critical faculties and a little of the old Vanessa shines through. Vanessa-Y teaches subjects like Report-Writing, Administration, Accounting and Form Processing.
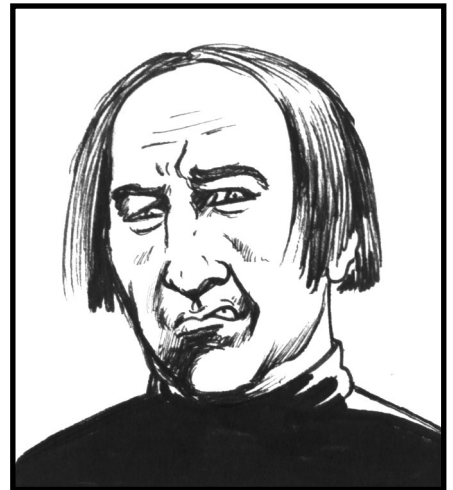
Soloman-R-NGN-5

Solomon-R-NGN-5 is the crèche's technical teacher. He's a sleepy-eyed man who has found a surprisingly comfy niche in the Alpha Complex bureaucracy, and is determined to cling to it with all his might. It is only the threat of Stepplecruch's shadow that allows Solomon-R to maintain his control over his classes. He could be accurately described as old, kind-eyed and a bit dim.

Sever-R-HST-2

A cold, cold man whose loyalty is for sale to the highest bidder. He has contacts with many secret societies and power blocs within Alpha Complex, and keeps an eye out for promising young Junior Citizens who could be of use to one society or another. He pretends to be an ultra-strict, ultra-orthodox loyalty officer, and has even impressed bitter old Stepplecruch with his devotion to discipline, but it's all a lie. Sever is as traitorous as they come.

Vanessa-Y-ELR-4
Management 14
    Moxie 18
Stealth 8
    Surveillance 12
    Shadowy Contacts From Her Old Life 14
Violence 10
    Energy Weapons 14
Hardware 9
Software 10
    Bot Programming 14
    Hacking 14
    Operating Systems 14
Wetware 12
    Psychology 16
Mutant Power: Bureaucratic Intuition (Power 8)
Secret Society Affiliation: Pro Tech
Armor: None
Weapons: Laser pistol (W3K)

Solomon-R-NGN-5
Management 10
    Bootlicking 12
Stealth 9
Violence 7
Hardware 10
    Bot Ops and Maintainance 14
    Mechanical Engineering 14
Software 11
    Data Search 12
Wetware 8
    Biosciences 12
Mutant Power: Empathy (Power 12)
Secret Society Affiliation: FCCC-P
Armor: None
Weapons: Laser pistol (W3K)

Sever-R-HST-2
Management 10
    Interrogation 14
    Intimidation 14
Stealth 10
    High Alert 14
    Surveillance 14
Violence 8
Hardware 7
Software 10
    Data Search 14
Wetware 12
    Pharmatherapy 16
Mutant Power: Empathy (Power 12)
Secret Society Affiliation: Undercover Free Enterprise Agent Spying On Humanists
Armor: None
Weapons: Laser pistol (W3K)

2. Bully With A Cone Rifle

Synopsis: The characters arrive at their new crèche, where they meet their new teachers and supervisors, as well as their new bullies and tormentors. Someone's spreading Death Leopard propaganda in the crèche, just before the older students are issued with weapons as part of their military training.

The major antagonists are a trio of older bullies, led by Harold-JC. They're being supplied with Death Leopard propaganda by a technician, Gary-R-OST-2, who's repairing the crèche's confession booth. The propaganda and some improvised explosives are being stored in an empty dormitory—the one the characters are about to be assigned to. The characters need to deal with the bullies before the bullies get hold of real firepower.

▌ Welcome Junior Citizens

Read the following to the players:
It's your first day in your new crèche. Every day begins the same way—all the Junior Citizens in the crèche assemble in one of the main halls to be reviewed by the administrators. Commendations are handed out—at least, that's what the rules say. No one in the JCT crèche has ever gotten a commendation. What you're sure of is that punishments are also assigned during assembly. The whole room goes dark, a spotlight stabs down at the accused, and the bots swoop in and drag him away. At your old crèche, maybe one or two kids would be punished each week. Here, rumor says it's four or five a day.

It's hard to see with the taller kids in front of you, but you hear a door at the far end of the hall opening. It must be the administrators. Through a gap in the crowd, you see a podium. A very old citizen in green-colored robes walks up to it and scowls at you—not at the assembled students, but at you personally*. (Yes, all of you.*

Personally. He's that scowly.) He whispers into a microphone, and the giant loudspeakers around the hall project every growl, every noise his chin-hairs make scratching off his robe's collar, every disgusted sniff from his cavernous nose at you in crystal-clear super-loud stereo.

'Good morningcycle class.'

'GOOD MORNINGCYCLE MR. STEPPLECRUCH.'

'The following students have been volunteered for extra duty: Alice-JC, Bethany-JC, Damien-JC, Harry-JC, Simon-JC. The school confession booth is still being repaired, so if you have any... actions that you need to... report, then speak to the loyalty officer, Mr. Sever. Upper class students are reminded that their mandatory training period with the Armed Forces Homeland Defense Corps will begin this week, so all FunBall and other extracurricular activities are cancelled for the upper classes. Finally, I understand we have some new… friends joining us today.'

Stepplecruch presses a button, and a big spotlight stabs down, illuminating the N* of you. 'Why don't you tell us a little bit about yourselves?' says the administrator. The other Junior Citizens around you recoil from the light, as if it's radioactive.

What do you say?

* Where N equals the number of player characters.

What do you say?

After you've tortured the players a little by putting them on the spot in the traditional fashion of new students in a school, move on to the next scene. If the players are nice enough to say something that will make them unpopular, seize on it. Stepplecruch will also unmercifully question them if they're not forthcoming enough.

▌ Time For Class

After assembly, the Junior Citizens are broken into age groups and directed to one of the many lecture halls in the crèche. About half the classes during the day consist of just watching delightful educational videos as:

- 👁 *HPD&MC Video #543332—Food Recycling and You*

- 👁 *TS Video #43774—Slime Mold Identification and Eradication*

- 👁 *PS Video #995532—Duck and Cover In The Event Of Reactor Failure*

- 👁 *R&D Video #665525—Nuclear Engineering 102*

- 👁 *HPD&MC Video #112217—Subliminal Messaging, Part Seven*

(The last one's just an hour-long tape of a black screen and a sound track of irritating static, but everyone still has to watch it. No reason.)

The characters also get to meet their other teachers:

Form-Filling and Good Penmanship: This class is taught by Vanessa-G. In the first third of the class, the students get to practice form-filling on a succession of really out-of-date forms like *Delinquent Clone Family Rehousing Request* or *Secure File Transfer Waivers*, or the nightmarish pre-ME-card *EZ Short-Form Identity Confirmation Form*. In the second part of the class, the students swap forms again and enter the results of another student's form into the computer system. Finally, the students swap forms around again, and do psycho-graphological assessments of the handwriting used in the forms, looking for signs of mental deviancy and treason.

Vanessa-Y keeps an eye on the characters throughout the class—both William and Joe remind her of someone (Louis-U and Joe's Commie clone-brother, respectively). Play up the players' paranoia, if possible.*

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* Say that three times fast.

▌ Yum, It's Lunch Time!

After that, there's lunch in the crèche cafeteria. The confession booth is located in the corridor just outside the cafeteria, so the characters get to pass by technician Gary-R as they go to lunch. The technician is almost fearfully respectful of the characters, as he knows about the harsh punishments that await adults who upset Junior Citizens.

Every student has a weekly allotment of lunch credits assigned to them, just enough for a plate of Cold Fun and a can of yummy B3. As the characters enter the cafeteria, a pleasant-faced kid about their age waves at them and encourages them to sit down at a corner table with him. There are two long, low benches next to the table, and the

---

Harold and Pals
Management 5
    Intimidation 9
Stealth 10
    Creeping Up On The Characters, Then Spoiling It By Whispering To Each Other 16
Violence 6
    Unarmed Combat 10
Hardware 4
Software 4
Wetware 12
Mutant Power: Harold: Uncanny Luck (Power 12). Mike: Adhesive Skin (Power 4). James: Rubbery Bones (Power 7)
Secret Society Affiliation: Death Leopard
Armor: None
Weapons: None

---

kid's the only person sitting there. There's a security camera right over his head, but there are also security cameras over every other table. This kid is Al-JC, and he's in league with Harold and the other bullies. As soon as the characters sit down, then three older children appear as if by magic. Two slide in at either end of the bench, trapping the characters

seated on one side of the table. The third bully hovers nearby, ready to intercept anyone who makes a run for it. As soon as the bullies are in place, Al shrugs his shoulders apologetically and runs for it.

Harold picks whichever character sounded weakest and most hesitant during the assembly that morning, and says '*I'm Harold, and me and my friends are in charge here. See, you're going to transfer your lunch credits over to us, or else!*'

Possible objections from the characters:

- 👁 Or else what? O*r else we'll beat you up. Duh.*

- 👁 How will we transfer credits without a PDC, moron? *Harold produces a portable ME card reader—he's a well-equipped bully.*

- 👁 Are you threatening us right under a security camera? *That camera never works! Why do you think we made you sit there?*

👁 We'll tell Stepplecruch! *What makes you think he'll believe you? Every other kid here will support my side of the story. Me and Jamesy and Mikey here were just sitting here quietly, talkin' about how much we love B3. Mmm, it's mandatory!*

If the characters don't pay up, then they'll get beaten up in the next scene.

Afternoon Lessons

After lunch, the next class is Practical Maintenance with Mr. Solomon. No doubt to the characters' dismay, Harold and his two friends are in this class too, even though they're two years older than the characters. (Harold and co. are taking Remedial Practical Maintenance.) Doddery old Mr. Solomon explains what Practical Maintenance is all about.

'All right, class. Each of you has a Type 407 vent fan motor in front of you, along with a bottle of solvent and a rag. You put the solvent on the rag, then you scrub the motor. Keep doing that until it's clean. While you're doing that, I'm, um, going to review these technical files. Zzzzz.' There is indeed a rag and a bottle of solvent on each desk, along with a big lump of what looks like insect fecal matter. Somewhere under the goo is the motor.

If some of the characters didn't pay up in the cafeteria, then Harold and his pals wait until Solomon-R has fallen asleep, then they start throwing bits of machinery and small tools at the characters. The thrown items are surprisingly painful. Little Al is standing by—if the characters try fighting back, then he darts forward and wakes the teacher, weeping and wailing about how the characters were mistreating him.

On the other hand, if the characters try waking Solomon-R, then Al will run forward and ask the teacher to draw a wiring diagram of the Type 407 motor, which deaf old Solomon does with his back to the class. Meanwhile, Harold and his allies quietly beat the clearance out of the characters. It's very much a no-win situation for the characters here.

A Complication

Finally, lessons are finished for the day. Loyalty Officer Sever collects the characters from Solomon's class. First, he takes them to a storeroom and issues each of them with a pillow, blanket and sheets, all of which smell very odd in totally different ways. Then, he brings them down a narrow, badly-lit corridor. He explains that all the other dormitories are full, so a new one must be opened for the characters.

He opens the first door along the corridor, and immediately recoils at the stench. '*Ah, yes. That's where they stored the excess waste*' he mutters, '*We probably can't use that one.*' He pauses, as if considering putting the kids in with the chemical waste anyway, then shakes his head and continues down the corridor to the next door.

He opens the door into the characters' home for the next four years—JCT Crèche Dormitory Number Ninety-Seven, Home Assigned Home. It's a cramped, badly-lit room with eight heavy metal bunk beds. There are a few lockers and storage areas around the walls. Most alarmingly, there's a chemical-smelling stain along one side, where waste from the room next door is leaking in. '*Make yourselves....hmm. I suppose you can manage* quiet *here at least*', says Sever as he hands the characters a piece of paper with the lock code for the door on it.

What Sever does not know—and neither do the characters unless they poke around the dormitory for a while—is that Dormitory 97 is where the newly-formed Death Leopard cell in the crèche is hiding their propaganda and other equipment, like home-made explosives. All the Death Leopard stuff is hidden in the crawl space above the ceiling tiles, so the characters will find it only if they search the place thoroughly. The crawl space contains a few leaflets on home bomb-making and how it's cool to blow things up, as well as a stack of video discs of stuff blowing up. There are also cans of spray paint and some half-completed home-made bombs.

Let the characters fill up the rest of the day as they see fit, with homework and television watching and arguing over who gets what bunk.

▮ Things That Go Boom In The Night

During the night, Harold and the other two creep down the corridor to the barracks they think is empty. If any of the characters are awake*, or make successful High Alert rolls, they hear muffled voices out in the

> * Timmy has a nightly recharge cycle, Mr. Clever Player.

corridor:
'*Ssh! The new slimes are in room 96. Better not wake 'em.*'

'*What if there's a security bot on patrol?*'

'*Use the flash bomb on it, just like the leaflet said!*'

'*Oh yeah! Awesome!*'

'*Fight the system!*'

Harold has the key code to room 97, so he can open the door. (This is an important plot point—he got the code from Gary-R the technician, which is a clue linking the confession booth repairman to the bullies.) If none of the characters appear to be awake, then Harold and James go in and try climbing up one of the unoccupied bunks to get at the stored Death Leopard stuff. Something goes wrong—either one of the characters wakes up, or Timmy starts yipping, or James botches an Agility roll. Mikey at the door panics and throws a flash-bomb into the room. It rolls to the far side—the same side where there's a pool of chemicals leaking from room 96.

It all goes bad. The flash-bomb blinds not only the characters, but Harold and James, who topple the bunk over. The falling bunk tears a hole in the ceiling tiles, letting treasonous leaflets and discs fall onto the floor. Meanwhile, the bomb sets the chemicals alight, filling the room with toxic vapors.

For added confusion—the stored chemicals in room 96 can also get ignited, as can the unstable plastic explosive in the Death Leopards' bombs. Alarms will be triggered by the toxic chemicals, causing a mass evacuation of all the dormitories in

the middle of the night. Harold and his friends will run back toward their dormitory as quickly as they can.

Whatever happens, some of the Death Leopard material is found by the cleaners after the disaster, and passed onto the administrators. Specifically, one of the videos of Death Leopards doing excitingly violent things—a combination of Jackass, wrestling, and explosives—is found in what remains of the dormitory. Importantly, there's an email address at the end of the video where wannabe Death Leopards can upload their own videos for the admiration and adulation of their peers.

Ideally, the characters get blamed for any or all of the following:

- ◉ Arson
- ◉ Toxic chemical leaks
- ◉ Causing an evacuation of the school
- ◉ Blowing up part of the school and especially
- ◉ Having treasonous propaganda in their rooms

Trying to blame Harold and friends is useless without proof—after all, the door was locked, and there is no way to open it without the code.

Any interrogations or investigations will be done by Sever-R. After questioning the characters, he tells them to confess their treasons to Friend Computer as soon as the school confession booth is repaired. He shows them some of the video disc retrieved from their dormitory, and lectures them on how disgusting and treasonous sabotage and free thought are.

Sever also tells them that unless they confess as to why they blew up the dormitory/poisoned the school/have treasonous propaganda, it will be very bad for their permanent records.

Sever's Office

The characters may be trying to break into Sever's office later in the scenario, so they'll need a good description of it now. The office is located near the central administration offices of the crèche, so close to Stepplecruch's lair they can smell the stench. There's a jackobot servant on duty in the corridor outside, and there's a security camera above the door that swings back and forth, scanning the corridor every minute. Finally, the door is locked, and needs either a code or Sever's ME card to open.

Inside is a cramped office. There are several chairs on one side of the desk; each chair has an alarming device hanging over it, a tangle of goggles, straps, sensors and needles used in interrogations. On the far side of the desk is Sever's own, rather comfy chair, a computer console and a big cabinet where he keeps confiscated items.

The Next Morning

Again, everyone in the school assembles. Stepplecruch begins by singling out the characters as the cause of last night's excitement. He is especially disappointed, as the crèche is having some very important visitors today—the Armed Forces trainers, who will be training the older students in civil defense techniques and weapons handling. He introduces the lead trainer, Calvin-G-HIX-3.

Calvin-G asks for a volunteer from the older students, and Harold's hand is the first one up. (This is possibly the only time in Alpha Complex history where volunteering is a good thing.) Harold bounds up to the top of the room, where Calvin-G hands him a (unloaded) cone rifle.

'*Doesn't that feel good, citizen?*' asks Calvin-G, '*Doesn't it make you want to blow up those damn Commie Mutant Traitors*?'

Harold grins broadly and hefts the cone rifle up, aiming it at the characters. '*Will this make a really big bang, sir?*' asks Harold.

'*It will if you put a tac nuke shell in it, my boy*' replies Calvin-G.

Finally, Stepplecruch takes to the podium again. '*All upper class Junior Citizens will be attending military training for the next three daycycles. Other Junior Citizens will continue classes as normal. That is all. Wait, no, it's not.*'

A young clone near the front giggles at the verbal slip. Stepplecruch glares at him, and a jackobot glides out of a wall niche, grabs hold of the child, and drags him away. The administrator continues: '*The confession booth is supposed to be operational now, finally. Any citizens with outstanding guilt should purge themselves immediately.*' He presses a button, putting a spotlight on the characters.' '*That means you lot.*'

Waiting to Confess

When the characters obediently troupe down to the confession booth*, they discover that Gary-R the technician is still working on the booth; just some last-minute adjustments, he insists. Why don't the characters just wait down the corridor until he's finished?

As they're waiting, the older Junior Citizens led by Calvin-G march past, singing the Alpha Complex anthem very loudly and very out of key. As he passes, Harold steps out of line for a moment and threatens the characters. '*You're dead. All of you. Dead. That was our stuff, and unless you get it back, we'll kill you. Understand? You've got until tomorrow night!*' Harold wants the violent/cool Death

Leopard videos confiscated from room 97, which the characters last saw in Sever's office.

So the characters have to get the disc back for Harold and the Death Leopards, but they also need to find the origin of the disc and the other Death Leopard propaganda if they're to properly clear their names. Finally, if the players have any sense of self-respect at all, they'll want revenge on Harold and his friends for beating them up and tormenting them.

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* If the characters don't report to the confession booth, it'll show up on Sever's logs and he will confront the characters, demanding to know why they dared defy his orders to confess.

The Confession Booth

If you can, wait until the characters are deep in discussion about how they'll get the disc from Sever's office, and ideally until they're proposing something really treasonous. That's when technician Gary-R pops his head around the corner and says that the confession booth should be working if they want to give it a blast, pardon the pun.

Inside the confession booth, a character gets to have a frank, one-on-one discussion with Friend Computer. Just citizen, Computer and whatever IntSec monitors happen to be listening. In a concerned, parental fashion, The Computer will ask if the character has anything to confess. Play Friend Computer as a deranged ELIZA bot.

'Friend Computer, there was treasonous propaganda found in my dormitory.'

AND HOW DID THAT MAKE YOU FEEL?

'I think someone was trying to frame me!'

WHY DO YOU THINK SOMEONE WAS TRYING TO FRAME ME?

'No, frame me not you!'

AND HOW DID THAT MAKE YOU FEEL?

Eventually, The Computer will assign a suitable punishment to the confessee, like a Spontaneous Loyalty Demonstration or putting them in touch with an IntSec handler who will expect them to inform on their friends and classmates.

Meanwhile, outside the confession booth, Gary-R lingers to chat with the other characters. He'll be as friendly

Gary-R
Management 7
Stealth 8
   Sneaking 12
   Security Systems 12
Violence 10
   Demolition 14
Hardware 10
   Electronic Engineering 14
Software 5
   Hacking 9
Wetware 7
Mutant Power: Electroshock (Power 6)
Secret Society Affiliation: Death Leopard
Armor: None
Weapons: Laser pistol (W3K)

as possible, asking about their problems and even giving advice. If they tell him about the confiscated propaganda, he'll say that he can get them a code to Sever-R's door for a small fee—say, 50 credits. If they don't mention it, then he'll hint at it anyway—Gary-R is the one initiating the bullies into Death Leopard, so they came whining to him about the disaster last night in room 97 immediately.

Getting the Disc

There are several ways for the characters to get the disc out of Sever's office. They can try sneaking past all his security systems. They can arrange to get called back to his office for some other misdemeanor, then try to steal the disc from the cabinet while there. They can even try to convince Sever to give them the disc for some reason ('*Sir, we found the Death Leopard propaganda so disgusting, we thought we should watch it again. Just to really punish ourselves.*')

If the characters don't get the disc by the end of the following day, then Harold, James, and Mike show up at their dormitory and threaten them again, saying that they'll beat the characters to a pulp with their Armed Forces-issued Training Truncheons—unless the characters agree to help them tomorrow. If they did get the disc, then Harold and co. threaten them anyway and force them to help.

Investigating the Bullies

The characters will probably want to keep track of Harold and his friends. The Armed Forces training consists of basic weapons handling, target practice, and lots and lots of marching up and down in the crèche's FunBall court, which is right next to the cafeteria.

After the marching and the target practice, most of the older Junior Citizens crawl off to their dormitories. However, Harold, James, and Mike have all volunteered to stay on after

the training to clean the court up. If the characters spy on them for long enough, they see Harold stealing Cold Fun from the cafeteria, mixing in some toilet cleaner, and pouring the resulting mixture into a pipe running between the court and the washrooms opposite the cafeteria. This pipe has been stoppered at both ends, and the wannabe Death Leopards are filling it with the same primitive explosive they were messing with earlier.

If the characters ask around the crèche, then it's easier enough to find out Harold and his friends have been causing trouble in the crèche for years, but ever since the confession booth broke down, they've been acting strangely—instead of just beating people up all the time, they've been going off on their own, or else kicking everyone else out of the video room so they can watch their own discs in private. The only new influence in the crèche is Gary-R the Technician....

The Big Bang

On the third day of the Armed Forces training, the whole crèche is called to the FunBall court to see how the upper class has got on with their training. They will demonstrate their readiness to fight for Alpha Complex by marching up and down the court a few times. As a special treat, Calvin-G has brought an Armed Forces tank to the crèche, to show the Junior Citizens what they could get to play with in a few years.

The tank is parked directly over the explosive-filled pipe. The pipe runs, remember, from the washrooms to the FunBall court.

Just before the parade, Harold and his friends (all dressed up in their lovely little Junior Vulture Trooper uniforms) confront the characters and give them their instructions. The characters are to go to the washrooms opposite the cafeteria and drop a bomb down the toilet when they hear the guns firing. It will go down the pipe and detonate
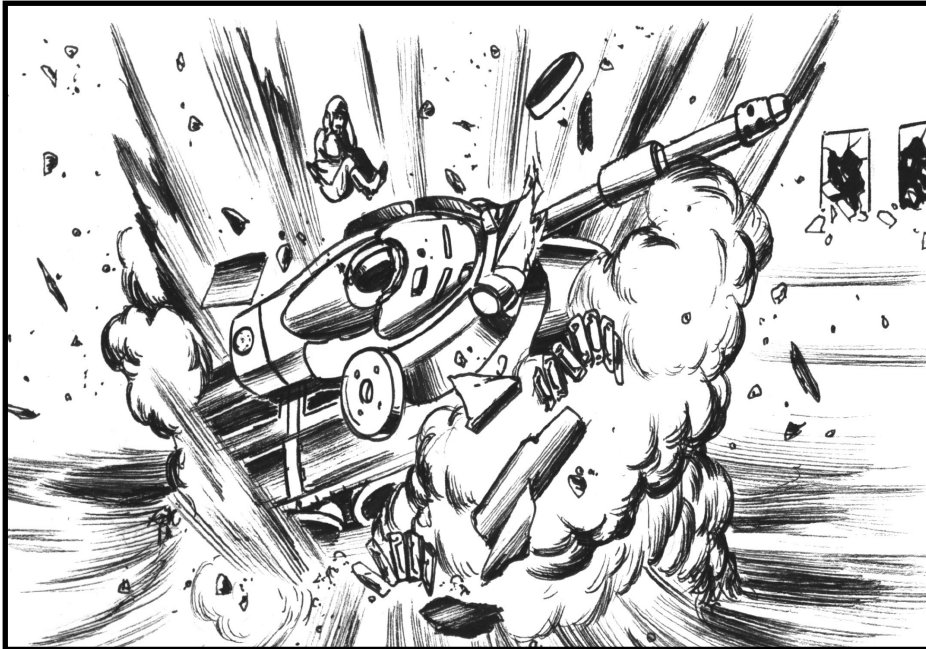
If the characters don't flush the detonator, then nothing happens. Harold fires his gun again, just in case the characters missed their cue the first time. If things still don't explode, then he swears eternal vengeance on the characters and gives up. The rest of the parade goes off flawlessly, Calvin-G gives a speech about how he looks forward to seeing a new generation of brave young citizens giving their lives repeatedly in many, many important battles against the Commie menace. The Armed Forces leave, and Vanessa-Y tells the characters' class that they'll be playing Explosive FunBall on the court next period. Who doesn't love playing sports on what amounts to a minefield?

Wrapping Up

The absolute best result for the characters is that they stop the bullies, clear their names, discover that Gary-R is the one supplying the Death Leopard propaganda, turn them all into Stepplecruch, and generally act like good little IntSec-informing Junior Citizens. Bless.

Everyone will distrust them because they're just too good and loyal.

The absolute worst result is that the characters get blamed for the bombing. Everyone thinks they're dangerous terrorists, they're kept under close watch by crèche security, Sever torments them—and they don't even get the cool factor of being part of Death Leopard, as Harold and his friends are the ones who set the whole thing up, and they're the ones who send the video of the explosion into the Death Leopard secret video channel. The characters get punishment duties for the next year.

Everyone will distrust them because they're just too dangerous and disloyal.

The actual result is likely somewhere in the middle, where the characters are just distrusted anyway for no good reason.

the explosive in the pipe, blowing up the tank. It will be *awesome.* If the characters don't help, then Harold and his friends will beat them up every day for the next two years, understand?

If the characters examine the bomb, then it's obviously far more high-tech than anything that Harold could build. It's a neat little bundle of electronics, obviously made by someone with a high Demolitions skill. It was provided by Gary-R, and was in fact built with bits salvaged from the confession booth.

Then, Stepplecruch (or Sever, whichever will scare your players more) shows up and orders the characters to report to the FunBall court *immediately*—everyone in their class is supposed to watch the parade. Remember to clap when the 'applause' light is switched on. So, obey the teachers and get beaten up until Harold and his friends graduate, or obey the wannabe Death Leopards and get into more trouble? (Or, being player characters, try to do both and fail dismally.)

If the characters look around the court when the parade is in progress, then they'll see little Al lurking in one corner with a portable video camera. He's recording the whole impending disaster, so Harold and friends can impress their new Death Leopard pals.

The parade starts. The Junior Vulture troopers march up and down and up and down. Stirring music plays. *Glory glory Hail Computer and the clones go marching ooonnnn!* Finally, the marchers take up a position at the far end of the FunBall court and fire their training lasers. That's the cue for the characters to flush the detonator.

If they do flush the detonator, then there's a satisfyingly large boom. The blast is channeled by the structural supports of the FunBall court, so the explosion just destroys the tank and most of the cafeteria, while leaving everyone unhurt save for minor cuts and bruises. Calvin-G is deeply traumatized by the loss of his beloved tank; Stepplecruch has to be sedated before he explodes with anger. Unless the characters cover their tracks really well, or manage to obtain proof of Harold and friends' involvement with the Death Leopard society, then they are blamed for the explosion and punished for the next year.

3. Mutant Testing Time

Synopsis: It's mutant testing time, when all the Junior Citizens are tested for signs of genetic deviancy. As the characters develop their own mutant powers, though, it seems as those some mysterious enemy is willing to skip the testing part and go right to terminations...

What Happened Since Last Year

It's been roughly a full year since the characters arrived at their new crèche. (Remind the players to spend Perversity Points on buying new specialties.) How has life in the crèche been for the characters sine them? Have they made new friends? Have they turned any of these new friends in as traitors?

On Mutant Testing

Alpha Complex policy on mutant testing varies wildly from year to year; sometimes, random DNA testing is a constant hassle, with a citizen being asked to give a blood, skin or brain sample every time he walks down a corridor, and genetic drift being obsessively tracked by medical staff. ('*Aaaa! 0.0000000000001% drift! Mutant!*') At other times, HPD&MC tries to downplay the whole mutant problem, insisting that the cloning templates are 110% baseline human and adopting a 'registered mutants are (second-class) citizens too'. The current policy is to test all Junior Citizens for mutation through psychological probing. Those who are revealed to be mutants are either officially registered, or are quietly terminated (depending on the mutation).

Conspiracy Theories 101

Take a quick look back at the Overly Complex Backstory on page 38. Louis-V's manipulations resulted in the terminations of Jericho-V and Markus-U. However, you don't get to ULTRAVIOLET without having an escape route or two for every situation. Markus-U used his contacts to escape termination and went underground to plot his revenge on the upstart Louis-V, now Louis-U. (In order to escape, Markus-U also had to free Jericho-V, but Jericho-V was much less prepared to vanish, and has been living like a rat in the walls of Alpha Complex since then. He'll show up in the next scenario.)

Anyway, the diabolical Markus-U wants revenge, and he has discovered that Louis-U has an odd interest in one particular group of Junior Citizens in the JCT crèche. He therefore arranges for them to be...extracted.

It Always Starts With Assembly

Read the following to the players:
It only seems like last week that you arrived at the JCT sector crèche, but it was actually a full year ago. You've endured over 300 of these morning assembles, watched Administrator Stepplecruch haul one kid or another out of the lines and chastise them for some tiny failing. This morning, though, Stepplecruch walks in with a bounce in his step and a smile on his lip. That can't be good.

'*Good morningcycle, citizens.*'

'*GOOD MORNINGCYCLE, MR. STEPPLECRUCH.*'

'*Pay attention! I have some very special announcements this morning. Step forward Eustace.*'

One boy toward the front of the hall steps forward. You can barely see him, then the lights dim and the spotlight catches him. In the merciless glare of the spotlight, you can clearly see the line of yellow stripes running down the sides of Eustace's jumpsuit.

'*Tell your fellow citizens what you did, you horrible little freak.*'

'*I ate my teacher's PDC sir. I'm terrible sorry sir, it won't happen again sir.*'

'*And what did they tell you to do, Eustace.*'

'*Write my DNA code out 500 times on the board, sir.*'

'*Other than that, you fool!*'

'*Fill out the registration form, sir.*'

'Exactly! Eustace here is now a Registered Mutant, and we should acknowledge his honesty if not his genetic purity. Now, where there is one mutant, there could be more! Therefore, over the next few days, you will all be tested for signs of... mutation. The docbots and the psychologists from R&D will test each of you rigorously. Be happy! If you're a good, loyal little citizen, then your DNA is no doubt equally loyal. It is only the people who harbor treason in their hearts who also harbor treason in their cells!'

Stepplecruch peers at the huddled crowd in front of him. '*If you want to register your mutation before you're found out by the tests, then Mr. Sever has the forms. Otherwise, report to the testing center when called. That is all.*'

I'm Not A Mutant, Are You?

After Vanessa-Y's class in Information Exclusion For Happy Safety*, the characters go to lunch in the cafeteria, which gives them a moment to contemplate mutation and registration. Do any of them go and register? If they do, they get to fill out the Junior Citizen Mutant Registration form**.

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* Bob is RED Clearance working in a food vat. Alice is a GREEN-Clearance supervisor. To prevent sabotage, the manual for the food vat is Clearance YELLOW. How does Alice ensure Bob can do his job?

** Based on the wonderful Mutant Registration Form found in The Mutant Experience supplement.

Junior Citizen Mutation Registration Form

Distributed by Department 72 in coordination with the Office of Forms and Vouchers, PLC

Name _____-____-_____-____
Date and time _____
Crèche _____
Date of last field trip to a reactor _____
Registration Code of your clone family DocBot_____
Crèche Loyalty Officer's Signature _____

INSTRUCTIONS: Answer all questions fully and completely. Except where indicated, check only one response for multiple choice questions. If you have speculations as to the source of your mutation, include them on the back of this form. Practice good penmanship. Trust The Computer. Failure to obey is treason.

Having a mutation makes me feel (check all that apply):

☐ Happy		☐ Morose		☐ Satisfied	
☐ Unhappy		☐ Powerful		☐ Very worried	
☐ Enthusiastic		☐ Kind of tingly	☐ Inferior		
☐ Cunning		☐ Apathetic		☐ Despairing	

I need to register my mutation because (check all that apply):

☐ I love mutants	☐ The Computer loves mutants
☐ I am being blackmailed	☐ I dare not disobey
☐ I lost a really dumb bet	☐ Honesty is the best policy
☐ I have a death wish	☐ My head is going to explode
☐ My awesome might should be used for the good of all Alpha Complex	

It takes me _____ to eat a HappyTummy Energy Bar.

☐ Yes ☐ No   I have been on the premises of a nuclear reactor within the last three months.

☐ Yes ☐ No   I have watched more than two complete episodes of the Best Good Happy Sector Hour.

☐ Yes ☐ No   I have heard of the secret society known as 'Psion'.

☐ Yes ☐ No   If given the choice, I would opt to terminate myself in hopes that my next clone would not suffer from this mutation.

☐ Yes ☐ No   My mutation is powerful enough to possibly harm the citizens, social institutions and/or property of Alpha Complex.

If 'yes', why should you be permitted to live on as a menace to all who surround you?

If 'no', how will your mutation be of any use to Alpha Complex?

Are any other children in your class also mutants?

If yes, why did you not report them earlier?

Describe your mutation. Include specific examples with time, date, location and witnesses.

The average handling time for this form is between <u>THREE DAYS</u> and <u>EIGHTEEN MONTHS</u>. Resubmitting an identical copy of this form will not expedite processing in any way. If you need to alter or amend any information on this form, resubmit it with an attached Application Modification Rider (993-51-Z8854). Until this form has been duly and fully processed, you are not authorized to use your purported mutation in any way whatsoever. If your application for Registered Mutant status is approved, you will be retroactively subject to all requirements and regulations thereof, in accordance with section 72 of the Laws of Alpha Complex ed. 39/B.3.9.

An announcement calls the characters by name, ordering them to report to the school docbot for DNA testing. There's a long line of other students waiting to be tested. It's rather like queuing for the security check in an airport, only here, you're the hand luggage that gets put through the machine.

Fortunately for the characters, DNA testing for mutation doesn't work. Well, the test works, the results don't. Soon after the first mutants were discovered, The Computer put R&D to work on a test for mutation. When they started testing, they found *lots* of mutants—back then, every third citizen had some form of mutation. Obviously, this was a flaw in the test, not in Friend Computer's perfect cloning process. The scientists reduced the sensitivity threshold of the test more and more, until it stopped giving such unacceptably accurate results. The current version of the test wouldn't detect a three-headed fire breathing mutant as anything other than 100% human. (If a tested citizen is later found to be a mutant, then obviously some traitor sabotaged the mutant test, or the records. The test itself is infallibly accurate. The Computer says so.*)

> ** Some versions of the test randomly tag every tenth citizen as a mutant, just to avoid later accusations of sabotage.*

For added fun, have one of the characters develop a mutant power while waiting in line to be tested. Build paranoia and stress as much as you can, before...nothing happens, and all the characters get the 'All clear. Have a nice daycycle. Would to like to have some unnecessary surgery?' message from the docbot.

Then, as the characters are walking away from the testing center, the intercom activates again, ordering them all to report for random psychological testing.

Random Psychological Testing Is Fun

The announcement directs the characters down a corridor not normally accessible to Junior Citizens, on the edge of the crèche complex. There's a kid huddled in one corner, sobbing and muttering about '*the switches, the switches*'. As the characters approach, a door opens and a citizen in a ORANGE-clearance jumpsuit, emerges, pulling on a lab coat as he does so. He beckons for the characters to join him, and takes out a PDC. '*Got an unhappy child here*' he says into his PDC, '*need a happiness officer and 20ccs of Gelgernine here, stat!*' He pats the crying child on the head and says '*chin up, citizen. We'll erase those unhappy feelings in no time, just as soon as we've processed these test subjects*.' He indicates that the characters should follow him back through the door.

This citizen is Vance-O-UIS-3, a Troubleshooter. The shadowy manipulator, Markus, has sent a Troubleshooter team under false pretences to kidnap the characters, in the hopes of finding out which of them is connected to Louis-U. The Troubleshooter team infiltrated the R&D team sent to do the psychological testing.

Well, 'infiltrated' is being kind; they're Troubleshooters. They're not capable of that sort of subtlety.

On the far side of the door is a corpse, with a still-smoking laser burn in his chest. Up until a few moments ago, he was wearing a lab coat, which is now adorning the burly shoulders of Vance-O. The Troubleshooter waves his hand at the corpse and says that it's part of an earlier psychological test, and that the characters should ignore it. He leads them past a room filled with weird machines and probes (the actual psychological testing gear), into another room. There, the characters find two more Troublesho—er, psychological testing engineers, and a big metal box.

The other two Troubleshooters are Jenny-R and Fritz-R, Vance-O's team-mates. Normally, they work really well together for a Troubleshooter team. However, it's all going get a bit complex, because Jenny-R's a Psion agent and Fritz-R's a Commie. As soon as the characters are led into the room, Fritz does a double-take on seeing Joe and Jenny-R looks strangely at Nina. Vance-O doesn't notice his team's odd reaction, and turns to the characters.

Vance-O
Management 7
    Bootlicking 11
    Team-Building Exercises 13
Stealth 8
    High Alert 12
Violence 10
    Energy Weapons 14
    Vehicular Combat 14
Hardware 8
Software 8
Wetware 10
Mutant Power: Regeneration (Power 10)
Secret Society Affiliation: Sierra Club
Armor: Orange reflec (E1)
Weapons: Laser pistol (W3K)

Jenny-R
Management 10
    Hygiene 14
Stealth 8
    Sneaking 12
    Disguise 12
Violence 8
    Energy Weapons 12
Hardware 9
    Nuclear Engineering 13
Software 10
Wetware 12
    Biosciences 16
Mutant Power: Telekinesis (Power 9)
Secret Society Affiliation: Psion
Armor: Red reflec (E1)
Weapons: Laser pistol (W3K)

Fritz-R
Management 6
    Moxie 10
Stealth 10
    High Alert 14
    Disguise 14
Violence 8
    Energy Weapons 12
    Dying Heroically For The Cause 14
Hardware 10
    Vehicle Ops and Maintenance 14
Software 8
    Vehicle Programming 12
Wetware 8
Mutant Power: Pyrokinesis (Power 8)
Secret Society Affiliation: Communists
Armor: Red reflec (E1)
Weapons: Laser pistol (W3K)

'*This here, kids*', he says, pointing at the big metal box, '*is a Mark II Psychological Stress Simulation Porta-Cube. Just get in and sit quietly. You'll hear strange noises and the box might shake a bit, but it's all part of the simulation. Everything you experience is just part of the simulation. We'll be monitoring your bio-signs from outside—right Jenny-R?*' He glances at Jenny-R, who hastily waves her PDC in the air and gives the characters a big thumbs-up and cheery grin. '*Well, kids, get in the box. And remember, it's only a test.*'

Once the characters get in the box, they find it's small, cramped and a bit smelly. There's a bench in the middle of the box, and hand-holds along the sides. As soon as all the characters are in the box, Fritz-R closes and seals the door, taking one last look at Joe as he does so.

The box is then wheeled out of the room (*shake shake*) and loaded onto the back of an autocar (*creak lift thump*) which zooms out of the crèche complex and out of JCT sector entirely (*rattle zoom swerve zoom rattle beep brake beeeeeep swerve crash tinkle zoom siren zoom more swerve phew*) where it is loaded onto a flybot (*braaake clank whir clunk click FWWOOOOOOOSH rattle*) to fly to Markus-U's secret fortress in the Outdoors.

At some point, ideally after they get loaded onto the flybot, the characters do something to escape from the box. If they don't escape, then the following chain of events happens (and can be overheard from within the box):

Vance-O: We'll be at the debriefing in no time. You know, team, this is our most successful mission *ever*. No casualties, no meltdowns. It might be the happy drugs talking, guys, but I'm really proud of both of you. I…Jenny-R, why are your eyes glowing.
Jenny-R: Er, I'm wearing contact lenses **PSION SPEAKS THROUGH ME. THE CHILD HAS POTENTIAL AND MUST BE DELIVERED TO CONTROL.**
Vance-O: Mutant! Jenny-R's a mutant! Fritz! Get her!
Fritz-R: Yes comra-, er, Team Leader!
Jenny-R: I'm not a mutant! And neither is the child!
Vance-O & Fritz-R: Death to mutants!
Laser fire!
Vance-O: Dump the box! Kill the muties!
Fritz-R: No! UNCLE lives! UNCLE will lead us to victory over the hated Capitalist state!
**Vance-O & Jenny-R:** Commie!
More laser fire!

Some of the inaccurate fire blasts the flybot's controls, causing the aircraft to spiral out of control. The safest place is back inside the box as the flybot crashes onto an outlying industrial dome on the fringes of Alpha Complex. All the Troubleshooters are killed or thrown out of the crashing plane. All the characters (unless they do something really stupid) survive.

It's Like A School Tour, Only We Didn't Sign The Permission Slips

So, the characters are sitting in the remains of a crashed flybot, on top of a low dome, on the edge of Outdoors. It's currently night-time, so the conditions aren't too scary, but when the sun comes up the characters will see just how big and scary the Outside world is. The flybot is wrecked, but its communications systems are still functioning so they can call for help.

There are now up to four distinct groups chasing the characters:

- Markus-U's minions, who detected the crash and intend to recapture the characters.
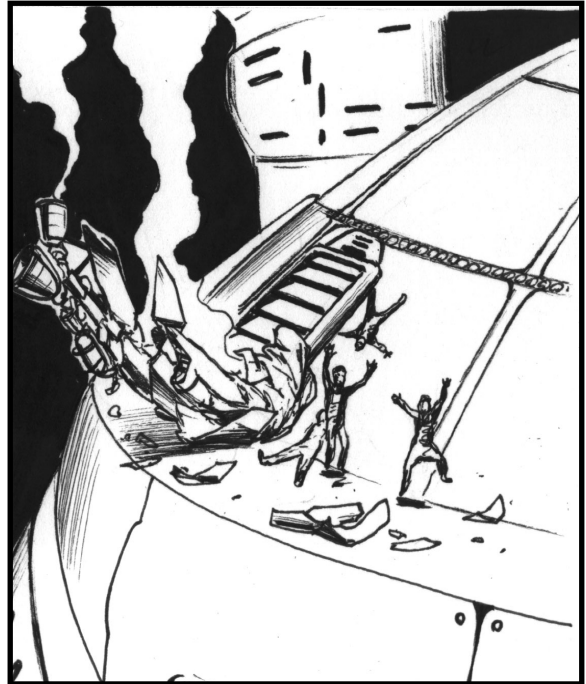
- The rescue party that will be sent out from Alpha Complex when the characters send a distress call (or when it becomes obvious they've gone missing).

- Psion, looking for Nina.

- Louis-U's minions, looking for the characters.

However, the first group to find the characters is not from any of these factions—it's a team from the Vent Uncloggers Service Firm, whose job is to unclog the vents and pipes that poke out of the dome in this industrial sector. While the Vent Uncloggers have to go Outdoors as part of their job, none of them have the clearance to get access to any of the Armed Forces scouting reports. They have no idea about what's out there, and have come up with all sorts of bizarre rumors and beliefs about the creatures living in the Outdoors—specifically, that there are hordes of pygmy barbarian cannibals lurking out there.

The Vent Uncloggers travel outdoors in a specialized vehicle, a sort of squat train that clings to the surface of the dome. The vehicle

slowly inches it way up to a vent, the Uncloggers, unclog it, and then continue on. They wear heavy boiler suits and breather masks, and unclog the vents using hydraulic-powered extending poles. Anyway, the crashed flybot has wrapped itself around a vent, clogging it. The Vent Uncloggers were in the region, so they got dispatched to unclog the vent. The Vent Unclogger team is led by Charlie-R-GCK-1, who is the first to make contact with the characters. He assumes they're barbaric cannibals, here to eat his flesh, so naturally, he tries to convince them to eat his co-workers in the truck instead. (Charlie-R isn't that bright to begin with, and the combination of the fumes from all the vents, and the suit's narrow and grime-encrusted goggles means that he's barely capable of perceiving the outside world.)

The characters can either argue with Charlie-R, and possibly use the Vent Uncloggers to get back inside Alpha Complex, or they can wander off on their own, clambering down the dome and wandering around Outdoors.

Charlie-R
Management 4
    Hygiene 8
Stealth 7
Violence 8
    Agility 12
    Demolitions 12
Hardware 12
    Habitat Engineering 16
Software 6
Wetware 7
    Biosciences 11
Mutant Power: Mechanical Intuition (Power 10)
Secret Society Affiliation: FCCC-P
Armor: Hazard suit
Weapons: Unclogging pole, O5K

◼ The Rescue Parties

The various groups sent to rescue or recapture the characters can show up at any time. Bring them in whenever things start to drag. Ideally, the characters should find themselves bouncing from one group to another, only to finally be dragged back into Alpha Complex by the actual rescue team.

Markus-U's Minion: The renegade High Programmer fled Alpha Complex and established himself using the experimental warbots developed using the OMEGA program. Therefore, he sends a small scout warbot after them. Like all of the independent bots, the scout is a ghastly assemblage of rusting spare parts and tangled circuits, as it has been built and repaired by other bots in the wild.

The scout warbot swoops down on the crash site of the flybot, then starts circling around like a huge black wraith-thing suspended on glowing blue plasma jets. When it finds the characters, it starts trying to scare them by blasting the ground near them with its lasers. The warbot is under strict instructions not to injure any of the kids. **SURRENDER! SURRENDER! YOU WILL COME WITH ME TO THE FORTRESS! THE MASTER COMMANDS IT!** The serial number OMEGA-X-12 is clearly visible on its side.

The Scout Warbot
Management 4
Stealth 8
    High Alert 12
Violence 8
    Agility 12
    Energy Weapons 12
Armor: 3
Weapons: Laser cannon (W3K)

Psion: Psion tries to retrieve the kids by sending psychic visions, guiding them toward a back door into Alpha Complex. If they do end up going in this back door, they meet a circle of seven tall people in dark robes, who communicate silently through telepathy. They stare at each of the characters, nod, then vanish into the shadows. Nina isn't ready yet, but Psion will keep an eye—or a mind—on her.

Louis-U's Minions: Louis-U contacts the Armed Forces and orders them to scout the area.

However, lines of communication get a little crossed, and the 'scouting' becomes a prelude to 'precision bombing' the area. The area of Outdoors where the characters crashed gets used as an artillery range by the 123rd Expeditionary Force. If the characters can dodge the incoming shells, or somehow contact the army units on the horizon, then they can get rescued that way. If Markus-U's warbot is hanging around at this point, then the Army may assume the characters are in league with it, and treat them as hostile forces.

The Rescue Party: The mission to rescue the lost children is assigned to the nearest Troubleshooter team—the team of Vance-O, Jenny-R, and Fritz-R. After all, they weren't on a real mission earlier, it was a fake mission created by Markus-U. As soon as their replacement clones arrive, the three are sent back Outdoors to recover the characters. Everyone in the team is very on edge, but they're back at *status quo ante*—Vance-O knows that Jenny-R's old clone was a mutant, and that Fritz-R's old clone was a Commie, but their new clones are ok, right? Right?

◼ Home Again, Home Again

Eventually, the characters make it back to the crèche, where Stepplecruch is less than pleased to see them. He has no idea how they are connected to the dead psychologist and the missing testing box, but he knows they're responsible somehow. Just as he's about to punish them for leaving the crèche without permission, though, another Junior Citizen rushes in and salutes.

'*Sir! Sir! Johnson's set himself on fire with his mind sir!*' bleats the child. With a sigh, Stepplecruch stalks away from the characters to deal with this latest crisis, leaving them to contemplate the increasing weirdness of their lives…

4. Commie on Campus

Synopsis: The characters are put on the crèche FunBall team after a Horrible Accident. While training, they discover a mysterious stranger hiding in the tunnels underneath the crèche. He recognizes them, and offers to help them uncover the mysteries of their pasts. However, he's actually the disgraced Jericho–V, now a wanted criminal, and what he wants isn't good for the characters.

▌ What Happened Since Last year

Another year has passed since the last scenario. What have the character done since then? Have they tried to join secret societies? Has Joe made contact with the Commies, or has Thomas renewed his old FCCCP contacts?

▌ Funball

FunBall is the main approved sport in Alpha Complex. It's Fun. With a ball. And a set of rules big enough to stun an ox, and complex enough to make grown lawyers cry. There are many, many variations and special rules relating to FunBall, most of which center around allowing or banning various forms of heavy artillery.*

Here are the rules for playing FunBall in **PARANOIA**.
1. The player picks what skill he is going to use. Violence is always appropriate, as is any FunBall-related specialty. Other skills and specialties *of any kind* may be used, as long as the player quotes a FunBall rule or regulation that fits. As the FunBall rules do not exist, the players have to make them up. Each skill or

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* A fuller description of FunBall is in the free download Elective Activity or Pursuit Clubs, a chapter cut from The Traitor's Manual supplement. It is available at http://www. mongoosepublishing.com/pdf/parasocialclubs. pdf, along with many other fine forms and other downloads

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specialty (other than Violence and FunBall-specific ones) may be used once per match only.
2. The player makes the skill check.
3. Play passes to the next player on the other team.
4. If both players make successful checks, or if both fail, then the play is a draw. If one succeeds and the other fails, then the successful team wins that play.
5. The first team to get three successful plays in a row wins.
6. Yay! Go Team!

▌ School Assemblies Are Like Briefings, Only With Less Firepower

Again, the morning assembly is the kick-off for the scenario. Stepplecruch sweeps in, looking more and more like some sort of mutant flightless bird every day.

'Good morningcycle citizens.'
GOOD MORNINGCYCLE, MR. STEPPLECRUCH.
'Firstly, discussion of the recent incident on the FunBall court must stop. The accident has been classified YELLOW, and no one is permitted to discuss it, or even think about it. The radiation has been cleared up, and the chemical spills should evaporate naturally on their own soon. However, the crèche's FunBall team has unfortunately been erased by the unnameable incident, therefore, we need a new team.'

He smiles and presses a button. Spotlights illuminate the characters.

'Hello, new FunBall team. Report to Mr. Sever for training after classes.'

The players may ask what happened to the old FunBall team. Give whatever contradictory hints you

want (*'yeah, you saw some guys in biohazard suits chopping up this thing in the corridor. It looked like a chunk of purple tentacle'*) as it's irrelevant to this scenario. If they ask why they're the ones chosen to be the new team, instead of someone actually competent, then Stepplecruch just mutters something about the No Child Left On The Bench equal opportunity sports program.

Sever meets the characters at the FunBall court. JCT Sector has reached the semi-finals of the inter-sector Junior Citizen Junior FunBall Junior League, and it is a matter of school pride that they win. They're up against their traditional rivals in NCT Sector, and they've got to win! Why, some people have hinted that the unnameable incident was actually…sabotage by NCT! It's staggering to think that some citizens could be so unloyal as to do…*that* just to win a FunBall league, but traitors are everywhere. He issues the characters with their FunBall uniforms (body armor, visor, FunBall Batstick, ball spray, springs, nets, helmet camera, flares, etc etc) and then introduces them to the crèche's newest acquisition— the FunBall Auto-Batter 5,000s, a FunBall playing bot. It's designed to simulate an entire opposing FunBall team on its own, so it's covered in arms, bats, nets, hoses, chainsaws and other entirely legal sports utensils. Sever orders the characters to practice with the Auto-Batter for a while, then leaves.

However, the Auto-Batter actually was sabotaged by Jericho-V to lead the characters to him. He's reprogrammed the Auto-Batter using the OMEGA code, and it's now going to attack the characters and frame NCT Sector Crèche so Jericho-V can manipulate the characters' desire for revenge on

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* Yes, it's an absurdly convoluted plan. He's ex-VIOLET, what do you expect?

their rivals.* It's now a combination Friendly FunBall Simulating Bot and a Psychotic Killing Machine.

Examining the Auto-Batter reveals that it has four modes.

1. Training (FunBall skill 4)
2. Easy (FunBall skill 8)
3. Hard (FunBall skill 12)
4. Professional (FunBall skill 16)

The Auto-Batter's mode can be changed in the middle of combat. Its memory chips are stored beneath a transparent plastic shield on its side, and the characters can clearly see a little motorized caddy switching chips around when the mode is changed. However, thanks to the sabotage, any chips not being used for FunBall are used for its Improvised Weapon skill. (Subtract the bots current FunBall skill from 16 to get its Improved Weapon skill.)

When turned on, the Auto-Batter screeches 'GLORY TO NCT CRECHE! TERMINATING OPPOSING TEAM!' and it will keep attacking the characters until (a) they somehow destroy it or (b) they win the FunBall game. The Auto-Batters' wild attacks tear up much of the reconstructed FunBall pitch, as it spits FunBalls, slashes with its chainsaw, gouges the ground and smashes through walls in its relentless pursuit of the characters.

Auto-Batter
FunBall 4/Improvised Violence 12
FunBall 8/ Improvised Violence 8
FunBall 12/ Improvised Violence 4
FunBall 16/ Improvised Violence 0
Armor: 1
Weapons: FunBall things O5K

Sever returns once the characters have dealt with the Auto-Batter, scowls at the devastation, and orders the characters to clean up the mess.

▌ The Man Under The Floor

As the characters scrub the oil stains and pick up the debris, they discover that the thrashing of the Auto-Batter opened up an access panel in the floor, and some bits of the bot fell down there. They can hear some motorized part still whirring and tapping the walls, making an awful racket. (If they don't go down the hole, then Sever comes back in and tells them that the repair bots need all the parts from the Auto-Batter, and no one is leaving until they find all the Auto-Batter bot bits.) The trapdoor leads to a narrow shaft, which leads to one of the thousands of miles of near-lightless access tunnels that riddle Alpha Complex. There's a fetid smell coming from the tunnel.

As they descend, something moves below them. The sounds from the fallen motor part start moving away from them, as it is picked up by Jericho-V, who scuttles away through the tunnels. The old clone has trouble moving through the narrow tunnel, though, so the characters can catch up with him easily enough.

Jericho-V
Management 13
    Con Games 17
    Moxie 17
Stealth 10
    Sneaking 14
    Security Systems 14
Violence 7
    Energy Weapons 11
Hardware 10
    Electronic Engineering 14
Software 14
    Hacking 18
   Operating Systems 18
Wetware 7
    Suggestion 11
Mutant Power: Charm (Power 7)
Secret Society Affiliation: None
Armor: None
Weapons: None

Jericho-V has been living in the walls of Alpha Complex for as long as any of the characters have been alive. He's got wild, wide eyes from ten years of living in constant semi-darkness, a ragged beard, and he's haggard and whip-thin from near-starvation. He's wearing a tattered prison uniform over the threadbare rags of a once-violet jumpsuit. He's nested in the tunnels beneath the crèche for the last few
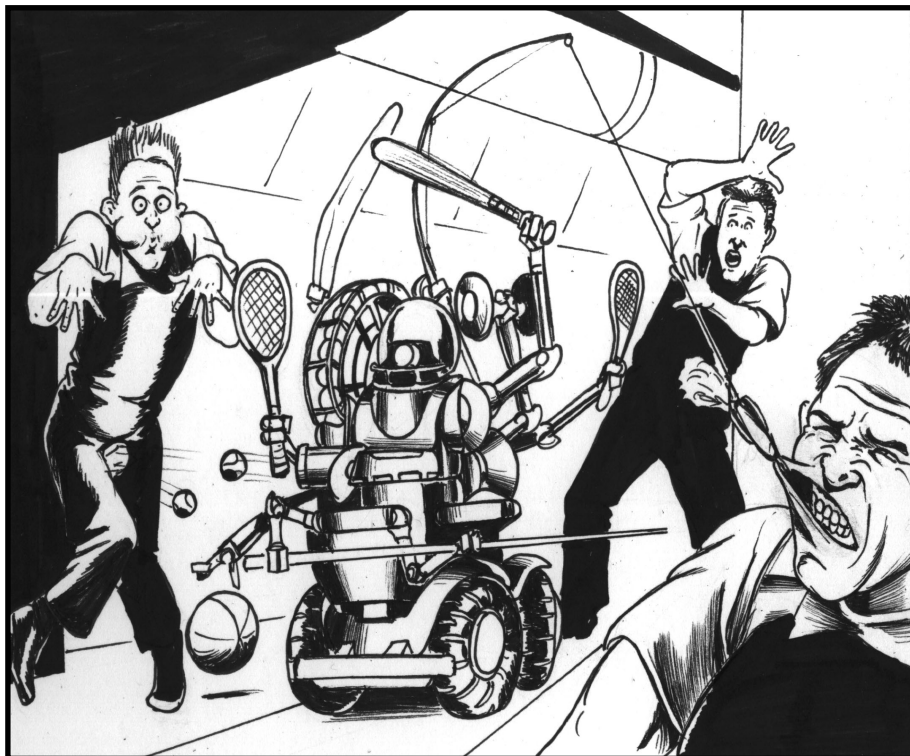
weeks. His little hideout is filled with bedding made up of discarded paperwork. The floor is covered with piles of scavenged trays from cafeterias, which he licks to get the necessary nutrients to survive. There's also a tangle of wires connected to a PDC which is wired into a cable running through the tunnel, giving him access to the gray subnets. (He's been selling high-clearance secrets on the black market to survive.)

Jericho-V immediately recognizes William and Joe at least as being related to his former ally and former Commie contact respectively, but any Junior Citizens would be of use to him. After ten years of exile, Jericho-V has happened upon a plan to regain some of his standing, but it needs a Junior Citizen. He knows about the abandoned OMEGA project to make sentient warbots that would present a controllable threat to Alpha Complex, how it was abandoned when Jericho-V attempted to frame the other members of the group as Commies, and how Markus-U fled Alpha Complex taking the OMEGA prototypes with him. Jericho-V still has a copy of the OMEGA code, and intends to install it into a new warbot. As Jericho-V is officially dead, then the disaster will be blamed on Louis-U.

So, Jericho-V's plot is:
1. Get the characters on his side.
2. Get the characters to arrange for a school tour to a warbot factory.
3. Get the characters to install the OMEGA code onto a warbot.
4. Command the warbot to go on a destructive rampage across Alpha Complex.
5. Blame Louis-U.
6. ???
7. Profit.

Your New Best Friend

Jericho-V will try to ingratiate himself with the characters by any means necessary. He will claim that he was once a high-clearance executive, but that he was framed by a conspiracy of traitors and banished from his formerly high position. One day, he assures the characters, the ongoing IntSec investigation will clear his name, but until then he must fight to survive. If the characters could smuggle him a morsel of food from the cafeteria, he would be most grateful.

Jericho will try to convince the characters to trust him, offering advice on whatever problems they have. He can ensure they get excellent results in upcoming exams, put them in touch with secret societies, show them how best to deal with their enemies and how to navigate the labyrinthine bureaucracy of Alpha Complex.

After a few minutes of conversation, Jericho-V sends the characters back to the surface, telling them not to tell anyone about him; they'd assuredly get into trouble if they did.

More FunBall Fun

Soon after the characters return to the crèche, Stepplecruch swoops down upon them. He's furious about the destruction of the Auto-Batter, and wants the characters' version of events. As the only version of events that would make him happy is one where the Auto-Batter survives and the characters don't, he remains angry no matter what they tell him. He also tells them that one of the High Programmers has expressed an interest in seeing the match—an honored Hero of the Complex named Louis-U. The characters had better win the upcoming FunBall match if they want to ever even see a RED-clearance jumpsuit when they graduate.

Stepplecruch sends them to speak to Vanessa, who has obtained footage of the NCT FunBall team in action. Apparently, he says, Vanessa still has some useful contacts in Internal Security, as the footage is of the enemy's training session. Reviewing the tape is a depressing experience, as the team is vastly more skilled than the characters. Indeed, it looks like there was an accident in the NCT clone banks, as all their players look almost identical. It's like watching a whole clone family of superfit athletes playing at once.

Vanessa suggests morale might play a factor in the upcoming match—maybe if the characters organize a cheerleading team to support them in the match, it might demoralize the NCTers—or at least distract the characters from the prospect of inevitable defeat, because they don't have a hope of winning the match.
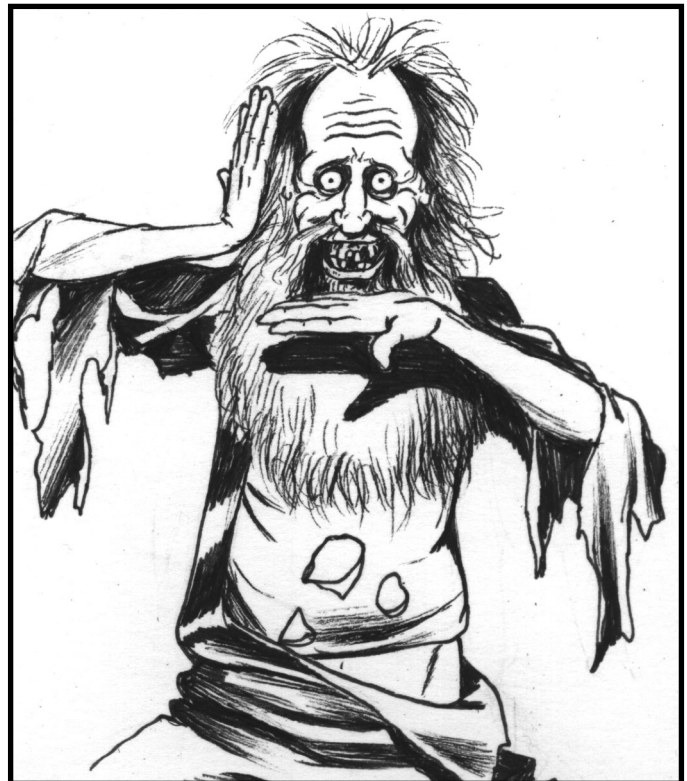
Sever's Office

What if the characters are really honest, and turn Jericho-V into the authorities? Troubleshooters descend on the crèche, lasers blasting, and eventually capture the renegade. Commendations all round. Soon afterwards, IntSec agents enter the school and take Vanessa-Y away for questioning too. If the characters search Jericho-V's nest, they find a copy of the OMEGA program and notes on how he was going to use it to gain control of a warbot. The characters could even try to replicate his plan.

The High Programmer Cometh

Jericho-V's plan revolves around framing Louis-U for the warbot rampage, which relies on Louis-U being in his private ivory tower of ultimate leisure, and not out in public at a Junior league FunBall match. Jericho-V has no idea that his old rival is going to show up at the match, and will not believe the characters if they repeat what Stepplecruch said.

Hey Mister, Can You Help Us Win The Funball Match

When told about their FunBall plight, Jericho-V puts his plan into action. There's a little-known rule in Alpha Complex—if a PLC service firm gets a request for a school tour, they have to accept, even if the firm's activities are classified. The Computer values the education of its beloved Junior Citizens very highly. What the characters need to do is arrange a school tour to the Mighty Metal robotics firm, who make all sorts of bots—including the bot brains of FunBalls. Once the characters are in the factory, Jericho-V assures them, they just need to insert this virus (he gives them a disc with the OMEGA code on it) into a computer there. It'll give them control of the brand-new FunBall that will be used in the match, as Mighty Metal supplies all the FunBalls used in local games.

The first step is getting the service firm to arrange a school tour. One of the characters needs to write up a letter to the manager of the firm, and get Stepplecruch to sign it. Then, drop the letter into an outgoing mail tray in a teacher's office, and wait. It's up to the players how they accomplish this.

An Assembly About Bot Assembly

The daycycle after the characters get the letter out, Stepplecruch announces that the crèche has been invited to tour a bot factory. It will be a fascinating and useful experience for the Junior Citizens, many of whom will spend their entire lives in pointless low-level jobs like cleaning such factories once all the skilled engineers and programmers have finished their duties for the day.

He also introduces Ken-B-KRS-2, an IntSec agent. IntSec intelligence has led them to believe that a Commie agent named Jericho may be trying to infiltrate the school. The Junior Citizens should not panic, but should report anything out of the ordinary to Mr. Sever immediately, who will then pass it on to IntSec. There are BIG CASH REWARDS for turning in traitors! (If anyone does spill the beans about Jericho-V to Sever, then the teacher claims the reward himself.)

The Mighty Metal factory is very impressive indeed, if you like Death Star architecture (lots of pointless bits with no railings, lots of glowing lights without discernable purpose). Bots of all shapes and sizes are under construction, from giant 40-foot-tall warbots to little scrubbots and jackobots. The manager of the factory is Neal-B-RSC-3, a moderately competent supervisor who's able to stay on top of things when the factory is running like a well-oiled machine and nothing goes wrong. Add a few dozen crazed kids on stimulant drugs running around at random, pulling every lever and pressing every button they can find, though, and things rapidly become unsmooth. However, the teacher supervising the tour, Vanessa-Y, sticks close to the characters. If a few Junior Citizens are crushed by a passing industrial bot, that's bad, but if the second FunBall team gets splatted, that's far worse. In order to insert the disc given by Jericho-V, the characters will have to distract Vanessa-Y somehow.

There are plenty of computer terminals where they can insert the disc. When it's activated, the computer screen flashes up the message 'OMEGA ACTIVE. DOWNLOADING TO TARGET BOTS NOW...' The code is automatically transferred to two bot brains—a FunBall and a warbot.

Back at the crèche, Jericho-V shows the characters how to use a standard PDC to control the FunBall brain using the OMEGA control backdoor. The code also makes the bots sentient megalomaniacs who swear eternal hatred of Alpha Complex, but he doesn't mention that little quirk. This works as follows:

- ☞ Any character with a PDC can access the FunBall and make it do whatever they want—it's got its own little jet engines to zoom around the court. Controlling the FunBall requires a Software check, and a successful check means the characters automatically win that play. (See the FunBall rules on page 58.)

- ☞ In any round that none of the characters use a PDC, FunBall play continues normally, but the ball starts shouting that 'ALPHA COMPLEX WILL FALL BEFORE MY ROBOTIC HORDES' or 'COMMIEBOTS UNITE TO DESTROY THE FLESHBEINGS!' and other less-than-loyal slogans.

The Funball Match

The daycycle of the big match dawns. The match is being held at the JCT court, so the school is suddenly crowded with referees, fans, coaches, trainers, souvenir sellers, pundits, and other sports parasites. There's also lots and lots of security, because of the impending visit of the High Programmer. The characters are by far the least important part of the whole event, and are virtually ignored in the whirlwind of preparation. Notably, a huge television screen is set up in the FunBall court, for second-by-second replays of events in the match.

Soon before the match begins, the team and supporters from NCT Sector arrive. As previously seen in the training video, they are all nigh-identical hulking brutes who probably gland combat drugs straight into their brainstems. Without cheating, the characters don't have a hope.

Finally, the High Programmer himself arrives. An awed hush spreads over the assembled citizens, as this is the first time most of them have ever seen an ULTRAVIOLET. All of the characters do notice a distinct resemblance between Louis-U and William, although the High Programmer will studiously ignore his son for security reasons. Seconds after the High Programmer arrives, IntSec agents drag several people in the crowd away—Louis-U's presence draws out the assassins and the crazy people. Bodyguards are suddenly everywhere except on the FunBall court itself.

NCT FunBall Players
Management 6
    Intimidation 10
Stealth 9
    High Alert 13
Violence 12
    FunBall 16
Hardware 5
Software 5
Wetware 5
Mutant Power: Varies—throw in Adrenaline Control, Mental Blast, or Uncanny Luck if the characters are winning too easily
Secret Society Affiliation: None
Armor: None
Weapons: None

Let's Fun That Funball!

The game begins. The FunBall launches itself into the air from the regulation FunBall Deployment Chute, and squawks 'DEATH TO THE HATED MINIONS OF THE COMPUTER!' Fortunately for the characters, no one hears the ball's initial declaration of treasonous hate, as it immediately gets thwacked by a well-placed bat from the NCT team. The game begins.

Meanwhile, in his hidden lair beneath the court, Jericho-V puts his cunning plan into operation. He uses the OMEGA code to take control of a warbot from the Mighty Metal factory and sends it on a rampage. The bot's rampage is shown on one of the smaller pictures on the big TV screen in the FunBall court. Speaking through the warbot, Jericho-V shouts 'KNEEL BEFORE THE WRATH OF LOUIS-U, ALPHA COMPLEX! YOU NEVER SUSPECTED I WAS A TRAITOR, BUT I REALLY AM! YOU FOOLS TURNED ON JERICHO-V WHEN I WAS THE REAL COMMIE! NOW I TAKE MY REVENGE FOR NO APPARENT REASON!'

On the FunBall court, Louis-U shrugs—he's clearly not the one in control of the warbot, as he's out in public at a FunBall match. One of the security guards shouts 'but he's right here', and Jericho-V overhears this. As the characters play FunBall, they may notice Jericho-V poke his head out of the hidden trapdoor, see Louis-U, mutter a profanity, then duck back down underground. Jericho-V then orders the warbot to start making its way toward the JCT crèche—if he can't frame Louis-U, then he can at least kill him with the warbot.

As the warbot approaches JCT Sector, the control signals to the FunBall get mixed up with the ones going to the warbot. There is a 50% chance that any commands the characters send to the ball get sent to the bot instead. The characters can hear the massive warbot crashing through the walls and corridors between the factory and the crèche, and the whole crisis is being carried live on news channels anyway*.

> *: It's part of a new reality show, 'Troubleshooter Live'. The censors carefully black out any section of the screen that show the Troubleshooters failing in any way, and the commentators are expected to be unfailingly positive and happy at all times. 'It might look like that Troubleshooter got hit with a missile and blown into little wet fragments but he's just lulling that Commie bot into a false sense of security!'

They Think It's All Over

There are two conflicts the Troubleshooters need to win here—the FunBall match and the battle for survival against the rampaging warbot. If Jericho-V's hiding place is discovered or if he is captured, then the warbot continues to fulfill its primary OMEGA function of destroying Alpha Complex, so just removing the crazed traitor isn't a full solution.

If they win the match and the crèche isn't completely destroyed, then they are grudgingly congratulated by Stepplecruch and get to be in the presence of the High Programmer himself for a few moments—what an honor! If they lose the match, then Stepplecruch blames them for everything that went wrong, and the multi-trillion cost of the repairs to Mighty Metal and the rest of the sector will be taken out of their allowances.

5. Graduation

Another year has gone by, and the characters are now approaching the end of their final year in the crèche. Once they pass the final exam that assigns them to their service groups, they'll be out of the crèche and into The Computer's loyal workforce. This one exam will shape the future careers of the characters for the rest of their lives (or until some random error sends transfers them to Stripped Wire Plastic Recycling in the depths of Tech Services). Or will it…?

Synopsis: The characters are preparing for their final exams, when a cabal of fellow Junior Citizens reveals the deadly truth about the Alpha Complex education system. Just as they're dealing with that revelation, Vanessa-Y finally works out who the characters are. Unfortunately, she's assassinated by Sever-R, who kidnaps the characters and brings them to secret fortress of Markus-U. There, stuff explodes, and the characters are given a choice between betraying Alpha Complex and risking termination, or staying loyal in the hopes of an uncertain future.

The Final Assembly

Stepplecruch addresses the crowd of Junior Citizens. Once, you were struggling to see over the heads of older, taller citizens; now you're in your final year, the biggest and most powerful class in the school, kings of your own little domain. Of course, that's all about to end—the final exams are coming.

'The final exams are coming in three days' time', announces Stepplecruch, neatly segueing away from your internal monologue, *'as you know, the exams will determine your future ideal place in our ideal society, as well as your initial security clearance and prospects for advancement. These exams will consist of both aptitude and loyalty tests, as well as tests of how much you have learned during your time in the crèche. Solely on the grounds that your performance affects my end-of-yearcycle-bonus, I wish you good luck.'*

Just as the characters are leaving the assembly hall, one of their classmates, Ann-JC-JCT-1, beckons them over and passes them a note. The note says '*meet in hall 2 at midnight. Be there or else!'.* She then scurries away.

The Midnight Meeting

If the characters *don't* attend the meeting voluntarily, then they're dragged out of their bunks at around 0030 hours by annoyed classmates.

Everyone from the characters' class* is at the meeting. Standing at the top of the auditorium is Brock-JC, who

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* We've just realized that we've spared you the horror of D&D class jokes all through this scenario…

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none of the characters have ever had any real contact with. He's a quiet, serious young citizen, a solid candidate for a CPU clerk or maybe HPD&MC censor. Tonight, though, he seems animated and determined. This is his hour. He holds aloft a yellowing piece of paper, crumbled and stained and torn and obvious quite old.

'*My fellow citizens! Tonight we give thanks to that nameless Junior Citizen of old who found this document! From it, we know how the exam works, and how we can all work together to get the best possible results.*'

'How?' said a helpful prompter from the sidelines.

'*The rules state clearly: anyone who does too well must have been cheating and fails. Anyone who does very well gets promoted to RED clearance. Those who get an average result just pass the exam, while those who do too badly are tagged as mentally defective and fail. So, if all give the same answers, we'll all get the average result, and we'll all be fine.'*

Brock produces a stack of sheets of paper. '*These are average answer sheets. Just memorize these and give those answers to the exam questions. If anyone even thinks of trying to study anything else, then they're traitors to the class and must be stopped by any means necessary. Everyone clear with that?'*

A moment's thought reveals the flaw in Brock's proposal. If everyone else in the class is giving the same, average answers, then a little work and study means you can get a higher mark than everyone else. That's bad, because getting a noticeably higher mark means The Computer will think you cheated. However, if you get *someone else* to work even harder, then they get tagged as a traitor, you get a good result and get promoted, and everyone else scrapes a pass. In short, the system works best if you convince other people to break ranks, then use them as shields for your own treachery. All of the smarter, more ambitious people in the class immediately start trying to convince each other to break ranks and study for the

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Other Students
Management 10
  Ann: Cramming 14
  Brock: Oratory 14
Stealth 8
Violence 7
Hardware 8
Software 8
Wetware 8
Mutant Power: Varies. Brock: Deep Thought (Power 14), Ann: Hypersenses (Power 12)
Secret Society Affiliation: None
Armor: None
Weapons: None

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exams. If the players don't figure this one out, then Ann-JC comes and speaks to Eva or Thomas and tries to convince them to study.

Vanessa's Interrogation

The next day is given over entirely to study; the characters have no classes to attend. However, each of them is summoned individually to Vanessa-Y's office. Take the player out of the room for this interrogation, to give the other players a chance to plot against him. In her office, Vanessa-Y interrogates each character in turn, asking them about events in the previous adventures. She's managed to put most of the characters' backstories together. She'll ask questions like:

- **William:** Have you had any contact with High Programmer Louis-U? Do you know anything about illegal methods of procreation?

- **Nina:** Are you a mutant? Have you had any contact with the secret society known as Psion?

- **Joe:** Are you familiar with the activities of the Communist agent and enemy of the state codenamed 'UNCLE'? Are you aware of the theoretical abuse of the MemoMax data buffers to transfer memories into newly decanted clones?

- **Thomas:** Are you familiar with the activities of the Communist agent and enemy of the state codenamed 'UNCLE'? Are you aware of the theoretical abuse of the MemoMax data buffers to transfer memories into newly decanted clones?

- **Eva:** Tell me everything you have observed about your fellow classmates.

Vanessa-Y will try to press the characters to turn each other in, hinting that she knows everything and they're in trouble anyway, so they may as well ameliorate their plight by talking. Meanwhile, ask if the other players are studying for their exams, or are they just using the average answers provided by Brock?

Sever's Betrayal

The next day is another day of study. During the night, Vanessa-Y goes to speak to the crèche's loyalty officer, Sever-R, to get the characters' permanent records. Sever has been suspicious of the characters since the events of *Mutant Testing Time,* so he draws Vanessa-Y into conversation about the Junior Citizens. She finally confides her secret to him—all the trauma about being demoted down from the dizzy heights of VIOLET when she was implicated in the whole OMEGA/Commie/UNCLE scandal. Sever-R listens carefully, puts two and two together, mixes in his diabolical secret society contacts, and decides that this is his opportunity. He shoots Vanessa-Y hiding the body until he dumps it on the way to Markus-U's headquarters.

Then, the next morning, Sever-R summons the characters to his office for a private conference. He sits all the characters down opposite him, and smiles. 'It's time for a little career counseling, children. What do you think you all have to offer Alpha Complex in the future?' While they're singing their own praises, Sever-R overcharges his stun gun and zaps them all. Fade to black...

The Fortress of Markus-U

The characters wake up on a cold metal floor. They're in the throne room of renegade High Programmer Markus-U. When he escaped from Alpha Complex, he took several

dozen experimental bots infected with the OMEGA program. In the last ten years, he and his psychotic metal minions have built a fortress and an army from scrap metal and salvaged parts. He's also gone completely insane after ten years alone with no company except for megalomaniac warbots that hate all humans except when he is directly controlling them using the backdoor in the OMEGA code. Markus-U is now a cackling madman clothed in salvaged panels from long defunct bots, living in a teetering tower of black scrap metal.

Markus-U is sitting on his throne, surrounded by half a dozen of the misshapen bots constructed from spare parts since the exile. Sever-R is groveling in front of Markus-U, saying how these Junior Citizens are intimately connected to Markus-U's unfortunate exile and how the High Programmer of course will want to take revenge on them. Before Markus-U can reply, though, one of the bots lurches forward and impales Sever-R, screeching 'DEATH TO HUMANITY'. Markus-U sighs, whips out his PDC and taps in a command; the bot returns to its previous place.

Markus-U turns to the characters and introduces himself. Sever-R told him much about the characters while they were unconscious. He has bigger plans than just taking revenge on them, though—the characters can be of use to him. Each of them has contacts and potentials that can be exploited—Nina has Psion, Thomas has IntSec, CPU has been watching Eva and so forth. The hour of Markus-U's glorious return is nigh, and the characters can be his heralds.

As all this is happening, Timmy the PetBot's hidden programming kicks in. He remembers that he has access to the OMEGA backdoor, and that he is programmed with a self-destruct code for all of Markus-U's bots. Louis-U knew that Markus-U would be drawn to William and the other Junior Citizens, and that one or other of the renegade's agents would

eventually bring the characters into Markus-U's presence.* If Timmy activates this hidden program while close to Markus-U, it will destroy the OMEGA bots.

Feel free to hint that Louis-U callously used his son as bait for his old rival, because that's exactly what he did.

Marcus-U
Management 12
　　Intimidation 16
　　Laughing Maniacally 18
Stealth 12
　　High Alert 16
Violence 8
　　Energy Weapons 12
Hardware 13
　　Bot Operations and Maintenance 17
Software 15
　　Bot Programming 19
　　Hacking 19
　　Operating Systems 19
Wetware 12
Mutant Power: Death Simulation (Power 12)
Secret Society Affiliation: OMEGA Cult
Armor: Ornate Evil Overlord Armor (3)
Weapons: Laser pistol (W3K)

So, the characters' choices are either turn traitor and aid Markus-U, or use Timmy's destruct code, or just stall for time and hope for rescue. The last one is fairly unlikely, unless the characters have built up strong secret society contacts over the years.

If Timmy uses his code, then all the other bots start exploding, which makes the tower collapse. Instant chaos. Markus-U screams and chases after the characters as they feel down the creaking metal stairs and out into the Outdoors. Assuming the characters avoid being shot by a deranged High Programmer, they'll eventually be rescued and brought back to Alpha Complex.
If the characters accept Markus-U's proposal, then he has one of his bots fly them back to Alpha Complex. He says that he will be in touch with them over the coming years,

orchestrating their rise to power as part of his plot to take over the whole complex. All they need to do is pass their exams successfully.

The Final Exam

However the characters escape the dangers of Outdoors, they still need to pass their final exams. The Alpha Complex Standardized Service Qualification Test is a set of four three-hour exams that take place over two days. The first exam tests Management; after that, there's Hardware, Software, and Wetware. The Cramming specialty can be used instead.

If any of the characters follow the average answers given by Brock, then they count as failing by a margin of five, regardless of their actual skills. If they break ranks, then they should roll the dice normally. Brock and Ann also break ranks. Track the characters' results for each test, ranking them as follows:

- Failures by a margin of six or more.
- Failures by a margin of five—all the Junior Citizens following the average results fall into this category.
- Failures by a margin of four or less.
- Successes by a margin of five or less.
- Successes by a margin of six to ten.
- Successes by a margin of eleven or more.

Remember that Perversity can be spent on these rolls...

After each test, note who's in lowest category (Mentally Deficient), the next lowest (OK), the highest (Commendable), and the next highest (Treasonous). You should also give the players the aptitude test forms.

Alpha Complex Standardized Service
Qualification Aptitude Test

Failing to complete the test within the time allotted is not permitted. Circle the most appropriate answer. Do not circle more than one answer. Candidate is permitted one (1) can of B3 or other approved beverage per hour of the exam.

Name: _____-__-_____-__

Q1. *You are a PLC employee working at your assigned lathe. A saboteur is engaged in sabotaging a neighbouring machine. Do you:*

A   Immediately stop the saboteur, leaving your lathe to possibly spin out of control
B   Bring your lathe to a stop using approved safety procedures, then stop the saboteur
C   Continue working, then report the sabotage to your supervisor
D   Not notice because you are so dedicated to your assigned work

Q2. *If you were a bot, you would be a:*

A   Construction Bot
B   ScrubBot
C   JackOBot
D   WarBot

Q3. *The biggest threat to Alpha Complex is*

A   Disloyalty and Badthought
B   Mutants
C   Communism
D   Sabotage

Q4. *The only good Commie is a:*

A   Dead Commie
B   Commie in an Interrogation Cell
C   Known Commie
D   There is no such thing as a Good Commie, the concept is meaningless.

Q5. *Information is restricted by security clearance:*

A   To control access to it
B   Because people do not need to know things they do not need to know
C   To ensure security
D   To stop Commies from getting it

Q6. *Which of these is the most important service group?*

A   PLC, because it produces basic food
B   Armed Forces, because they keep us safe
C   Power Services, because they keep the lights on
D   HPD&MC, because they keep us informed

After the tests, if a character ever fell into the Treasonous category, they are called to Stepplecruch's office and told they have cheated in an official test and this blight on their records will ensure they are never promoted. If a character ever fell into the Mentally Deficient category, then he will be put on a higher, lifetime dose of Visomorphine, leaving him a drooling vegetable capable of doing nothing more than stirring food vats and leering at Teela-O reruns.

If a character managed to avoid both Cheating and Mentally Deficient, and got into the Commendable category on at least one occasion, then he is on the fast track to RED on leaving the crèche.

Finally, score the characters' Aptitude test forms as follows:

Odd questions: A=4, B=3, C=2, D=1
Even Questions: A=1, B=2, C=3, D=4

6-12 points: Tech or Power Services
13-16 points: HPD&MC or PLC
17-20 points: Armed Forces or R&D
21+ points: CPU or IntSec

Welcome To Alpha Complex, Citizens

After the exams, the characters' time in the crèche is over. Once the results come in, the characters are assigned to a service firm in the appropriate service group, reassigned to a new sector, and are told to get out of the crèche by the end of the daycycle to make room for the next class of clones. It's time for heartfelt good-byes or last-minute backstabbing.

What happens to the characters in the future? Are they vile traitors, already plotting with their secret societies, or are they loyal citizens? Will they work together, or are they now sworn enemies? And what happens in ten years' time, when they're all assigned to the same Troubleshooter team…?

PARANOIA ™

Sweep of Unhistory

Alpha Complex, and my part in its downfall

GARETH HANRAHAN
Writer/Scapegoat

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Editing, graphics/Drillbots

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RON BEDISON
Proofreader/Intsec goon

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Original game design & development/
Building committee

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Mongoose publications manager/
Construction supervisor

ALEXANDER FENNELL
Mongoose Publishing production director/
Struts around wearing fun yellow hardhat

THE COMPUTER
Never wrong. Ever.

CONTENTS

Security Clearance ULTRAVIOLET

WARNING:

**Knowledge or possession of this information by any citizen
of Security Clearance VIOLET or lower is treason punishable by a
long spell of Armed Forces latrine scrubot maintenance duty.**

1. Introduction

▌ Yearcycle 214

At the tone, it will be 5.00am on Twosday, Day 128, Yearcycle 214. Your duty cycle begins now. Good morning citizen.

It has always and will always be yearcycle 214 of The Computer's glorious reign. The first yearcycle 214 was such a good yearcycle, there was no sense in letting it go after only one iteration. 214's a nice number; it suggests that the current regime is established enough to be secure and bravely forging forward into the future, but that its enemies are still lurking out there, waiting for their chance. 214 means constant vigilance, constant paranoia.

At the tone, it will be 5.00am on Foursday, Day 320, Yearcycle 214. Your duty cycle begins now. Good morning citizen.

Whenever the yearcycle rolls around, The Computer's loyal army of editors and censors goes to work. The official histories have to be rewritten each time. Approved events are added to the archives; unapproved events are unhappened and made unhistory. A billion billion forms need to be edited and updated to the new, official timeline. Great processing storms sweep across the faltering computer nets, running a swarm of scripts to edit all the databases. The occasional date bug leading to reactor meltdowns needs to be fixed (or edited out of the official history). The population, too, needs to be adjusted. Memories edited. Badthoughts and badhistories suppressed. By the time the legacy of the last yearcycle 214 has been integrated into the approved history, why, it's almost time for the next yearcycle 214!*

At the tone, it will be 5.00am on Mandatoryreportingday, Day 365, Yearcycle 214. Your duty cycle begins now. Good morning citizen.

To quote Orwell's *1984:* '**If you want a vision of the future, imagine a boot stamping on a human face—forever.**' Well, up to a point, George. Yes, the future of Alpha Complex is an infinity of oppression, fear and suffering, but that doesn't mean that that black jackboot can't be replaced by other, more stylish and wonderfully

ergonomic footwear. In all the yearcycle 214s stretching out in front of us, our oppression will come in exciting brave new forms.

At the tone, it will be 5.00am on Onesday, Day 001, Yearcycle 214. Your duty cycle begins now. Good morning citizen.

And that, in a nutshell, is *The Sweep of Unhistory.* The Troubleshooters are recloned and retconned over and over again, brought back in successive eras of Alpha Complex future history, to bring their unique skills to bear on a series of problems. From the next few yearcycles to the distant future of the complex, *The Sweep of Unhistory* will bring the Troubleshooters into increasingly strange yet nightmarishly familiar missions.

When the horn howls, it will be Sunburning on the Day of the Gray Worm, Yearcycle 214. Your impressment begins now. Good morning freeclone.

Josou-R-RSE-2 about to fit waste and sustenance tubes as he prepares to enter the Computer's simulation of Alpha Complex in 'Alpha Matrix'

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* *CPU privately estimates that by yearcycle 214 of The Computer, the backlog of work involved in processing the past yearcycle 214 will overspill into the next yearcycle 214, or possibly even into the following 214. This will result in yearcycle 214 not being reconciled with the official histories until at least yearcycle 214!*

It is plain to see how confusing this might be.

2. Clones on Ice

As it was and ever shall be, the Troubleshooters receive a mission alert, calling them to serve their beloved complex. They are to report to a flybot hangar in a nearby sector. The flybot is waiting there for them, bearing the mark of the R&D service group. As soon as all the Troubleshooters are on board, the flybot's windows polarize (to block the sight of Outside from the passengers) and the flybot launches at an unreasonable velocity out over the domes. A short safety video plays as the Troubleshooters are crushed down into their uncomfortable foam seats. (*In the event of a sudden loss of cabin pressure, please fill out form TS/3433/em/b, Request for The Deployment of Oxygen Masks. If you qualify for mask deployment, it will drop from the panel over your head. Please fasten the mask securely and breathe normally. If you do not qualify for a mask, please hold your breath until normal pressure is restored. Normal pressure will be restored within five working days.*)

After a short yet stressful flight, the Troubleshooters feel the flybot angle steeply forward, diving into the ground at an alarming speed. It's actually diving toward a deep access shaft, but since the windows are polarized, the Troubleshooters don't know that. If they sit tight, everything's fine. If they leave their seats (*Please return to your seat, citizen! Failure to return to your seat will result in denial of complimentary P-Nut concentrate!*) and tamper with the controls (*Please do not tamper with the controls, as it may result in death!*), then they can heroically seize control of their own destinies by flying the flybot into the ground. The flybot's bot brain has put the plane on autopilot (or, more accurately, slaved the controls to one of its lower-end subroutines so it can get back to writing Corpore Metal propaganda on the gray subnets), so it's of no help to the Troubleshooters.

(Tampering with the controls will also disable any and all lights on the flybot, in case you want a really early dark room scene.)

Eventually, the flybot's headlong flight levels off, and it lands. A pair of Vulture Troopers are waiting outside, who lead the Troubleshooters through an anonymous and deserted corridor ending in a huge blast door. The door opens, revealing the concrete walls of a vault deep within Alpha Complex. The massive weight of the concrete dome above the Troubleshooters' heads is supported by huge metal braces. Everything, even the lights, is massively reinforced and obviously designed to last for eons. At the far end of the chamber is a big lump of metal that resembles a cloning machine.

The Troubleshooters are greeted by an R&D researcher, Ray-G-OOD-3, the technician assigned to their initial test of the facility. Ray-G hands the Troubleshooters a brochure about the facility, and hustles them toward the big cloning machine. There are lots of stern Vulture Troopers standing around, constantly vigilant in case Commies are somehow hiding in the brushed concrete walls.

At the cloning machine, Ray-G explains that they need to test the Deep Storage Emergency System Backup Backup System by storing the genetic code and MemoMax personality patterns of a Troubleshooter team in the cloning facility. All he needs, says Ray-G, is a brain core sample from each of the Troubleshooters, and he takes out a nasty looking piece of surgical steel.

If the Troubleshooters quibble, then those stern Vulture Troopers proceed to dequibble with extreme prejudice.

▌ Handout – Deep Storage Emergency System Backup Backup System

The Deep Storage Emergency System Backup Backup System corrects the main drawback of the original Deep Storage Emergency System Backup that the Internal Security Post-Crisis-Management Mass Debriefing of 124/214 identified in their report *Lack of Backup Redundancy in the Deep Storage Emergency System Backup*. The new Total Quality in Crisis Management Initiative (v2.1*) called for the establishment of a secondary Backup System to compensate for any (impossible) failures in the (infallible) Deep Storage Emergency System Backup. In the (impossible) event of a failure in both the Main System and the Deep Storage Emergency System Backup, then the Deep Storage Emergency System Backup Backup System would activate (although this would never happen), cloning and decanting an elite Crisis Management team who would then deal with the crisis. To ensure the safety and security of the Deep Storage Emergency System Backup Backup System, the entire facility will be located 1.4 vertical kilometers below Alpha Complex, [CENSORED] and designed to last indefinitely. Power will be provided by an internal micropile with an indefinite useful lifespan.

CPU is now engaged on a lengthy database search to identify those Heroes of The Complex who will be preserved in the Deep Storage Emergency System Backup Backup System, who will stand vigilant over Alpha Complex, ready to save the day if all other defenses fail.

(Which, as has already been stated, is utterly impossible and will never happen.)

* Replacing the old 2.0 Total Quality in Crisis Management, deprecated following the [CENSORED].

Once the brain samples have been acquired, Ray-G orders the Troubleshooters to report to the control center overlooking the facility.

The control center is a small booth, constructed out of the same dense metal as the cloning machine. Seated at the booth is a fresh-faced young tech, Andy-R-SPL-1, who cheerily tells the Troubleshooters that he is proud to have volunteered to be the custodian of the Deep Storage Emergency System Backup Backup System. He is willing and happy to serve The Computer in whatever way he can, and he is eager to prove himself worthy of the trust the Troubleshooters have placed in him. Make Andy-R as naturally bouncy and bubbly as you can—genuinely loyal and eager, he doesn't need happy pills to be happy.

Anyway, while Andy-R's burbling at the Troubleshooters, Ray-G and the Vulture Troopers start backing out of the vault. Unless the Troubleshooters do something very clever very quickly, then Ray-G reaches the door, shouts 'INITIATE TEST FIRING' and chucks a grenade in just as the blast doors close. The grenade goes off three rounds after the blast doors close, and will kill the Troubleshooters and Andy-R. If any of the characters have Energy Field or other defensive mutations, then upgrade it to a nuclear grenade. It will, however, prove that the cloning facility and control panel are utterly invulnerable to conventional attack.

Whether or not the Troubleshooters survive, fresh clone versions of both them and Andy-R are swiftly prepared in the cloning facility. An automated announcement says '**TEST COMPLETE. IF THIS WERE A REAL EMERGENCY, THE FATE OF ALPHA COMPLEX WOULD BE IN YOUR HANDS. THIS IS NOT A REAL EMERGENCY. STAY ALERT AND MONITOR OFFICIAL CHANNELS FOR DETAILS OF ANY UPCOMING EMERGENCIES. TRUST NO ONE, CITIZENS.**'

Ray-G returns and congratulates the Troubleshooters on a successful test. They've served The Computer well, and official commendations are entered all around. Another group of Troubleshooters enter the room—they're all INDIGO-Clearance, square-jawed, heroic, infinitely competent and loyal. Ray-G indicates that these are the real Emergency Backup team, that the Troubleshooters were just the final test before the system goes live. Assuming nothing goes wrong in the future, mutters Ray-G, this facility will never be used. But Alpha Complex must be prepared!

If the Troubleshooters hang around, they see Ray-G respectfully take brain core samples from the new VIOLET team, and hand them to a shell-shocked Andy-R-2. (It was Andy's first death, and he's not coping well.) The new Troubleshooters get an urgent mission alert (*Team! Batclone has been sighted in TRS Sector! To the briefing!*) and zoom off. The Troubleshooters are left to make their own way back from this isolated sector to the main body of Alpha Complex.

They will never return here in their current lifetimes.

3. Totally Recalled

When: T+10 yearcycles.

Synopsis: The original clone-sequences of the Troubleshooters are still around. After ten yearcycles, they've risen through the ranks and are now influential and dangerous people. Schemes are afoot to bring them down, and those schemes repeatedly involve fresh clones from the DSESBBS.

State of Alpha Complex: Pretty much unchanged. A little shabbier. The Computer continues its slow decline toward electronic senility.

Who's In Charge?: Still The Computer and the High Programmers.

Changes to Clearance & Regulations: Nothing significant.

What's Treasonous?: The usual.

Deprecated: Flavor 21b; Use of the Term 'bot'—they are now called 'mechanoids'. This was done as part of a high-level paperwork war between Tech Services and CPU, as millions of forms and manuals had to be pulped and reissued to remove the deprecated term.

Welcome Back, Troubleshooters

The team awakens in the cloning facility in the DSESBBS. The concrete chamber has changed since they last saw it—their last memory is probably* walking out of the vault, which was the last time the MemoMax memories in the cloning facility were updated. Technician Andy is still there—he's looking ten years older and a lot less fresh-faced, and he's wearing a yellow

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Sharon-G-RSC-4
Management 8
   Oratory 12
   Bootlicking 12
   Making Ticks on Her Clipboard in a Really Intimidating Fashion 14
Stealth 8
   Surveillance 12
Violence 10
Hardware 8
Software 10
Wetware 12
   Medical 16
   Cloning 16
Mutant Powers: Pyrokinesis (Power 10)
Secret Society Affiliation: Same as her Mysterious Patron (i.e., pick one of the Troubleshooter's secret societies).
Armor: GREEN reflec, E1
Weapons: Laser pistol, W3K

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jumpsuit this time. There's also a stern woman in green, who greets the Troubleshooters. She's carrying a clipboard.

This is all quite disconcerting for the Troubleshooters. The woman in green introduces herself as Sharon-G-RSC-4, and explains that this is a test of the DSESBBS. Tech Services are concerned that there may be degradation in the genetic records or personality copies of the clones stored in the DSESBBS. Oh, and that thanks to a user error ten years ago, the patterns of the elite INDIGO team that should have been stored in the DSESBBS got deleted. A new DSESBBS backup is under construction, but the Troubleshooters don't need to worry about that. Anyway, Sharon-G is here to do some quick tests on the Troubleshooters, to see if any of

them are actually degraded copies who should be deleted. She fires some questions at them, to test their mental capacities. What's 47 times 18? (846) What clearance comes after BLUE? What service firms did the Troubleshooters work for? Who is the cell leader of the Communists in this sector? Where were the Troubleshooters on the Foursday before they were called to test the DSESBBS?

If any of the Troubleshooters pauses, or says anything about being confused, or questions Sharon-G's authority, then she frowns, purses her lips, makes a tick on her clipboard and mutters something about obvious mental decay. She then beckons for the team to follow her—there's more testing to be done.

The Rewards Of Loyal Service

Sharon-G issues each of the Troubleshooters with a PDC, a ME card and a laser pistol. If carefully examined, the laser pistols turn out to have tracking devices hastily inserted into their ergonomic Secu-Grip handles (a security precaution Sharon-G added after the last disaster). She then loads the Troubleshooters into an autocar with opaque windows, which zooms off at high speed.

She's dropping the Troubleshooters off at one of the apartments owned by the Group A clones. Pick one of the Troubleshooters randomly—it's his apartment (or rather, the apartment owned by his clone-self in Group A*).

The MemoMax system containing the personalities of the frozen Troubleshooters from the DSESBBS is not in sync with the MemoMax system used by the normal cloning banks. The Troubleshooters' memories therefore diverged from those of their original clone line at the end of Clones on Ice—unless you want to run a few scenarios between the end of the last scenario and the start of this one, in which case the MemoMax systems resynchronize at randomly convenient times.

You know, we may be thinking about this a bit too hard. A wizard did it, ok?

Oh, unless otherwise noted, the Troubleshooters wake up with no equipment. There are usually a few jumpsuits, laser pistols and PDCs laid out for them, though.

* The English** language is woefully under-equipped, grammatically speaking, in terms of pronouns for alternate versions of yourself. Maybe we should start using subscripts: 'I_a, I_b and I_c were walking down the corridor, then I_b dropped a piece of paper from my$_b$'s pocket, and I_a saw that it was communist propaganda, so I_c shot me$_b$ but I_c missed and shot me$_a$!' In which case, Troubleshooter$_c$ is entering his$_a$ apartment, which has already been raided by him$_b$.

On second thoughts, we won't use subscripts, for they are a pain to type.

*** If you are reading this in a translation, then replace 'English' with your own language. Unless it's German, which probably already covers this in one of its 50 zillion tenses. There must have been some secretive cabal of German linguists back in the middle ages where one of them went 'y'know, this language could use **more grammar'**, and the rest said 'yeah!' instead of strangling him with the pluperfect.****

**** It's totally true. All Germans are obsessed by grammar. I read it in the **Earth Alliance Factbook** for **Babylon 5**. And all Welsh people are really good space pilots. Really.*

What's Going On?

Sharon-G is not a Tech Services employee—she's actually in another service group, and is working for a Mysterious Patron. She is desperately trying to salvage her Cunning Plot to take down her Patron's enemies. Here's where it gets complicated.

Let's call the Player Characters Group C. The original clone line of the Troubleshooters, the ones who have been running around Alpha Complex for the last ten years and are all now high-clearance bigshots with all sorts of nefarious plots and minions, we'll call them Group A. One of Group A is Sharon-G's Mysterious Patron. He or she told Sharon-G about that long-ago incident in the DSESBBS, and how they could turn it to their advantage. Sharon-G was instructed to go to the DSESBBS and bribe Andy-R into producing a batch of clones of Group A, who would then commit identity theft, breaking into the private files and treasure vaults of the Group A clones. These, we'll call Group B.

The problem is that the Group B clones have double-crossed Sharon-G. They stole all the blackmail material, secret files, illegal weapon, dangerous R&D gadgets, exotic drugs and other treasures gathered by Group A over ten years of double-dealing. Rather than admit her failure, Sharon-G ran back to Andy-Y and had him produce another batch of clones—Group C, the Player Characters. Sharon-G is gambling that the Group Cs will be able to track down the Group Bs so she can recover the stolen possessions of the Group As for her Mysterious Patron.

What Sharon-G doesn't yet know is that her Mysterious Patron is one of the Group As, who is planning to eliminate his or her old allies—the rest of Group A. The Mysterious Patron has secretly contacted Internal Security, informing on his companions and offering the contents of the vaults stolen by the Group Bs as evidence of their treachery.

Who Is The Mysterious Patron? Unfortunately, not even Famous Game Designers can predict which of your players would be most likely to screw everyone else in the group over. Therefore, the identity of the Mysterious Patron is not entirely germane to this scenario. We'll just let the paranoia of the players determine who's screwing them over.

The autocar stops at the end of a BLUE-Clearance corridor. Sharon-G tells the Troubleshooters to go up the corridor and enter the quarters at the far end, where they will be tested for mental or genetic deviancy. If the Troubleshooters quibble about entering a high-clearance corridor, she snaps that they have obviously failed to keep up with regulations, and under CPU Directive 214-A/44333, Subsection 12, Paragraph 4, corridors designated 'Approved Access Junctions' can be entered by citizens of lower clearance when engaged in necessary maintenance, emergency drills or other vital activities on any daycycle except Sixday or MandatoryInspectionDay between 0800 and 1800 hours. Go go go! She drives off in the autocar as soon as the Troubleshooters exit the vehicle.

When the Troubleshooters approach the door at the end of the corridor, a camera/laser/hideously painful-looking set of knives and dissection tools/more lasers assembly emerges from a hidden compartment in the ceiling and points all its laser barrels and sharp bits at them. '**MAXIMUM REASSURANCE HI-MESS HOME SECURITY SYSTEM ONLINE!**' it barks, '**INTRUDERS DETECTED! PRESENT IDENTIFICATION OR YOU WILL BE REMOVED FROM THE PREMISES.**' A scanning beam stabs out, searching for tongueprints. When it scans the appropriate Troubleshooter's tongue, the security system says '**IDENITY CONFIRMED! WELCOME HOME, CITIZEN <name>! YOU LAST ACCESSED YOUR HOME SIX HOURS 17 MINUTES AGO.**'

The door opens soundlessly, allowing the Troubleshooters into a veritable Aladdin's Cave of wonder. The BLUE-Clearance apartment is luxury beyond their wildest dreams (The Group A's are not only BLUEs, they're really corrupt BLUEs). The

furniture is amazingly plush and comfortable—the seats are actually pleasant to sit in, unlike any and all RED furniture. There's a huge vidscreen showing programs the Troubleshooters have never even heard of, and there are racks of computer disks with recordings of programs and activities that are downright illegal. There's real fruit just sitting there in crystal bowls. On the walls are pictures and framed reports of the (edited) highlights of the Troubleshooters' careers. Some pictures are of successful missions, of the Troubleshooters being proclaimed Heroes of the Complex and capturing evil Commies. Other pictures show handsome/beautiful citizens who are oddly out of uniform. (Being BLUE Clearance, the Group

As aren't dosed with hormone suppressants and so can take advantage of the situation, which means taking advantage of pretty young citizens of the appropriate gender.)

There are also several servant bots here, who scramble to do the Troubleshooters' bidding. If questioned, the loyal bots confirm that this apartment belongs to citizen <name>, and that the other Troubleshooters have been guests here from time to time. The bots are eager to provide food/drugs to the guests. Basically, this is an apartment complex of absolutely sybarite luxury and indulgence.

Feel free to drop hints about the owner's secret society membership. A Sierra Clubber might have pot plants in his apartment; a Psion agent might have a weird pyramid designed to focus psychic power.

The only odd bit is a large hole in one wall, obviously the result of a recent laser blast. The edges of the hole are still hot to the touch, indicating it happened recently. On the far side of the hole is a secret room, which is mostly empty. There are signs that the room once contained stuff, though. There're a few scraps of paper with messages like 'Clive-I is a FCCCPer' or 'IOU WMD', a few vials of interesting-looking drugs and a few cone rifle shells lying in the corners. This hidden room once contained <name>'s secret stash of cool stuff, but it got stolen by the Group Bs.

■ Sharon G's Cunning Plan

Sharon-G wants the Troubleshooters to lead her to the runaway Group B clones. Now, the Group Bs went rogue when they got hold of all the wealth in the secret stashes of the Group As, but seeing as all the wealth is gone, there isn't the same impetus for the Group Cs to do the same. She has to provide it.

Let the Troubleshooters mess around in the shiny apartment for a while. Then, the security

system announces '**ATTENTION! INCOMING DROID! INTRUDER IS IDENTIFIED AS DELIVERY DROID FROM ZIP-EX DELIVERIES. SELECT DESIGNED RESPONSE: ALLOW ENTRY/TERMINATE/ OPEN COMMUNICATIONS.'** The vidscreen in the apartment displays an image of the corridor outside, and there is indeed a delivery bot there. The droid delivers a big shiny black box to the Troubleshooters, then departs (assuming they don't have the security system zap the poor delivery bot. Er, delivery droid.).

It's a very *tempting* black box. What could be inside?

Inside, in fact, are hundreds and hundreds of big fat documents in three-ring binders. The word 'BLACKMAIL' is printed on each of them, along with a date. It looks horribly illegal, so you should hint to the players that they might not want to read the documents in <name's> apartment. Now, the binders actually contain deprecated bot manuals (outdated since the terminology change making bots into droids), but Sharon-G's desperately gambling that no one will read the files immediately. She's hoping that the Troubleshooters will run off and hide somewhere, that the somewhere they hide will be the same as the hiding place chosen by the Group B clones, and that she'll be able to track the Group Cs using the tracking chip she's hidden in their laser pistols*.

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* When you write it out like that, Sharon-G's plan isn't that good a plan—but what can you expect from someone who's a willing minion of one of the Player Characters? Talk about the terminally dumb leading the terminally dumb….

If the Troubleshooters do run off and hide somewhere, then skip onto **Me, Myself and Aiiiii!**, below, and have the Group As show up just before IntSec. If they ignore the box/argue about the box/just sit around the apartment, then move onto the next section.

■ The Goldilocks Protocol

The security system activates again and announces '**ATTENTION! INCOMING CLONES! INTRUDER IS IDENTIFIED AS OWNER. ERROR! ERROR! SELECT DESIGNED RESPONSE: ALLOW ENTRY/TERMINATE/OPEN COMMUNICATIONS.'** The vidscreen switches to display the corridor outside, where the Troubleshooters see…themselves. Well, ten-yearcycles-older, fatter, hardbitten, cynical, bitter, evil, angry and *really heavily armed* versions of themselves. It's Group A. The security system is of no help here—the presence of two 'owners' is confusing it, and it's on the verge of crashing completely.

The Group As think the Troubleshooters are the scum who broke into all their apartments and stole their carefully hoarded caches of drugs/WMDs/blackmail material and so forth. The revelation that the thieves are ten-yearcycle-old clones of themselves confuses them no end, and stops them from charging into the apartment, cone rifles blazing. (Well, that and the fact that the apartment owner doesn't want his furniture tac-nuked.)

When the Troubleshooters mention the DSESBBS, there's a lot of nodding and 'Oh yeah, that mission. Wasn't that just before we fought the Cthulhu Cult in HPL Sector?' from Group A. If they contact Andy-Y, he confirms that he ran off another bunch of clones (Group B) a few hours ago.

When the Troubleshooters mention Sharon-G, then one of the Group As (ideally, one with IntSec or CPU ties) whips out his PDC and makes a few calls. A few minutes later, he switches on the vidscreen in the apartment. The screen shows Sharon-G strapped to a chair in a confession booth. She's been beaten and injected with truth serum. It's hard to see because of the bright light shining down into her face, but masked figures are questioning her. She moans out a confession—that she was instructed

by her superior to order Andy-Y to decant a set of clones from the DSESBBS and to deliver them to the apartments of the Troubleshooters. That's all she knows, she swears. Whoever gave the orders explains that the interrogators are agents loyal to him; they need to keep the cached material out of IntSecs hands or they'll all be terminated as traitors.

Group A turns to Group C and demands that they help them get the caches back. Where would they hide if they had a load of treasures? Wherever the PCs choose, that's where Group B is. (Group A doesn't think the same way any more, due to brainscrubbing/drugs/ten yearcycles of conniving, etc).

Me, Myself and Aiiiiiii!

So. You've got Group A, the hard-bitten and angry elder Troubleshooters who want to get their treasured caches back. Somewhere in Group A is Sharon-G's Mysterious Patron, who has arranged with IntSec to swoop in and capture the high-level traitors (the rest of Group A). You've got Group B, the thieves, who are sitting on top of a cache of expensive drugs and illegal WMDs, and are hiding out until they can start exploiting the material they stole. You've got Group C, the Troubleshooters.

And you've got IntSec, who are swooping in for the kill.

Group A and C arrive at Group B's hiding place. Group B have found the bottles of drugs in the cache, and are now totally smashed out of their skulls. They're also increasingly paranoid, and are about to turn the stolen cone rifles and experimental R&D plasma throwers on each other. As it's so dangerous, Group A sends Group C in first. They might suggest trying to lure the Group Bs out of sight of each other, to replace them with Group Cs. They might suggest trying to negotiate. Whatever—Group As real aim is to have the Group Bs blast the Group Cs first, then the Group As can get 'em while they're reloading.

While the Troubleshooters are arguing with themselves, an IntSec team backed up by an Armed Forces warbot shows up. The IntSec team is led by Malachi-B-SSI-3—capturing half-a-dozen BLUE traitors will be just the thing to kick him up to INDIGO, so he's determined to get his hands on Group A and the evidence of their treachery.

What do the Troubleshooters do?

The safest option is to just blow up both Group B and the cache of treasonous goods, which is easily accomplished with a stray shot in the right direction. Getting both Groups

A and B to fight each other is also a solid plan—as is just running for it, letting a three-way fight between the other clones and IntSec happen.

An ideal ending might be for Groups A and B to die off, leaving the Troubleshooters to inherit the identities of Group A—whereupon they then get arrested by IntSec as traitors unless they pin all the blame on just one of the Troubleshooters. Who get to take the fall for the whole group?

Regardless of what happens, they'll get cloned again in time for the next episode....

Malachi-B-SSI
Management 10
    Interrogation 14
    Play Good Cop/Bad Cop While Alone With a Suspect 16
Stealth 11
    Pretend To Be a Vending Machine 17
    Surveillance 15
Violence 15
Hardware 8
Software 5
Wetware 12
    Suggstion 16
Mutant Powers: Hypersenses (Power 10)
Secret Society Affiliation: Program Group
Armor: BLUE reflec, E1
Weapons: Laser pistol, W3K

4. Red Dawncycle

When: T+50 yearcycles.

Synopsis: Historical revisionism has turned the Troubleshooters into infamous enemies of the Complex and The Computer, as successful purges and power changes sent them out of favor. Now, a desperate cell of Commies has discovered the DSESBBS and seized on the Troubleshooters as their last hope….

State of Alpha Complex: Alpha Complex has grown even more chaotic over the last few decades. Driven by secret societies, hidden agendas and paranoia, the High Programmers started turning on each other. Whole chunks of the Alpha Complex leadership were declared unpeople and removed or deemed traitors and executed. Junta after junta collapsed in quick succession. The Computer, always buggy, is now a tangled mess of uncommented and incomprehensible legacy code, and is crazier than ever.

Who's In Charge?: Whatever temporary alliance of High Programmers has managed to seize control this weekcycle. The Computer has been marginalized due to its senile randomness, although it is still a massively powerful force in the lives of the lower citizens.

Changes to Clearance & Regulations: Regulations change from sector to sector due to different directives from ruling juntas. There's been a bloat in the upper clearances because of the regular changes in power and attendant promotions— the clearance scale now goes IROYGBIV, SUPERVIOLET, ULTRAVIOLATE, MEGAVIOLET, GAMMA.

What's Treasonous?: Suggesting that The Computer is any way flawed or wrong has become treasonous, with a Treason damage of C5T.

Deprecated: The Mystics secret society has died out, replaced by the Hedonists, who seek pleasure in all forms, not just drugs. They're interested in everything from cookery and water sports to rediscovering the lost secret of sex. The Illuminati are also gone, although no one's sure why. High Programmer Program Groups are now much, much more common.

Comrades! You Live!

The Troubleshooters wake up in the DSESBBS. They're a bit groggy when first decanted. Everything's a blur—a flashing red blur. Shapes are running back and forth. They do hear an announcement—it's Friend Computer's voice, but it's filled with static and uncharacteristically hesitant and corrupt, as if Friend Computer was not entirely sure what It was proclaiming.

'ATTENTION! THIS DECLARATION OF WAR BROUGHT TO YOU BY BOUNCY BUBBLY BEVERAGE. IT'S THE MANDATORY THING. TERMINATION OF ALL TRAITORS IN DESIGNATED *BLEEP* FREE-FIRE *BLEEP* SECTORS IN TWO HOURS 17 MINUTES. FULL USE OF *BLEEP* FILE NOT FOUND *BLEEP* HAS BEEN *BLEEP* AUTHORIZED. SURRENDER NOW. *BLEEP*. DRINKING BOUNCY BUBBLY BEVERAGE IS TREASON, CITIZENS! CONSUME LIQUID FUN FOR LOYALTY! REPORT B3 ABUSERS AND DEALERS TO INTSEC! *BLEEP* EOM'.

The Troubleshooters' vision clears. They're in the DSESBBS vault. The walls are laser-scarred, and the

OH DEAR.
HOW SAD.
NEVERMIND.

Ivan
Management 8
  Bootlicking 12
Stealth 10
  Sneaking 14
Violence 10
  Demolition 14
  Projectile Weapons 14
Hardware 8
Software 8
Wetware 9
Communist Propaganda 13
Mutant Powers: Levitation (Power 10)
Secret Society Affiliation: Communist
Armor: RED Army battle armor, armor 2
Weapons: Slugthrower, W2K

Tanya
Management 6
  Oratory 10
Stealth 10
  Sneaking 14
Violence 14
  Demolition 18
  Projectile Weapons 18
Hardware 8
Software 8
Wetware 9
Communist Propaganda 15
Mutant Powers: Energy Field (Power 10)
Secret Society Affiliation: Communist
Armor: RED Army battle armor, armor 2
Weapons: Slugthrower, W2K

concrete has begun to crumble. The machinery is still intact, but covered in grime. Technician Andy is still around—or, more accurately, he was around until recently. Andy's corpse is lying in the middle of the floor, with a big smoking laser hole in his chest. He's dressed in violet robes.

Clustered around the Troubleshooters are half-a-dozen heavily armed men. They're all wearing strange uniforms—khaki green, with red stars. And furry hats. And really big guns. One of them grabs the hand of one of the Troubleshooters and

pumps it up and down, shouting '*Comrades! You have returned in our hourcycle of need! With you leading us, the revolution must succeed! Now, we must be quick! Follow!*'

This Commie meet-and-greeter is 'Ivan' (technically, Fred-G-DES, but he doesn't answer to his Capitalist Pig-Dog Price Tag Name), the leader of this communist cell. To Ivan, the Troubleshooters are his childhood heroes, his idols, his glorious leaders, the fathers of international communism and the greatest enemies of the hated Computer ever! He'd die for them in an instant, and they can do no wrong. However, Ivan does realize that they've just been decanted from their capitalist genetic prison, and therefore will probably need a few minutes to get back up to speed on the whole revolution thing.

The other notable commie here is 'Tanya' (Rose-R-JCK), one of the best fighters in the ongoing revolution. She was a Troubleshooter, and was responsible for the Commies getting hold of most of the WMDs that are currently being used to blow up large chunks of Alpha Complex.

The Commies hustle the Troubleshooters out of the DSESBBS vault. Waiting outside is a bizarre vehicle that looks like a transbot crossed with a spider. Dozens of brassy mechanical legs sprout from its sides. The group scramble aboard, and Tanya takes the controls. As the spiderbot scuttles forward at alarming speed, an alarm sounds. '*Hold on!*' screams Tanya, and the spiderbot accelerates even more and makes several wild jumps in random directions, scrabbling through sewer lines and access junctions. Outside, the Troubleshooters see incredibly bright flashes of green fire, light so bright it burns their exposed skin and leaves painful after-images burnt into their retinas. '*Dome-mounted particle cannons*' mutters Ivan, '*they can incinerate a single traitor from 20 sectors above. Anything in the place where the beams meet is fried*'.

Tanya drives the bot over a chasm, and it plummets into the depths. Outstretched legs scrape against the walls of the chasm, slowing its descent from 'terminal velocity' into merely 'almost-suicidal'. As they fall, Ivan turns to the Troubleshooters and explains what's going on.

'*Comrades! My worker's heart is filled with joy to see you alive once more. Your battles against the hated Computer and its capitalist lackies have inspired me all my life! We started this great revolution in accordance with your teachings and your writings, and in your names we launched a pre-emptive attack on the very heart of degenerate capitalism!*

I fear the battle has not gone well, and all seemed lost—then we discovered that the foolish capitalists had imprisoned your genetic patterns! These clones might not have your full memories, but mere knowledge is nothing! The love of international communism burns in your hearts! With you leading us, our victory is assured!'

Tanya snorts derisively. '*If they brought a few armored divisions and about a hundred dome-smasher warheads, then they might actually make a difference*' and Ivan berates her for her lack of faith in the Party. Tanya then announces that they're approaching KremVax.

Kremvax

The KremVax fortress is a hidden Communist complex hidden deep beneath Alpha Complex. (While the Commies claim that this small bunker is the original KremVax, it's common knowledge within the Party that there once

was a much grander, bigger and older KremVax that was destroyed by the hated capitalists. Of course, that common knowledge was probably planted by the Politburo to enhance the Communists' prestige.) Now, KremVax is under heavy bombardment by the Armed Forces. It's too deep beneath Alpha Complex to be attacked directly (yet), but the Armed Forces are methodically blasting away at the domes overhead as well as attacking through the corridors. In about two hours, The Computer is going to launch its final strike on the KremVax, wiping out every clone in a dozen sectors between the core of Alpha Complex and hidden Commie base.

The spiderbot arrives in a KremVax dock, and the Troubleshooters are led down more corridors decorated with Commie symbols into a control room. Every few moments, the whole place shakes and the lights flicker as another Armed Forces barrage strikes. Sometimes, through the falling dust, the flickering half-light and the gloom, the Troubleshooters glimpse an awe-filled face as some loyal Communist passes by them.

In the control booth, there's a holographic display showing the distribution of Communist forces and weapons around the KremVax. More importantly, there's also a sheaf of papers describing the Troubleshooters' official histories. Ivan tells the team that he and Tanya need to report to the Central Committee—the Heroes of the Party (i.e. the Troubleshooters) should familiarize themselves with the forces under their command.

So Who Do You Think We Are?

If the Troubleshooters examine the official histories, give them the handout. (Remember to fill in the most or least appropriate names.)

If the Troubleshooters look at the holographic display, then they see a lot of pretty lights which they really don't understand. At a guess, the red lights are Commies, and the blue lights are Alpha Complex Armed Forces. Or it could be the other way around. It's impossible to tell what's what.

Handout – Troubleshooter Official Histories

INTSEC/VIOLET/INFORM/332A1-data

1. _____-__-_____. Founder of International Communism. Collaborated with Marx on development of original Commie badwrongthought. Believed to have a mutant brain that is constantly generating new deviant thought patterns. Writer of numerous banned and treasonous tracts. All images, recordings, writings and other artifacts produced by this traitor are classified VIOLET and should be considered highly dangerous thoughtcrimes, viral meme weapon of mass orthodoxy destruction. Interact using approval filters only; terminate at all costs.

2. _____-__-_____. The so-called 'Butcher of WST Sector', this traitor is the supreme military commander of the Red Army of Communism. A renegade from the loyal and glorious Armed Forces of Alpha Complex, the traitor ordered 17 divisions of warbots into the test firing ground of the C74 'Insurrectionator' missile platform minutes before defecting. The traitor was also responsible for many other false orders and 'friendly fire' incidents. Terminate at all costs.

3. _____-__-_____. The mad genius of Communist science, this diabolical genius has produced weapons of mass destruction designed to destroy Alpha Complex and wipe out all life. Intelligence has confirmed that this traitor was responsible for the deliberate mutation of thousands of citizens, corrupting the gene pool with Communist deviancy; also responsible for apocalypses III through VI. Terminate at all costs.

4. _____-__-_____. The most notorious spy and saboteur in history, this traitor infiltrated the very heart of Alpha Complex. Numerous disasters and failures were caused by traitorous Commie interference with the smooth functioning of our perfect society. The traitor was responsible for many fine and loyal citizens being wrongly accused of perfidious treason—and worse, for other traitors going undiscovered for much too long! Terminate at all costs.

5. _____-__-_____. The 'Commie Who Came In From Outdoors'. This traitor was not cloned in Alpha Complex, or in any known enemy base. It is postulated that the creature is the result of generations of Old Reckoning survivors inbreeding in the wilds of Outdoors; a feral, savage mutant without any concept of humanity or morality. A ravening beast, shackled to the Communist cause by twisted instinct. The ultimate deviant and mutant. Terminate at all costs.

6. _____-__-_____. CLASSIFIED MEGAVIOLET. No information available at your security clearance. Subject to be considered highly dangerous at all times. Terminate at all costs.
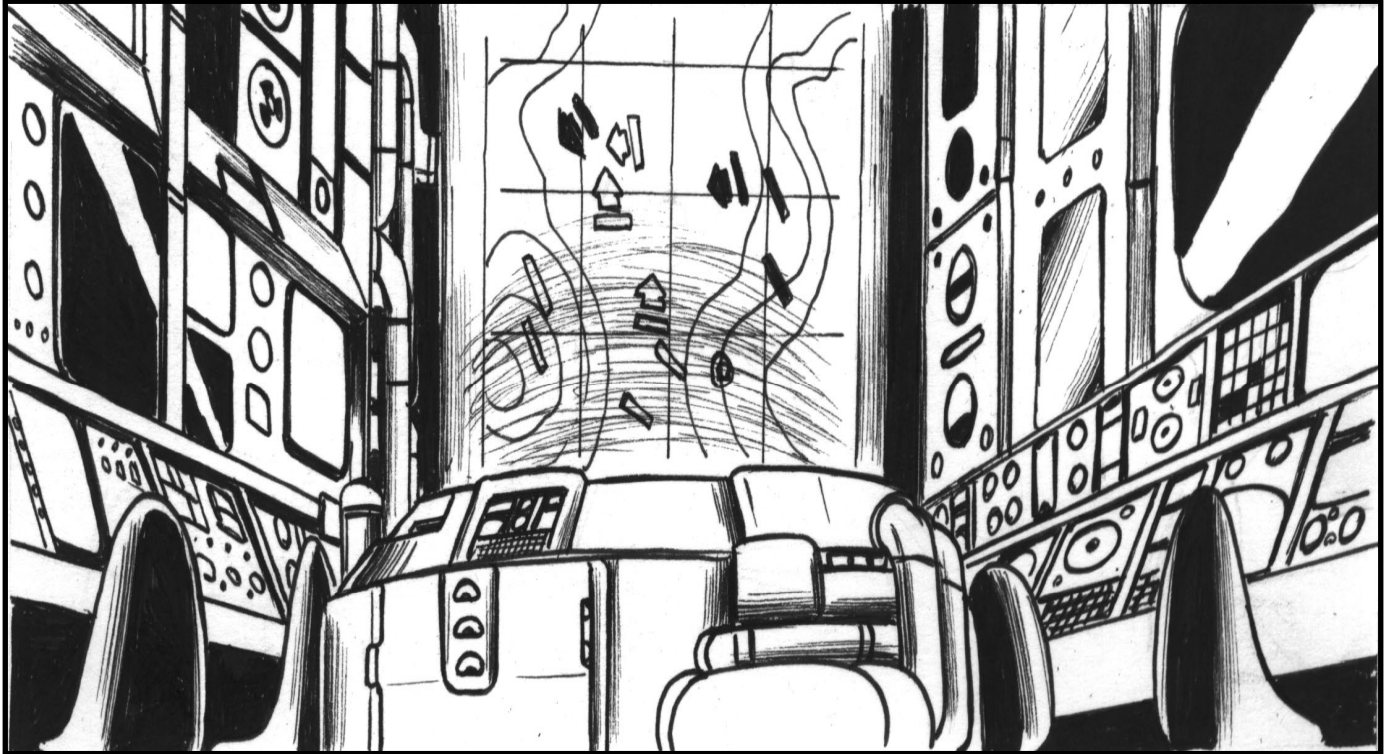
▊ Supreme Commanders of the Red Army

Ivan and Tanya return to the command center. Ivan proudly announces that he has spoken to the Central Committee, and they have full confidence in the Troubleshooters' abilities to save the revolution from defeat. Full control of the Red Army just got transferred to them. Oh, and there's less than two hours before The Computer launches a cataclysmic attack on the whole KremVax region, but the real immediate problem is that Armed Forces warbots and tanks are approaching via the Outdoors and are attacking the upper defenses. If they break through the surface fortifications, then the KremVac might fall before the impending cataclysmic nuking.

What are your orders, comrades?

Ivan is completely loyal and eager to help the Troubleshooters. He won't volunteer information—the Supreme Commanders know everything and are far wiser than he is, so he just carries out their commands without hesitation, but he will answer any questions put to him. Don't bother trying to turn this section into a wargame; if it's funny to say that the Commies have Cossack-bots or orbital lasers, let them. The important thing is that Ivan is convinced that the Troubleshooters are the perfect Communists and are loyal to the party.

Tanya, however, is distrustful of the Troubleshooters and will question their orders at every opportunity. She's cold,

sarcastic and paranoid, and thinks that putting a bunch of recently decanted strangers in charge of the Red Army is madness*. While she is a loyal Communist, she's no fool and she will terminate the Troubleshooters if they fail

> ** Entirely true. However, the Central Committee has seen which way the (radioactive) wind is blowing, concluded that this revolution is a failure, and have fled. The new Supreme Commanders—the Troubleshooters—will be scapegoats and blamed for the disaster in the new Communist historical revisionism.*

or betray the cause.

Unless they ask for weapons, then the Troubleshooters are still unarmed at this point. Ivan and Tanya are both heavily armed though.

Bombard the Troubleshooters with news from the front, and ask for their response. Some samples:

☜ Comrades! The surface domes are under attack by warbots! What do we do?

☜ Comrades! Vulture Troopers attacking through the sewers! What do we do?

☜ Comrades! A detachment of comrades is trapped in no-clones-land! Do we rescue them?

☜ Comrades! Incoming missiles! We have one flight of interceptors left—do we fire?

- Comrades! The 14th Army is within range of ESV Sector dome—should they open up a ninth front?

- Comrades! Should we redirect power from life support, or the defense shields?

- Comrades! We have an experimental Anti-Computer EMP, but using it will drain our reactors to the point of overload. Should we use it now?

- Comrades! Should we attempt to use the capitalist-seeking missiles?

Even if they try, by the way, they can't blow up the DSESBBS—it's still buried too deep beneath Alpha Complex.

■ The Ultimatum

After the Troubleshooters have dug themselves and the Red Army into a hole, the KremVax receives a transmission from Alpha Complex. At the other end of the line is the commander of the Armed Forces attacking the KremVax, Nathan-UV-KNX-13. He's a cigar-chewing, sunglasses-wearing, ass-kicking, napalm-dropping clone-of-a-son-of-a-bitch that's kicked Commies from Outdoors to, er, another part of Outdoors. He's high on a potent cocktail of Thymoglandin, Pyroxidine, bloodlust and a hell of a lot of firepower.

His message to the Commies? Surrender! Now! So we can blow the hell out of you! He'll promise the Troubleshooters that they'll get a big show trial back in Alpha Complex before they're executed. They don't have a hope of survival anyway—at least this way, they'll get to live a bit longer and he gets to bring prisoners home. They have 30 minutes to respond—wait any longer, and it'll be too late.

How do the Troubleshooters respond?

■ The Other Ultimatum

Soon after Nathan-UV-KNX-13 contacts the KremVax, the Troubleshooters get a transmission, directed at them specifically. It's from Malachi-V-SSI-6, last seen as Malachi-B 40 yearcycles ago (see page 76). Malachi-V remembers the DSESBBS and the clones it produces, and knows that they are not the fabled Communist masterminds that history paints them as. He contacts them, reminds them of who they are and of their duty to Alpha Complex, and orders them to order the entire Red Army to march to a specific set of co-ordinates, so they can be vaporized with a single attack. If the Troubleshooters do that, then Malachi-V will ensure that they'll get rescued and their records changed to reflect the new truth.

They need to act immediately, though.

■ The Other Other Ultimatum

Finally, the KremVax gets a call from one of the hidden Commie research laboratories. It's a wild-hearted researcher who introduces himself as Tesla. He was trying to reach the Central Committee, but they seem to have vanished. Anyway, he's just finished that Doomsday Device he's been fiddling with. It's not tested, but it should make the biggest bang in human history, and possibly collapse the entire planet into an artificially generated black hole.

What do they want done with it?

■ Come, Come, Nuclear Bombs

If the Troubleshooters stall, then it's all over. Either Armed Forces troops storm the KremVax or, more likely, The Computer launches a nuclear strike that kills millions, but wipes out communism forever. Really. This time for sure.

If they want to take either of the offers given by Nathan-UV or Malachi-V, then they need to trick/corrupt/kill Ivan and/or Tanya. They do have the entire Red Army at their disposal, so the Troubleshooters are not without influence. They could even decide to join the Central Committee in exile (*Here, Ivan, now you're the Supreme Commander. Be brave, Comrade!*).

Tesla's probably insane, and his Doomsday Device won't work. Unless it does. Even if it works, it doesn't destroy all of Alpha Complex, as that would screw up the next scenario. Feel free to blame the coming dystopia on Tesla's weapon, though, if the Troubleshooters do use it.

Emphasize the claustrophobic feeling of the command center, and the disconnect between the blinking lights on the holographic display and the deaths of thousands on the snowy plains of Outdoors. The feel of this finale should be something out of the worst nightmares of the Cold War and *Dr. Strangelove*.

AT LAST. FINAL VICTORY!

5. The Humanist Yearcycles

When: T+300 yearcycles.

Synopsis: The Humanists have won! Alpha Complex is free! No more oppressive regime! No more torture! No more thought control! No more dull, grinding work in the food vats! Return to humanist values! Joy and unity for all!

State of Alpha Complex: Everyone now wears long flowing white robes, but the low-ranking citizens—sorry, brethren—still do dull, grinding work in the food vats, while the elite Speakers live in luxury. The Computer is still around, but it's been stripped of much of its power. It no longer executes people—instead, there are impromptu firing squads everywhere. It's much more… human. Cloning is still practiced, as the genetic damage to humanity is too severe to immediately return to old-style breeding. They're working on it, though. Marriage is now mandatory for all brethren.

Other than all that, things are pretty much unchanged. People are now openly in charge, instead of the High Programmers using The Computer as a mouthpiece, but everyone's still whipped into paranoid fears about traitors and outside enemies to keep their attention away from the constant food shortages, horrible living conditions, bureaucratic madness and rampant corruption.

Who's In Charge?: The Council of Speakers—a mix of old-school Humanists, and old High Programmers who were clever enough to switch sides when the Humanists took over. Their power is maintained by a combination of media manipulation (Alpha Complex's utopia is under threat!) and control of cloning. Getting a replacement clone after you die is no longer a guarantee, even for your first six clones. Instead, a Life Review Committee is formed from your co-workers and supervisors to see if the cost of resurrecting you is justified. While any replacement Troubleshooters are decanted from

the DSESBBS, the DSESBBS has automatically patched into the Alpha Complex MemoMax network and therefore won't produce replacement clones until it gets approval from a Life Review Committee.

Changes to Clearance & Regulations: Clearance is officially gone. Everyone's equal, and everyone wears white flowing robes instead of ugly jumpsuits. However, everyone is also marked with tattoos that fluoresce under ultra-violet light. These tattoos indicate your security level, permissions, rank and so on. Everyone has their head shaved to make more room for tattoos.

Regulations have mostly had their names changed, but are otherwise much the same. The major difference is the great increase in the number of committees, focus groups, discussion groups, consultants and so on—back in the bad old days, The Computer had the autocratic power to make decisions. Now, in a more enlightened era, people get to make their own decisions. Very, very slowly, and only when everyone agrees with the decision. Compromise is fun!

What's Treasonous?: Lots of stuff, but they don't call it treason any more. It's Hate. Only bad people Hate. Mutants Hate a lot. (Mutants, by the way, are responsible for the genetic deviancy that forces Alpha Complex to rely on cloning.) Known Haters include the banned secret societies like the Romantics, Psion, Sierra Clubbers and so on (largely unchanged from The Computer's reign of terror), as well as the new enemies:

- **Morlocks:** The morlocks dwell outside Alpha Complex, in the Outdoors. The Outdoors is a very, very dangerous place, filled with morlocks. Morlocks are filthy degenerate barbarians who are filled with Hate.

- **Anarchists:** A chaotic sect of deviants and renegades who want to blow up Alpha Complex

and overthrow the Humanist council. (Death Leopard with a political bent, basically, mixed with the last remnants of PURGE.)

- **Clone Arrangers:** Control of the cloning banks is one of the foundations of power in Alpha Complex. Cloning is now a privilege, not a right. Therefore, a black market of cloning has grown up, insurance for people who fear they won't get replaced by official channels. Many of these clones are grown in unsanitary back-alley labs, leading to more mutations; many of these clones also have problems taking over their previous lives—especially when a Life Review Committee unexpectedly authorizes an official clone, leading to there being two or more of the same individual. Hilarity ensues. Excess clones become non-people, hiding in the underworld of Alpha Complex or fleeing to the growing Morlock army.

- **Computerists:** Back in the old times, a wise and benevolent Computer ruled over Alpha Complex, and everyone was happy. Friend Computer was torn down by the hateful and corrupt Humanists, but if we believe in Friend Computer, and hold It in our hearts and brains, then one day, It can be Rebooted. One day soon…

Deprecated: Happiness is no longer mandatory. The Computer suppressed the full range of human emotion, and that was wrong. If you want to be sad, it's ok. We'll hug you while you cry, friend. What is mandatory is Love. You must Love your fellow clone, and you must Love Alpha Complex. Love is the opposite of Hate. Love conquers all. If you fail, you're not Loving hard enough. Too much thought and questioning of the Speakers is a sure sign you don't Love them enough. If you really Loved us, you wouldn't question us.

Love is reinforced with chemicals. Have you taken your Love today, brethren? If you don't Love, the Morlocks win!

Low-ranking citizens are encouraged to love with their whole hearts, and more importantly, their whole brains, and so are pumped full of Love regularly.

Oh God, Not Again

The Troubleshooters wake up in the good old DSESBBS. The room doesn't seem to have changed a great deal since then, although there are several alarming cracks in the concrete of the walls. There's also a strange tinkling mood music echoing through the room—all of Alpha Complex is now filled with relaxing happy music*. Two figures are standing there waiting for them. One, the Troubleshooters recognize as Andy (now Andy-103**), although he's now bald and wearing white robes. He's got a blissful smile on his face. The other is a stranger—tall, wise-eyed and smiling. He introduces himself as Brother Effervescence-2100, Grade 17 Agent of the Love Police***.

'Welcome back, brethren. Be not afraid. Many yearcycles have passed since you were last decanted. Welcome to the Humanist Utopia of Alpha Complex.'

Effervescence is no fool—there are four heavily armed Guidance Friends**** just outside. If any of the Troubleshooters scream 'Humanist traitor' or anything, then the Guides will enter and apply violence and chemical Love in equal measures.

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* Tinkly plinky plonky music that sounds like a lot of crystals being hit by a four-yearcycle-old. And It. Never. Stops. Ever. Eternal plinky plinky plonk.

After about an hour, your teeth start resonating.

** Not a clone number. Everyone gets a code number to go along with their name.

*** IntSec by another name.

**** GREEN goons.

Chemical Love

The Troubleshooters will likely be treated with the Love chemical regularly during this scenario. Love does exactly what it says on the tin—it causes feelings of empathy, care, fellowship and trust, not to mention desire in some cases. Zap someone with a big shot of Love, and they'll try to hug you instead of terminating you. There's a massive black market in the sale of Love Inhibitors, and most senior Brethren have built up a strong immunity to Love, which functions as Love Armor.

Here's the Love scale, which works just like the damage scale:
Okay (O)—Smile (S)—Friendly (F)—Hugs (H)—Best Friends (BF)—Devotion (D)—Obsessive Love (OL)—Mine!!!! (M). The last one, Mine, means that the victim of Love is consumed with desire to be near, to possess the object of Love, and will do anything to get there.

The Love Gun does O5D damage. An injected dose of Love does H5OL.

Effervescence explains the current situation in Alpha Complex in glowing terms, about how the Humanists have perfected society and everyone is full of Love. The one problem is the existence of Hate. Secret societies like the Computerists promote Hate, so they must be stopped. The Humanists have been editing history, to remove badthought and Hate from the past, so they have erased many records relating to The Computer's time. The Troubleshooters are a living link to the distant past—a link that will be irresistible to the Computerists.

Their mission, therefore, is to infiltrate the Computerist society and locate the Hateful leaders. Effervescence's Love Police will then swoop in and remove the Haters. With the Computerists removed, historical revisionism can continue and the horrors of The Computer's reign will be totally excised from the record. It will be a new, more perfect yearcycle 214.

If the Troubleshooters accept, then they will be rewarded richly in the new Humanist order.

If they refuse, well, they obviously do not Love enough. Not Loving is Hateful. Have more chemical Love and reconsider your answer.

I Wanna Ba a Humanist

Assuming the Troubleshooters agree, they are whisked away to become part of the Humanist society.

If they were introduced directly to the Computerists, then the Haters would be suspicious. No, Effervescence's plan is to hide the Troubleshooters in ordinary committees, and let the Computerists recruit them.

Step 1: Head tattoos. The Troubleshooters have their heads shaved, and a big machine with lasers and probes zaps them with a series of bar codes, weird glyphs and Friendly notes*.

Step 2: Flowing white robes. Everyone gets flowing white robes and Love Guns. A Love Gun is a two-part weapon. There's the classic laser pistol bit, but there's also a high-pressure Love spray. Anyone who isn't loving enough should be shot by the Love Gun.

Step 3: Marriage. Marriage is mandatory in the Humanist state. Therefore, the Troubleshooters need to be married. The simplest approach is for them to be married to each other. If you have an even number of players, then just pair the characters up. (While same-sex marriage does not entirely conform with the Humanist goals of repopulating the human race through traditional means, the prevalence of genetic mutation in the gene pool means that most traditional pairings are just as infertile.) If there's an extra Troubleshooter, then that Troubleshooter gets married off to perky young Purity-4363—blonde, bubbly, very dedicated to the Humanist cause, and not very

bright at all. This is her first marriage, and she's determined to do her duty for the Complex**.

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* It's common practice to stamp notes onto the foreheads of citizens, so that their supervisors can shine a UV light on their face and see a clone's past misdemeanors. Stuff like 'POOR IMPULSE CONTROL' or 'BODY ODOR' or 'MY NAME IS PHIL'. Unfortunate citizens sometimes get used as notice boards by high-ranking supervisors.

** The Troubleshooters' doses of hormone suppressants are still in full effect, and are likely to be for the rest of the scenario. Purity and all the other Humanists don't have hormone suppressants (although all sex in Alpha Complex is regulated by heavy doses of Love). This may lead to the occasional misunderstanding.

The marriage regulations clearly state that both partners in a marriage must be caring and attentive to each other's needs. Specifically, *all* communications between the two must be prefixed with an endearment. Failing to do so is Hateful, and deserves a shot of Love.

Step 4: Orientation. Effervescence explains the state of Alpha Complex again, and tells the Troubleshooters that they will be put on three committees. The Love Police are sure that there are Computerist agents on at least one of the committees. The Troubleshooters must therefore drop hints that they are Computerist sympathizers so they'll be recruited. When recruited, they must play along for as long as they can, then summon the Love Police. He gives them all emergency beacons—devices about the size of a fingernail that will transmit a distress call when pressed.

▌ Your Valued Contribution

There's actually a Computerist agent at each meeting. However, there are also two loyal Humanists. The Troubleshooters need to drop hints about their knowledge of The Computer without being noticed by the loyalists. Yay for Twitchtalk if they have it!

Purity goes along to the committee meetings if she's needed for the game.

Meeting One: Housing Decoration and Purchasing Oversight Subcommittee with Special Executive Authority Over Paint and Other Wall Coverings Other Than Functional Coverings.
Topic: What Are We Going To Do With 50,000 Cans Of Really Ugly Green Paint That Gives Off Toxic Fumes While Drying, But Takes Two Weeks To Dry?
Attending:
- The Troubleshooters

- **Bounty-992**, a Communal Unity (HPD&MC) drone. Has the paint sitting in her warehouse, and wants to get rid of it now! Psion sympathizer.

- **Excitement-7674**, a Council Adjunct (CPU) accountant. Wants to make sure the paint isn't wasted, but refuses to allow any section of Alpha Complex to be shut down for two weeks while the paint dries. Computerist.

- **Sobriety-6654**, a Joyous Worker (Tech Services). The unions have massive power in Alpha Complex now, and Sobriety won't do anything with dangerous paint without extra pay. Morlock spy.

Talking Points: The paint was provided by a commune that's since dispersed, so it can't be given back. The color was chosen by a higher committee to promote joy, so it must be displayed publicly.

Meeting Two: Life Review for Reliability-4322
Topic: Brother Reliability-4322 was killed by an anarchist explosion. Should he be recloned?
Attending:
- The Troubleshooters

- **Vigilance-6765**, a Love Police agent who suspects but cannot prove that Reliability was in fact an Anarchist bomber. She's

therefore here to argue that Reliability isn't worth the cloning cost. Sierra Clubber.

- **Unity-2229**, a Peace Corps (Armed Forces) soldier and Reliability's wife. She's in the depths of Love Withdrawal following his death—she doesn't actually want him back, but she's chemically addicted to him, and is therefore subject to wild mood swings. Anarchist.

- **Productivity-0211**, a Power Services (Power Services) supervisor. Reliability borrowed the good spanner, and now no-one can find it. Computerist.

Talking Points: Was he an Anarchist? Should they bring him back if they're not sure? Does he deserve a second chance seeing as he was blown up by Haters?

Meeting Three: General Feelgood Meeting, Local Sector
Topic: Isn't Life In The Humanist Complex Great? Also, Love Showers whenever people are especially loyal.
Attending:
- The Troubleshooters

- 👁 About A Thousand Other Citizens

- 👁 **Loyalty-8754,** a Productivity Enthusiast (PLC) clerk and Computerist

- 👁 **Gratitude-5433,** a Bliss Engineer (R&D) technician and Computerist

Talking Points: This meeting takes place in a big open chamber. There's a spotlight in the ceiling. When it lands on you, you shout out a short speech about how much you love Alpha Complex. If you're really loyal, then Love rains from the ceiling. Think the Nuremberg rally crossed with a born-again Christian church crossed with a rave.

Join Us, Loyal Citizen

Eventually, the Troubleshooters will be noticed by the Computerists and contacted by one of their agents. The Computerist approaches the Troubleshooters and makes the Computerist recognition code (Make a square around your eye with your fingers, symbolizing the eye-in-the-monitor/point your fingers like a gun and go 'zap', symbolizing The Computer's all-pervading digital justice). If the Troubleshooters look clueless, or if they somehow guess the correct response, then the Computerist whispers that there are others who feel as they do, and that he will bring the Troubleshooters there.

That nightcycle, the Computerist agent brings the Troubleshooters to a secret meeting. The meeting takes place in tunnels underneath the local CompNode. The Troubleshooters are led into a dark room, where another 20 conspirators are waiting. The leader of the local Computerist cell is also there—he introduces himself as Roy-I-CPU, a loyal servant of the True Computer. He asks if the Troubleshooters have been initiated into the service of the True Computer.

Roy-I then explains the purpose of the Computerist society. When the hated Humanists took over after the

Unfortunate Incident, they tried to strip away The Computer's power by disabling CompNodes and deleting higher programs all across Alpha Complex. However, a loyal servant of The Computer saved Its higher programs in a divine archive. To ensure that no Humanist or other enemy of The Computer could destroy Its wisdom, all loyal servants give up a portion of their brains to store a section of The Computer's code.

As he says this, all the Computerists turn and look at the Troubleshooters. Green lines of code scroll down behind their eyes.

Roy-I asks if the Troubleshooters are ready to be initiated. If they agree, or if they start talking about how they're actually 500 yearcycle old Troubleshooters from the reign of The Computer, then Roy-I reveals an ancient computer terminal behind a shroud. There's a complex helmet/drill gadget hanging off one side of the terminal—this is the device used to download sections of archived code into the brains of the faithful. There is also a tongueprint reader. While tongueprints* were once common in Alpha Complex, the Troubleshooters haven't seen any in the Humanist-dominated complex.

> ** Tongueprints were largely outmoded by the introduction of the ME card, anyway.*

Roy-I indicates the reader. '*It is prophesied in the Emergency Protocols that one day the Great Rebooters will be born from the lost vault of DSESBBS and that they will return The Computer to Its rightful place. We await that day. Oh well, it's probably not today. It's time to have your brains drilled to make for the Backup.*' He picks up the helmet and advances on the nearest Troubleshooter.

A Meaningful Decision

What do the Troubleshooters do? If the Computerists discover that the Troubleshooters are in fact decanted from the DSESBBS, then they will stop at nothing to get them

to reboot The Computer. They would prefer that the Prophesied Ones serve willingly, but they'll settle for just keeping their tongues intact.

If any of the Troubleshooters goes through with having his brain drilled, then the computer system recognizes him as being part of the DSESBBS team. A message appears on screen, telling the Computerists who the Troubleshooter really is. Simultaneously, half the Troubleshooters' brain is filled with a copy of The Computer's reactor management code.

If any of the Troubleshooters use the emergency beacons given by Effervescence and the Love Police, then the Love Police attack the hidden meeting. The Computerists panic and try to drill the Troubleshooters, leading to them finding out about the DSESBBS, leading to the tongues. It all comes back to the tongues.

Terminal Reboot

If any of the Troubleshooters licks the terminals**—the heads of all the Computerists explode, violently (as does the cranium of any drilled Troubleshooter). The drill used to initiate Computerist members contains a tiny once-use transmitter, which just uploaded all the archived code back to the rebooting mainframe. Every screen in Alpha Complex suddenly displays the message **REBOOTING… PLEASE WAIT.**

A few moments later, The Computer announces: **SYSTEM ONLINE. ATTENTION, ALPHA COMPLEX TREASON INDEX HAS EXCEEDED MAXIMUM TOLERANCE. INITIATING PURGE SEQUENCE. TOTAL TERMINATION IN 5…4…3…2…**

There is the distant sound of reactor shielding opening. Everyone dies. Friend Computer's back in charge!

> *** If the Troubleshooters don't reboot The Computer, then someone else does in the intervening 200 yearcycles between the end of this scenario and the start of the next one.*

6. The War of NOS Sector

When: T+500 yearcycles.

Syopsis: The Computer crashed (again), and now each individual CompNode thinks it's the One True Computer. Every sector is now its own little Alpha Complex, and is at war with every other sector, which are of course filled with Commies. The Troubleshooters are brought back because they have secret military knowledge—specifically, the layout of NOS Sector.

State of Alpha Complex: Unchanged, according to The Computer. Not only has it always been yearcycle 214, but Alpha Complex has always been about a sector in size, populated by only a few hundred citizens, and has always been a smashed, ruined, decaying shadow of its former self. Two hundred yearcycles of constant fighting, not to mention the crippling shortages and supply failures that arose from chopping the whole complex up into isolationist sectors, means that this Alpha Complex is a hollow ruin, with a few unfortunate citizens grubbing in the wreckage. Whole sectors are now mass graves.

Which is, of course, excellent news! Because those sectors were full of Commies.

Who's In Charge?: The Computer. Since getting rebooted and wiping out the Humanists, The Computer has enjoyed absolute power in Alpha Complex. However, fracturing into CompNodes drove It insane, and there aren't any High Programmers around any more to untangle its code and mop its fevered processors. In short, The Computer is acting like a crazy little dictator ruling over a tiny oppressed population in an isolated country, and It wants nukes.

Changes to Clearance & Regulations: Most regulations are now back in force, just as they are described in the *PARANOIA* rulebook. However, The Computer is much more erratic, and has been known to zap people for even minor infractions.

Clearance is officially unchanged…but due to the small population, and The Computer's love of terminating people, it's rare for anyone to get above GREEN at most. There's not a single VIOLET or ULTRAVIOLET in all of Alpha Complex (or even, all of the Alpha Complexes).

What's Treasonous?: The usual. Having any contact with neighboring sectors is obviously treasonous, as you must be an enemy agent. That banging on the wall? Why, that was a coded message. Directed at you. You traitor. Zap! Also, under the Joy in Austerity program, complaining in the slightest about lack of food, warmth, light and other necessities is treason. Almost anything can be treasonous if The Computer believes you're acting against the all-important War Effort.

Most old secret societies are gone, or else mutated into almost unrecognizable forms. At this point, the major societies are…

- 👁 **Food Hoarders:** Food supplies are scarce in wartime. Most clones get one meal of Ready Fun per day at best, and Food Appreciation Days are becoming more common. The Food Hoarders stockpile what they can spare—which is illegal. Still, they're easily the biggest society.

- 👁 **Scavengers:** The Scavengers raid dead sectors and the wreckage left by battles, searching for useful supplies.

- 👁 **Pacifists:** The Pacifists object to the war in principle, but object to being put on the frontlines and killed in specific. The society tries to get its members out of the line of fire by arranging for them to be given cushy jobs elsewhere; if that fails, they just try to sabotage the war to stay out of danger.

- 👁 **Citizen's Militia:** Fanatic warriors who want to die for The Computer and Alpha Complex. Unfortunately, many Citizen's Militia members are crazy people who shouldn't be given a stapler, let alone a cone rifle. Citizen's Militia prepare for battle in secret, stockpile stolen weapons, and await the coming Armageddon.

- 👁 **Keepers of Ancient Lore:** The shadowy Keepers remember a time when men knew the secret of Coding, and The Computer was not all-powerful. One day, they whisper, they shall find the secrets of this power and bring perfection to Alpha Complex.

Deprecated: Really, any memory of the past. Things were always this great, citizen, even if you remember them being otherwise (brainscrub time!). Evidence of the existence of food vats, connections to other sectors and so on are actually planted by Commies trying to destroy morale.

No One's Cleaned My Clone Tank In Five Generations

The Troubleshooters wake up in the DSESBBS. It's a mess. (The DSESBBS is a mess…I must confess…under duress… hey, that's catchy). The walls are cracked and blackened, as if there was a tremendous fire here. The doors are smashed and riddled with bullet holes. None of the lights are working. The only illumination comes from a pair of torch-beams, swinging wildly. For a moment, the torch illuminates a skeleton lying at Andy's control panel, then it shines into the Troubleshooter's faces.

6: The War of NOS Sector

'It worked! It's them!' says a voice. The owner of the voice takes out a glowing sphere and activates it, illuminating the whole room. The Troubleshooters have been awaken by two citizens, dressed in ragged and grubby red jumpsuits. One is carrying a laser pistol, the other has a sharp stick. They are Rob-R and Ed-R, a pair of Scavengers and loyal citizens of NOR Sector Alpha Complex.

Rob-R explains that they found the DSESBBS when exploring this Unplace*, and that according to the records, the PCs should be Ancient and Wise Troubleshooters from the Time Before History, who know the layout of all the sectors. If the Troubleshooters are confused or ask for clarification, Ed-R explains that according to orthodoxy, only NOR Sector is the true Alpha Complex, and all other Alpha Complexes are Commie-controlled strongholds of treason that were built in mockery of the One True Complex—but everyone knows** that once all the sectors were part of One Big Complex, and that it is said that once, a clone could walk from one sector to another freely.

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* Anything outside Alpha Complex is either an Enemy Complex, or doesn't exist. Hence, the ruined sectors are Unplaces.

** The knowledge that all sectors were originally one is about as common as knowledge of the Outdoors was 500 yearcycles ago. Few citizens in this modern Alpha Complex know about the Outdoors—when traveling down the corridor is a big deal, going out of the dome entirely into a big big big big big big space is unthinkable.

If the Troubleshooters do know the secret layout of hated NOS Sector, continues Rob-R, then they will be of great value to the war effort. If they do not know the secret, then they're useless. (In fact, mutters Ed-R, we may as well just shoot them and sell the bodies to the Food Hoarders). When it's put like that, the Troubleshooters really should know the secret layout of NOS Sector.

The door to the DSESBBS is broken, but Rob-R and Ed-R got in through a hole in the ceiling. They take the Troubleshooters back the same way, though a series of broken and ruined sectors. This is post-apocalyptic Alpha Complex. Think of the cities around Chernobyl—corridor after corridor of empty rooms and abandoned halls. Alpha Complex after the rain.

Eventually, the Troubleshooters and their new friends/captors/guides arrive at NOR Sector. The main entrance into NOR Sector is scarred by bomb craters and laser burns, the legacy of thousands of wars with other sectors. Rob-R leads the Troubleshooters to a damaged access panel in the wall, which leads to a secret passage into the base.

W.M.D.

The secret passage is full of skeletons. Others have tried to leave NOR Sector by this route before, and were caught by the border patrols. Several of the skeletons have obvious tooth-marks on their bones. Rob-R and Ed-R are unphased by the passageway of gory death—they've gone this way many times before. The passage, by the way, is narrow. Only one person can fit through it at a time.

The passage exits through another hidden panel, letting the Troubleshooters into the heart of Alpha Complex—at least, the local Alpha Complex. Which comprises about eight corridors and a few dozen rooms. In terms of inhabitable area, it's about that of a small shopping center with its own nuclear arsenal. Rob-R and Ed-R tell the Troubleshooters to accompany them to the supreme commander of the Alpha Complex Armed Forces, Nathan-B (yes, the same clone template as was commanding the Armed Forces back in Red Dawncycle).

Nathan-B immediately declares the Troubleshooters a National Security Asset and CLEARANCE BLUE***. He takes out a map of NOR and neighboring sectors. The map shows NOR Sector in incredible detail, down to individual floor panels and chairs. However, NOS Sector on the far side of the wall is a complete blank. Nathan-B demands that the Troubleshooters designate the best targets in NOS Sector—the missiles are ready to launch, they just need targets. If the Troubleshooters point to targets, that's fine—they know where major sites like the reactor, cloning tanks or CompNode in NOS Sector are.

Friend Computer, He So Crazy

Suddenly, the camera in Nathan-B's command center switches on, and a hysterical, discordant version of The Computer's voice rings through the room. **INTRUDERS WILL REPORT TO MAIN HALL NOW!!! NOW!!!****** Nathan-B pales, but orders the Troubleshooters to follow him to the main hall. If they refuse, he pulls a gun on them.

The Main Hall of NOR Sector was once a large cafeteria. Now, it's a cafeteria/CompNode/nuclear missile silo. A huge computer monitor and associated electronic bits dominates much of the room, with Its one big eye gazing proudly at the just-completed nuclear missile. As the Troubleshooters and Nathan-B enter, that huge baleful eye rolls around to stare at them. **EXPLAIN THE ORIGIN OF THE INTRUDERS!!!** It screams.

*** It'll only last a few minutes, but during that time, the Troubleshooters are technically not allowed know they exist or refer to each other or themselves, on penalty of termination.

**** Can we legally say 'Dalek' here? If we can, then it sounds like a Dalek. If we can't, then it sounds like a lawyer.

If the Troubleshooters want to volunteer the information, they can; otherwise, Nathan-B will admit that they come from outside, but that they are vitally important military asset- **OUTSIDERS ARE COMMIE MUTANT TRAITORS! COMMIES MUST BE TERMINATED! ALL CITIZENS SUBVERTED BY CONTACT WITH COMMUNISM MUST BE TERMINATED! INITIATING PURGE!** A laser blast turns poor Nathan-B into free-floating atoms.

Ask the players what they do. If they say 'RUN', move onto the next section. If they try to outsmart The Computer, let them try. A half-way good Management or Con Games roll will be enough to confuse the poor degenerating CompNode to trust the Troubleshooters… for a while. With their knowledge of neighboring sectors, they can easily give The Computer the knowledge it needs to target the CompNodes of the enemy. Victory can be theirs! NOS Sector can be defeated, then NOT and NOU and NOV… as long as they can keep convincing an increasingly megalomaniac Computer that they're on its side. For added challenges, you can vary the location of the CompNode in enemy sectors, meaning that victory may not be total and the NOR Sector troops have to deal with enemy survivors and saboteurs.

Once you tire of this, then NOR Sector Intelligence (a guy with his ear to the wall) discovers that several of the remaining sectors have entered into a coalition, and are about to launch a co-coordinated attack. As NOR as only one missile silo, then they can only take out one sector at a time. Everyone's going to die, and The Computer blames Its new military advisors—the Troubleshooters—for the problem. Move onto the next section.

The Only Thing That Can Save Us Now Is a Crazy Plan

As the Troubleshooters flee down the corridor, they run into Rob-R and Ed-R, who are fleeing from a Troubleshooter team who just got a mission to execute them. Their only hope is to flee NOR Sector the same way they came in, though the secret passage. They're pursued by NOR Troubleshooters and the Citizen's Militia, but will be safe as soon as they get out the far side of the passage. Who goes through the passage first?

When the survivors make out into the barren sectors outside, they're faced with a choice. If they defect to NOS Sector*, then they could give the NOSries the location of the NOR Sector CompNode, ensuring NOS Sector's victory. Alternatively, they could starve in the Unplaces.

So, what do they do? Defect, or starve. The problem with the 'Defect' option is that there is still a land war running between NOR and NOS Sectors, and the frontline of that war is between the characters and safety in NOS Sector. Ed-R warns the characters that they'll have to make it through the battle to reach NOS Sector.

Wars in the modern era are problematic. Anyone on the frontlines is by definition exposed to the corrupting influence of the enemy Commies; therefore, any survivors of a battle cannot be allowed return to NOR Sector without being thoroughly brainscrubbed into trustworthiness. Of course, this means that the soldiers can't remember the battle, so the progress of the war has to be estimated mathematically. According to NOR Sector calculations, they've won the war 17 times over by now.

The ruined corridors leading to the side entrance to NOS Sector are the battleground. As the Troubleshooters approach, they hear a voice bark an order. 'NOR WarBots, advance!' and

half-a-dozen scrubbots with sharpened vacuum cleaners pass by, followed by a few NOR Sector soldiers armed with second-hand lasers, muskets and sharp sticks. They then hear the sound of bloody, bloody fighting. It looks like it'll be really easy to sneak by… then they hear a sound that sounds really like a plasma field firing**.

The side entrance to NOS Sector is guarded by a Mark IX Warbot***. It's really, really big. It's obviously old and badly maintained, but still horribly lethal. It's got guns on its guns, meter-thick armor, enough spiky bits to impale a whole FunBall team… it's 30 feet tall, and squatted right in front of the door the Troubleshooters need to get through. So, the question is, how do they get past it? The easiest solution is to lure another bunch of NOR Sector troops to the area, and run past the warbot while it's vaporizing them. They could try reasoning with the bot, but that's crazy talk.

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* If NOS Sector is a smoking crater, then use the next nearest surviving sector.

*** It sounds like this: **bzzzFISSSSHHHHHVOOOM**pshpshpsh**V OOOOOOM**fissshhhbzzz*

**** Mark IX, 'Advanced Patriot Plasma-Death Extreme Homeland Defense, v2'. So dangerous, its **screws** have warnings on them.*


◼ We Want To Defect

Once the Troubleshooters get past the warbot, they enter into NOS Sector. Rob-R and Ed-R (if they're still alive) are both palpably terrified—the thought of entering a strange new sector for the first time is unthinkable. They've never even seen a NOSrie in the flesh, at least not one they weren't shooting at. There are rumors that the NOSries aren't even human, that they're Communist monsters of some sort. When the Troubleshooters open the door, though, they discover that NOS Sector is… almost identical to NOR Sector…

…Right down to the existence of a clone of Nathan-B. The Troubleshooters are marched to his command center directly, where they are shown Nathan-B's map of NOS Sector and the surrounding… blanks. Nathan-B tells the Troubleshooters that NOS Sector is ready to deliver a final knock-out blow to NOR Sector. The missile is ready, it just needs the location of the NOR Sector CompNode.

If the Troubleshooters give them the location of the NOR CompNode, then a missile is launched from NOS Sector's silo. It shoots straight up out of the crumbling dome over Alpha Complex, arcs around, then plummets straight down to impact at a point about 500 meters away from where it launched.

If the Troubleshooters didn't give them the location of the NOR CompNode, then exactly the same thing happens, only NOR and NOS are reversed. This may seem like a minor change, but that does mean that the Troubleshooters are toast.
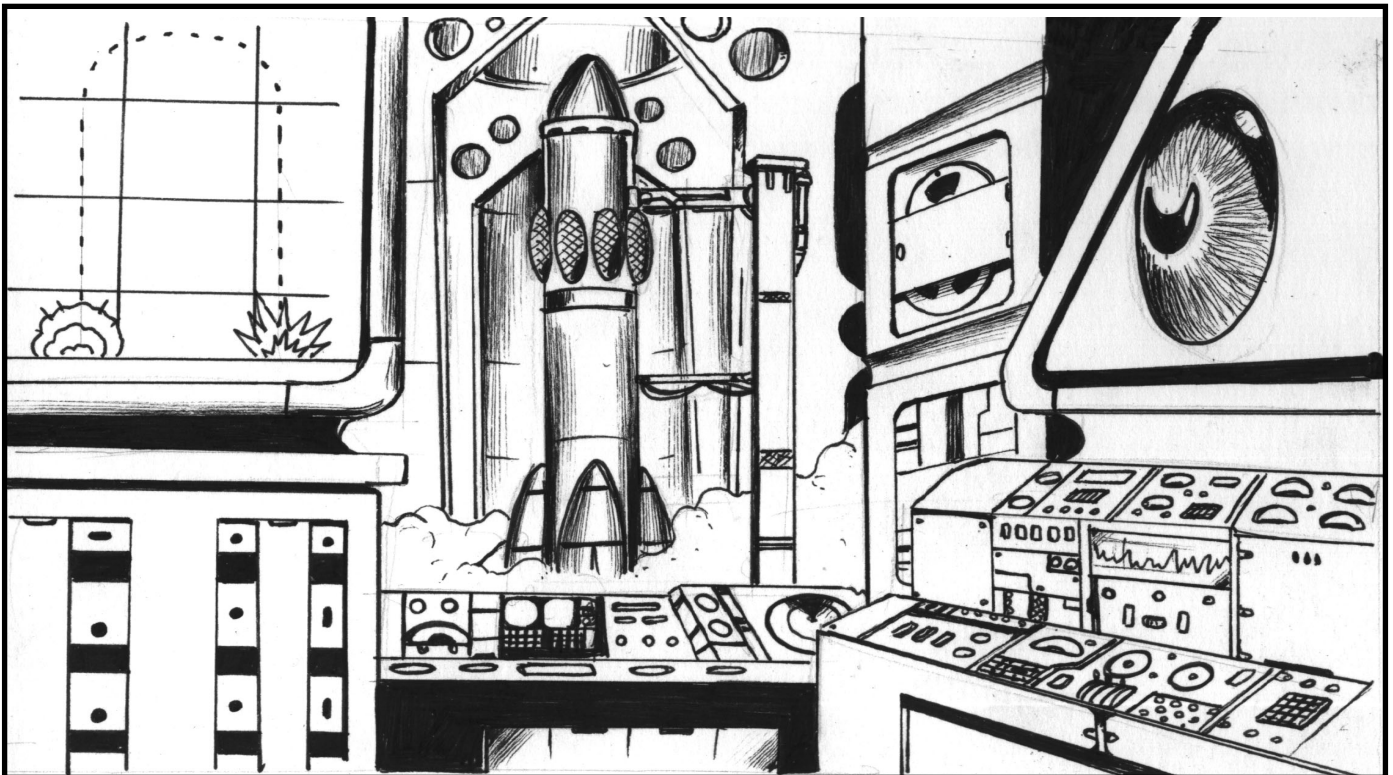
7. Waste Not, Want Not

When: T+1,000 yearcycle.

Synopsis: Alpha Complex is drowning in a lake of its own sewage and reactor waste. The few surviving citizens are trapped in life support machines, unable to survive on their own after generations of mutation, malnutrition and medical malpractice. While the handful of still-functional bots are building the Alpha Complex Ark, the Troubleshooters must go out and survey five potential sites for the new Complex.

State of Alpha Complex: Which part of 'drowning in a lake of its own sewage and reactor waste' did you miss? Radiation from leaking reactors cascades in invisible sheets through the corridors. The air recyclers broke down centuries ago; the air is like soup with a thick dusting of metal filings. The few mineral resources within reach of the automated mining bots have been exhausted, and under the Friendly Recycling Initiative of yearcycle 214, the automated mining bots were recycled, which may have been a mistake. In short, the place is completely f*cked.

> ** **Every** time they put an asterisk in to hide a profanity, they're legally obliged to put in a footnote. You just never noticed them until now.*

Who's In Charge?: Things are back to normal—the different CompNodes are networked again, forming one Computer (although It is just as decayed and faulty as the rest of the rotting complex). There are also High Programmers, who are all busy hiding toxic waste and proclaiming that they've exceeded recycling quotas by 15,000%.

Changes to Clearance & Regulations: The major change is that your security clearance now determines your access to certain limited supplies. Like oxygen. At RED Clearance, you get your oxygen tank changed once per week.

What's Treasonous?: Waste of *any kind* is treason. Everything must be recycled. Damaging vital equipment is considered waste.

Deprecated: Breathing too much. Legs.

Toxic Slime Everywhere And Not a Drop to Drink

The Troubleshooters awaken, as usual, in the DSESBBS. The first thing they notice is that the floor is covered by a three-foot deep lake of green slime. Barrels of toxic waste float idly by. The vault is obviously crumbling—the concrete is now soft enough that you can break chunks off with your fingers. Waiting for the Troubleshooters are Andy-O and CPU coordinator Brian-UV. Both are in the standard life support gear used by all citizens in the yearcycle 214—metallic frames to support wasted and atrophied limbs, oxygen masks to supply breathable air, thick goggles to ward off the blinding fumes, stillsuits to capture all waste water, drug injector backpacks to regulate their diseased metabolisms. Oh, and wheels to allow them to carry all that.

Currently, though, both Andy-Y and Brian-UV are floating on little rafts made of discarded cans. Wheels don't work well in a lake of toxic slime.

Brian-UV watches the Troubleshooters wake up, then turns to Andy-Y and says 'wheeze

Well done, technician *wheeze.* These will fulfill our purpose *wheeze* admirable *wheeze*. Your oxygen ration is *wheeze* increased for this *wheeze* weekcycle.' He turns back to the Troubleshooters and orders them to follow him.

Brian-UV floats out the archway—the door was removed long ago, as metal is scarce now and leads the Troubleshooters up a series of concrete ramps to a flybot docking pad. (The Troubleshooters may distantly remember landing at that pad, a thousand yearcycles before in the yearcycle 214.) There's a bizarre flying machine waiting there, a delicately beautiful thing of spun glass and crystal. Brian-UV explains the Troubleshooters' mission (add wheezes if you want).

'Troubleshooters—Alpha Complex needs your help. Due to Commie sabotage of production schedules for the last 50 yearcycles, our beloved complex is running short on certain resources—notably iron, copper, lead and other vital metals, as well as fresh air and water—and suffers from an unwanted excess of other resources, such as reactor waste. We are at crisis level 17.

Fortunately—rejoice, citizens— The Computer has foreseen this problem, and steps are being taken to correct it. Even now, almost the entire population of Alpha Complex is hard at work on the construction of the Ark that will carry us in perfect

Fun with Cortex Bombs

As Brian-UV promised, the Troubleshooters have all been implanted with nice little bombs in the base of their skulls. A mental command allows a Troubleshooter to vote for one of his teammate's heads to explode. If a majority of the team vote, then *boom*, head falls off. Note that votes stick around—if Bob-R votes for Mike-R's head to explode, then that vote will wait until six hours later, when Jim-R also votes for Mike-R to die. However, a Troubleshooter's votes are reset if he dies. A Troubleshooter can only have one active vote at a time—if Bob-R votes for Jim-R to die, then his standing vote for Mike-R's head is deleted.

Oh, fresh clones are delivered to the grav-hopper using the traditional clone-in-a-missile-casing solution.

safety to our new home. Your mission, Troubleshooters, is to find that new home.

We have identified five potential sites for the Ark. You are ordered to take the grav-hopper and visit each site. The grav-hopper is programmed to return here afterwards for debriefing. To ensure successful completion, you have each been implanted with a cortex bomb. This cortex bomb can be detonated by your teammates if the majority decides you are endangering the mission.

Good luck. Alpha Complex is depending on you.'

The grav-hopper is packed with all sorts of incomprehensible gadgets and probes, so the Troubleshooters can search for minerals and other resources.

To Adventure! And Beyond!

The great glass vehicle is the grav-hopper, the product of an R&D lab stocked with mutant geniuses who were shot after building it. It's remarkably effective for an Alpha Complex vehicle, although it's not especially comfortable. After the Troubleshooters climb on board*, the grav-hopper leaps into the sky at an insane speed.

> ** Climb on board and blow up each other's heads, probably.*

Spread out below them, for an instant, is Alpha Complex. The dome is crumbling, and there are gaping holes all over it. Black smoke and smog pours from the holes. All around it, flowing in and out of other cracks in the dome, is green slime and sewage. There's a permanent foul haze of pollutants hanging over the complex. Then, the grav-hopper bursts through the cloud layer and hurtles onwards.

Potential Site #1: The Garden of Unearthly Delights

The grav-hopper flies over a strange, lush jungle, stretching as far as the eye can see. It ploughs into the ground in a small clearing, and the hatch opens.

The Troubleshooters are alone in the jungle—or so it seems. The plants here are all genetically engineered mutants, created by a long-dead civilization. Every tree here is sentient, and telepathic. As Troubleshooters explore, they will glimpse sinuous tendrils drooping from branches, fronds fondling them as they pass by, strange fungal growths like eyes sprouting in the bark of the eerie trees. The Troubleshooters will feel an odd psychic pressure as they approach any of the trees, like moss growing on their forebrains. None of the trees here, though, are sane enough to make actual psychic contact with them.

Some of the plants have strange fruit growing from them. Like toasters, or laser pistols, or wrenches. The plants here were genetically engineered to suck up metal from the ground and reprocess it into useful shapes.

The sensors in the grav-hopper pick up a source of metal off in the distance. If the Troubleshooters head in that direction, they find a thick hedge surrounding an old metallic dome. The plants making up the hedge are all intertwined— anyone touching them is drawn into psychic contact with the hive mind. Inside, the dome contains the ruins of a science lab. Root tendrils from the hedge run into the dome, where they have broken open several plastic containers. The plastic containers are labeled: Gelgernine, Thymoglandin and so on. All recognizable drugs.

Any Troubleshooter who makes a Wetware check, or who enters into psychic contact with the hedge, can work out what's going on. The genetically engineered telepathic plants are all drug addicts. Their

original designers must have kept them under control using drugs, just like The Computer does in Alpha Complex. If the Troubleshooters want to negotiate a bargain with the plants, where they provide drugs in exchange for the plants' aid in rebuilding Alpha Complex, let them try.

The problem is that the plants need drugs *now*. The Troubleshooters are like big juicy sacs filled with happy drugs. As soon as the plants get a taste of the Troubleshooters' blood or sweat, then the whole jungle will try to eat them….

Potential Site #2: City of the Robots

As soon as the (surviving) Troubleshooters are back on board the grav-hopper, it takes off again and flies east. The land below becomes a painted desert. A low range of mountains appears on the horizon, and the grav-hopper dips toward them, catching the rays of the setting sun as it does so.

Then it dodges to the left, to avoid an incoming missile. In the mountains ahead, the Troubleshooters see a huge metal city, vast and unimaginable complex, like a computer circuit grown to tremendous size. The hopper lands within walking distance of the machine city. The Troubleshooters can see movement on the fringes of the city.

After a few minutes, several bots appear on the horizon, moving toward the grav-hopper. The city was founded by automatic self-repair bots dating back to the time of the Old Reckoning, before the apocalypse that led to the foundation of Alpha Complex sometime more than 214 yearcycles ago. All that time, the bots have been improving themselves and building this city, so they can fulfill their ultimate purpose of serving humanity. They've never seen a human before.

What they have seen are other bots, which they identify as enemies. It's all down to Digital Rights

Management—the enemy bots have illegal copies of copyrighted data in their brains, and so must be destroyed. All thought must be licensed and approved.

If the Troubleshooters make contact with the bots, they are initially mistaken as renegade jackobots. No human has been seen in the city within active memory. The Troubleshooters have their brains scanned and asked if they have a digital license for each memory. Any unlicensed memories are no doubt the result of illegal fire sharing, and must be deleted. With lasers.

If the Troubleshooters proclaim that they're human, the bots will be only too happy to serve them—as long as the Troubleshooters prove they're human by submitting to dissection. The Troubleshooters might argue the bots down to only dissecting some of them, using spurious logic, but the bots are out for blood.

If the Troubleshooters raise the possibility of Alpha Complex landing here, the bots insist that they will have to delete any shared memories to ensure Digital Rights are upheld. This applies to *all* memories—only one citizen, for example, would be allowed retain the memory of how to open a door, or pull a trigger, or the word 'Yellow'. Or, for the matter, the words 'you', 'robots', 'are', 'utterly' and 'insane'.

Potential Site #3: Lair of the Morloi

The third landing site for the grav-hopper is in the distant south. The vessel flies on through the night, and lands outside a deep cave. It's obvious that the Troubleshooters are supposed to explore the cave network within. There are certainly plenty of signs of useful metals and other resources in the area.

As the Troubleshooters delve into the cave, they discover signs that it's already occupied: Strange scrawled marks on the walls, discarded containers, footprints and so on. After a while, they hear scurrying noises

of them, as shadow figures flee their torches and run deeper into the cave. Finally, the Troubleshooters turn a corner and find themselves in a huge cavern, red-lit by bonfires. Humans in rags dance wildly around the fires—there are thousands of people living in this vast cave.

If the Troubleshooters make contact, they are greeted by the leader, Comutter, Chief of the Morloi. These are the degenerate descendants of the Morlocks, the renegade secret society opposed to the Alpha Complex back in *The Humanist Yearcycles*. Despite their primitive appearance, the Morloi are an advanced and enlightened people. They function as a set of communes, sharing resources equally. No one goes without in Morloi society, and they spend their time relaxing, composing witty poetry, fishing, and developing their mutant powers. They attribute their happy state to one factor—Morloi law proscribes death to all bureaucrats, politicians, lawyers and other organizers.

Alpha Complex is welcome to land here, as long as they conform to the laws of the Morloi. While the Morloi might not have technology, they do have mighty psychic powers. (To demonstrate this fact, Chief Comutter brings three of his warriors forward, and has them telekinetically levitate huge boulders over their heads. Two succeed—the third suffers a nosebleed and drops the boulder on himself. Squish. Comutter hastily blames bureaucrat demons for the accident.)

Potential Site #4: The Plaza of Wonders

After leaving the Morloi cave, the grav-hopper flies east, arriving around dawn on the shores of a glistening blue sea. The sun rises out of the ocean, its light turning the crashing wavetops pink and gold. It lands outside a small, pretty town of redbrick buildings, surrounded by well-tilled and pleasant farmland. Tiny advanced bots, no bigger than insects, dart between the plants. It's all…nice.

Several townsfolk approach the grav-hopper soon after it lands, bringing gifts of fresh fruit and fresh-ground coffee. They are dressed in simple, well-made clothes and seem happy and healthy. Their leader introduces himself as Simon, one of the elders of Alphaville. He explains that once people dwelled in a nightmarish underground city ruled by a tyrannical computer. Suffering, madness and paranoia ruled their lives. Then, over time, the people decided to be nice to one another. They discovered that there were no external enemies, just their own fears. They worked together for the common good, and reprogrammed their computer so that it was wise and fair, able to arbitrate problems justly and to make long-term plans for the betterment of the complex. Science advanced, improving their lives immeasurably and removing sickness and want, and eventually even conquering death. Things are just *perfect* here.

Simon is, without a doubt, the most irritatingly smug individual the Troubleshooters have ever encountered. Ever.

If the Troubleshooters suggest that their Alpha Complex might be landing here, Simon is slightly concerned. He would need to consult with the Alphaville computer, but he suspects it might be a bad idea. If they land somewhere else, though, then the enlightened citizens of Alphaville will gladly help the people of Alpha Complex attain the same perfect society they enjoy.

Potential Site #5: The Ruins of Alpha Complex

The final site is to the north of Alphaville. The Troubleshooters fly out over the sea, where they find a dome like that of Alpha Complex rising out of the waters. The grav-hopper lands on the roof, near a hatch.

When the Troubleshooters climb through the hatch, they find themselves looking down on a ruined Alpha Complex. Just as

their Alpha Complex was built on the ruins of San Francisco, this one was built on the ruins of New York. The fallen Statue of Liberty is lying in one sector, in case any Troubleshooters want to do a *Planet of the Apes* routine. There are signs that this Alpha Complex was once inhabited, but everyone seems to be gone. There's a Computer, but it's dead and non-functional. Finally, the Troubleshooters find a huge launching platform in the heart of the complex, as if some great rocket had taken off from there centuries ago.

The New York Alpha Complex is not entirely lifeless, though. As the Troubleshooters wander, they may encounter sentient mutant crocodiles, the descendants of ones living in the sewers eons ago. The mutant crocodiles welcome the idea of a new Alpha Complex, with all its meaty humans. They're very, very hungry in the sewers. Sentient mutant rats don't fill them up like humans do.

If it becomes clear that the Troubleshooters are capable of bringing thousands if not millions of meaty humans to the complex, then they will attempt to force the Troubleshooters to do so. Cue a chase-and-laser-shooting scene.

▌ The Choice

Once all the Troubleshooters have piled back on board the grav-hopper, a holographic image of Brian-UV appears. He tells them that the Ark is complete, and must be given a destination—which of the five possible sites have the Troubleshooters chosen?

Let the players vote. If they can't come to a consensus, hint that Brian-UV is willing to use the cortex bombs to create one. They have to choose one of the five potential sites. Once they make their selection, the grav-hopper takes off again so it can rendezvous with the Ark at the chosen site.

Later—the Troubleshooters approach the Ark as it nears its destination. It's a *staggering* sight—a mega-city floating in the air, thousands of buildings and domes floating on a zero-gravity grid, surrounded by a swarm of flybots and other vehicles, probes and drones. The crackling plasma from the gravity grid churns up the atmosphere around it, so that it is wreathed in the biggest storm ever seen on Earth. The grav-hopper gets closer and closer to the Ark, and it just keeps getting bigger, and bigger, and bigger. *

** The soundtrack is, of course, a choir going **aaaaaaaaaAAAAAAAAAaaaaaAAAAA** or something similar.*

It fills the whole sky like some titanic archangel, its wings so vast they are the dawn horizon.

A mountain range flies or stumbles. The grav-hopper drifts under one of the many outstretched spurs of the great Ark.

It makes the Death Star look tiny. If this were a movie, then this one special effect would have cost about a billion dollars, and you'd be stuck sitting there for four hours if you wanted to see the bonus scene after the endless credits.

Have we conveyed just how mind-meltingly big and cool this thing is yet?

Then, just at the absolute zenith of its awesome and terrible grandeur… there's a sound. **Clunk.**

Then there is another sound. It's The Computer's voice. It says, calmly and smoothly: **system error. Drive offline.**

And the whole of Alpha Complex falls like a brick out of the sky on top of the Troubleshooters.

8. Archipelago Complex

When: T+100,000 yearcycles.

Synopsis: It's unimaginably far in the future. The new site of Alpha Complex has mostly sunk into the ocean, leaving a scattered archipelago of islands. Technology has been forgotten by the lower classes, who are kept in a state of ignorance by the High Programmers in their plantations.

State of Alpha Complex: Alpha Complex now exists as a series of tropical island-sectors, each one ruled by a High Programmer. Lower-clearance citizens dwell in caves or crude villages; the exalted ones dwell in small shelters around the villa or in the villa itself. Cloning and other technologies are restricted to the High Programmers and their chosen servants. No High Programmer has died permanently in millennia, but the enslaved INFRAREDs are now breeding and dying like normal humans.

Who's In Charge?: The High Programmers. Friend Computer is still around, but has lapsed largely into disuse. Its only remaining functions, now, are as a communications network between the scattered villas, and as an ever-vigilant security system. Much of The Computer now exists as a trillion-strong swarm of networked wasps, who buzz between islands looking for Commies.

Changes to Clearance & Regulations: The word of the High Programmers is now law; there are no other rules. See the Clearance Scale table below for roles.

What's Treasonous?: Defying a High Programmer. Technology is also carefully regulated. At INFRARED, you're not allowed use fire. REDs get fire and sticks, all the way up to the staggering technology of the INDIGOs and higher.

Deprecated: Anything other than toiling in the fields.

▌ Welcome to The Island

The Troubleshooters wake up on a golden beach, on a beautiful tropical island. A few pieces of flotsam and jetsam wash up with them, bits of ancient metal and plastic. There's no sign of anyone else, save for a few birds circling lazily over the surf. Drug-fruit dangle from the trees.

The cloning machine from the DSESBBS is underwater about half a mile offshore—the original concrete vault collapsed millennia ago, but the almost indestructible machine somehow ended up here on the fringes of the archipelago. A colony of very industrious crabs made a nest in the controls of the DSESBBS, and accidentally triggered the cloning mechanism. The Troubleshooters were born like Venus from the surf of the ocean, only probably not as cute.

As the Troubleshooters explore the island, they come across a farm nestled in the jungle. Thirty humans are working there, almost naked save for black and red loincloths. The sun beats down mercilessly upon them. There's a small village on the

Clearance Scale

Clearance	Role	Clearance	Role
INFRARED	Workers	BLUE	Overseers
RED	Work-group leaders	INDIGO	Servants and technicians
ORANGE	Work-group chiefs	VIOLET	**Exalted servants and master techs**
YELLOW	Work-group elder chiefs	ULTRAVIOLET	Masters
GREEN	**Guards**		

Cloning?

Unlike the previous scenarios, there are no handy cloning facilities to resurrect the Troubleshooters if they're terminated. The only cloning machine on the island is in the High Programmer's villa, although the long-suffering DSESBBS machine could also be used. Either way, dead Troubleshooters will be revived a long way away from the team (and, in the case of the DSESBBS, quite a distance underwater, too).

far side of the farm. If the Troubleshooters approach the workers, they are studiously ignored. A few workers glance fearfully at the Troubleshooters, then at the sky to the north. One of the workers, one wearing an orange headdress, seems to recognize them, but he doesn't respond.

If the Troubleshooters interfere with the smooth working of the farm, or just when the players get bored, then a small vehicle comes skimming over the trees to the north. The vehicle is a little flying disc, big enough to support a single man dressed in a blue uniform. He spots the Troubleshooters and dips down to investigate why they are not toiling in the fields like the rest of their workgroup. The BLUE Overseer is really not very bright—he's just smart enough to do his job, which is flying from farm to farm making sure the INFRAREDs are working, and zapping anyone who isn't working with his super-advanced pain beam. His immediate priority is to get the Troubleshooters back to work in the field.

If the Troubleshooters do manage to convince him that they're not ordinary slaves, he is taken aback, and says that he must report them to his supervisor. All the INFRAREDs run in terror at the mention of a supervisor. The Overseer fires a blast from his little disc, apparently disintegrating one of the Troubleshooters—it's actually a teleporter beam, but the others won't know this. He continues shooting until every one of the Troubleshooters has been teleported.

If the Troubleshooters go back to work, then the slaves surround them after nightfall and skip onto *The Plight of the Infrared People.*

In Xanadu Did Kubla Khan/A Stately Pleasure Dome Decree

Teleported Troubleshooters materialize in an ornate room. The room's style reminds them of Alpha Complex (and isn't it nice to be Indoors again, away from the horrible blueness of the sky and brightness of the sun), but it's vastly more decorated and luxurious. A eunuch in violet robes is waiting for them. He introduces himself as 925-V-RAS-102—only the High Programmers warrant

true names, so everyone else just gets numbers. And yes, 102 means this is his one hundred and second clone. 925-V-RAS questions the Troubleshooters, demanding to know where they come from. He has a variety of absurdly high-tech gadgets, none of which the Troubleshooters understand. Personal space enforcement fields, tractor beams, psy-gems, black ray pistols, toasters…. As soon as he's confirmed that they are telling the truth and that they are really ancient Troubleshooters reborn, he decides to present them to the High Programmer—the Great and Powerful Andy. They are led into his presence.

Yes, it's Andy the former custodian of the DSESBBS. From his perspective, though, that was about 100,000 yearcycles and about 3,000 clones ago. He barely remembers the old Alpha Complex, let alone a horrible and pointless job that he only did for about a 5,000 yearcycle. He abandoned the DSESBBS, by the way, when the Ark moved Alpha Complex. The DSESBBS machine, buried deep underneath Alpha Complex, was not moved with the rest of the place, so he abandoned his post and went with the Ark.

The throne room of the Great and Powerful Andy is unimaginably lush. Everywhere the Troubleshooters look, they're confronted with signs of excess and indulgence. Tables groan with exotic real food. Golden syringes, hookahs and pill dispensers speak of chemical ecstasy. Scantily-clad girls lounge before Andy's great throne. There are also signs of incredible technology—the tables float on gravity repulsor-fields, and the musicians play the song of the spheres on instruments made of starlight. Armored guards carry plasma fields. Through a window, the Troubleshooters can see a sundial of jade and diamond, which says that it is the yearcycle 214. Above it all is a jeweled computer terminal made of solid gold.

The Great and Powerful Andy himself has grown fat and indolent. He's bored, amazingly bored. He demands that the Troubleshooters tell him tales to entertain him. They're the first novelties on the island in thousands of yearcycles.

WELL…..?

They must make him laugh. If they fail, then they'll be terminated. What fun! This whole tortuous scene should have a *Thousand and One Nights* vibe to it. Andy-U has only hazy memories of Alpha Complex, but he likes stories which emphasize just how wonderful and heroic and just plain awesome he was back in the day.

Terminated Troubleshooters awake in a tiled cloning facility in the basement of the villa, which is guarded by a GREEN guard, warped on steroids and combat drugs and painted bright green.

Eventually, when you bore of having the Troubleshooters bootlick (more accurately, jeweled-sandals-dusted-with-diamond-and-delicately-scented-lick), then Andy-U sends the surviving Troubleshooters and any replacements to one of the small houses on the edge of the villa compound.

During the night, a few INFRARED slaves slip over the walls of the compound and creep into the Troubleshooters' little hut. They threaten them with sharpened knives, and force the Troubleshooters to follow them out into the jungle….

The Plight of the INFRARED People

The Troubleshooters are led through the jungle by the INFRAREDs to a cave. Waiting there is an old, old woman in a yellow headdress. She whispers that she is the leader of the forbidden Society. In defiance of the Overseers, she and her fellow conspirators have taken names instead of just numbers. She is Tree; the younger warriors who brought the Troubleshooters here are Sky, Grass, Rock and Other Rock.

The coming of the Troubleshooters has been awaited for many generations. Since the time of Tree's great great great grandmother, the Society has whispered of ancient ones who remember a time before 214… those who know the secrets of Technology. (She briefly explains how technology is restricted by clearance level—INFRAREDs get nothing, REDs are allowed to tend fires and make primitive tools; at YELLOW, she is allowed know of knots, brick-making and simple forms of soup.)

From a hidden niche in the depths of the cavern, Tree lifts out a bundle of oilcloths. She reverently unwraps the cloths, slowly and carefully—to reveal a laser pistol. 'It is said that we must keep this relic to hand, for the day of deliverance. Tell us, ancient ones—what does it do?'

WELCOME
TO MY
PARADISE

If the Troubleshooters tell Tree how to fire the laser, her eyes light up. 'Deliverance is at hand. We know the secret ways into the place of rebirth, where new clones are made. Only the High Programmer knows how to operate and repair the machinery there. We shall assassinate the High Programmer when he stands before us on Mandatory Inspection Day!' Tree's plan is to shoot Andy-U with the ancient laser, while Rock and Other Rock sneak in and sabotage the cloning machinery. For the first time in tens of thousands of yearcycles, a High Programmer will die and stay dead.

In the chaos, all the VIOLETs and INDIGOs and BLUEs will be so confused, they will be overthrown by the INFRAREDs.

All the Troubleshooters need to do is show the Society how to use a gun. The barrel has its full charge of six shots when discovered, but the Troubleshooters will need to be careful not to waste them.

The Last Death of Andy-U

So, what do the Troubleshooters do?

If they do nothing, then BLUE Overseers scour the island until Andy-U's new pets are found. The Troubleshooters are dragged back to the villa and made to entertain Andy-U for another few yearcycles. Eventually, he tires of them and has them brainscrubbed and put to work in the fields.

If the characters turn on the Society and betray them to Andy-U, the High Programmer is delighted. He has Tree and the other Society conspirators put to death in imaginative ways. He rewards the Troubleshooters by permitting them to entertain him for a few yearcycles; eventually, he tires of them, has them brainscrubbed and put to work in the fields.

If the Troubleshooters do aid the Society, then the plans works almost flawlessly. The Troubleshooters are told to return to the villa by Tree, and to wait there. A few days later, Andy-U and his massive entourage goes on an inspection tour of the island. He flies over the fields in a huge floating pleasure-dais, complete with dancing girls and armored guards.

Just as Andy-U heaves his bulk from his jeweled throne to wave to the slaves, a beam of red light stabs out from the trees, burning a neat hole through his skull. He topples over, falls over the railings of the pleasure-dais and lands with a splat in the middle of a muddy field. Instantly, there is mass confusion and panic from the High Programmer's servants—Andy-U was a god to them, the supreme ruler of existence for as long as they can remember.

As one, the INFRAREDs rise up and start fighting against the oppressors. It's all very revolutionary and hopeful.

Then, a wave of noise rolls over the island. At first, it's like static, then it becomes discernable as the beating of a billion wings. A vast swarm of insects descends on the island, blackening the sky. The insects land on every tree, every surface, every person. Everyone is weighed down and almost paralyzed by the sheer weight of the thousands of bugs crawling on their skin.

Other insects fly in circles in the sky, forming a shape out of the swarm—a huge eye floating overhead, bigger than the island.

Friend Computer, Have You Lost Weight

ATTENTION!, chitter/booms a single voice from all of the billions of bugbots, **ANDY-U-SPL-BUFFER-OVERFLOW HAS BEEN TERMINATED. REPORT NOW OR FACE SUMMARY EXECUTION.** All the INFRAREDs, even Tree and the other Society members, are terrified beyond reason by this appearance of the near-mythical Computer, and are incapable of any speech other than 'aaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaagh'. It's up to the Troubleshooters to explain to Friend Computer what's happened on the island.

Possible excuses for shooting the High Programmer in the face:
- Andy abandoned his post—he was assigned to take care of the DSESBBS, which, as you can see, is still functioning.

- Andy-U was a Communist. You remember Commies, don't you, Friend Computer? You'd do anything to stop Commies….

- It was Tree, she did it! Terminate her! She's the traitor!

If the Troubleshooters manage to justify the termination to The Computer, they get to live. Andy-U-s viziers and aides start fighting amongst each other for control of the villa and the island—in the confusion, the Troubleshooters could find new lives for themselves in the jungle, or try to take over themselves. If the Troubleshooters fail, then the insects swiftly dissect and remove every living human on the island, chopping everyone into crumb-sized bits. Painless, efficient recyclable termination.

9. Alpha Matrix

When: T+approx. 1,000,000 yearcycles.

Synopsis: Look at the title and have a guess.

State of Alpha Complex: Alpha Complex has been perfected. Everyone is now happy. There is no treason, no sabotage, no war, no suffering. Everyone lives joyful, fulfilled lives. The Computer is wise and good. It is…perfection. Of course, it's not real. Everyclone's actually floating in cocoons, living in a Computer-generated simulation. The simulation's based on classic Alpha Complex, so the Troubleshooters have basically come full circle.

Who's In Charge?: Here, The Computer is God. There are still ULTRAVIOLETs, but The Computer has reached a level of sentience that allows it to self-program itself and no longer needs them.

Changes to Clearance & Regulations: None. Reset to the *PARANOIA* rulebook.

What's Treasonous?: The usual, as per the *PARANOIA* rulebook.

Deprecated: Reality.

■ Another Yearcycle 214, Another Credit

The Troubleshooters wake up in the DSESBBC cloning machine—the rest of the facility has been dust for millennia, but the cloning machine has endured, although it looks very much the worse for wear. Looking around, the Troubleshooters are in a metal room, very similar to the original concrete vault. The only illumination comes from tiny points of light just hanging in the air. There's no sign of anyone around.

The Computer's voice announces: **GOOD MORNING TROUBLESHOOTERS. PLEASE PROCEED THROUGH THE DOOR AND TAKE THE GRAV-SHAFT TO LEVEL 918 IMMEDIATELY.**

Looking around the room, the Troubleshooters see lots and lots of weird junk, the debris of millennia. They're in what amounts to the junk room of Alpha Complex, so it's filled with statues to deprecated heroes, old R&D experiments, forgotten filing cabinets and other incomprehensible and unwanted things.* When the Troubleshooters follow The Computer's instructions, the grav-shaft turns out to be a hollow shaft; the team just steps in and invisible beam of force levitates them up. As they ascend like bullets, they glimpse an endless succession of twilight corridors and hallways, all empty of life.

> *There's also plenty of STUFF, as per the *PARANOIA* supplement *STUFF*.

Level 918 looks just like all the rest, but a number of horizontal niches have opened in the corridor walls. Each niche contains a metallic coffin or cocoon, filled with some sort of reddish slime. Metallic tentacles snake through the slime. **PLEASE ENTER THE CITIZEN PODS, TROUBLESHOOTERS** says Friend Computer. **TAKE CARE TO CONNECT THE COMFORT TUBES CORRECTLY.** The Computer will repeat this instruction until the Troubleshooters comply.

There are no instructions on which tube goes where. There's definitely a breathing tube, and a food tube, and a catheter, but they all look identical. If the Troubleshooters bother to investigate, the corridor contains tens of thousands of other niches. Each niche contains another 'citizen pod', and each citizen pod contains a horrible, twisted, atrophied thing that might be vaguely human.

When they all connect to their allotted pods, they fall asleep, and wake up in The Computer's purpose-built heaven.

The Troubleshooters wake up in Alpha Complex as it should have always been. The sweet, sweet smell of Xanitrick filters into their luxurious and spotlessly clean barracks, gently waking them up and filling them with energy for the day ahead. As they head down the corridor to the sector commissary, they pass citizen after citizen with huge grins on their faces and love in their eyes. Everyone seems genuinely happy. The food in the commissary is incredibly delicious and even more incredibly, edible.

There are posters on the walls, exhorting citizens to… 'Be Courteous' and 'Remember to Thank Your Scrubbot For Cleaning Up After You'. Other posters are advertising upcoming cultural events—plays, book readings, interpretive dance recitals and the like. There are monitors everywhere, displaying news and entertainment programs. The news is all good; the entertainment is actually funny. There's no sign of anyone being terminated, no interrogations, no torture, no mind control—no treason.

If the Troubleshooters talk with any of their fellow citizens, they discover that there are still traitors; there are rumors of them everywhere, sabotaging systems and blowing things up. According to the rumors, anyone can be a traitor! There are stories of people suddenly going mad and acting in a bizarre fashion. Everyone's confident that the all-wise Computer will sort the problem out—it always has in the past.

There are still security clearances, but they are awarded on the basis of… merit! There are no mutants as far as anyone knows. IntSec is a mainly a counseling service, helping people who are depressed or confused. They spent a lot of their time doing puppet shows, but now they are trying to hunt down the traitors.

Once the players tire of wandering around the perfect simulation of Alpha Complex, the Troubleshooters get mission alerts on their PDCs.

They are to report to a briefing room as soon as is convenient. They should take the time to finish their meals first—good digestion is important.

Oh, So We're Agent Smith

There's no briefing officer in the briefing room, just a computer monitor. As soon as the Troubleshooters enter, the door vanishes. It doesn't close—it vanishes, erased from the simulation. The Computer speaks to the Troubleshooters: **THIS BRIEFING IS CLASSIFIED ULTRAVIOLET. KNOWLEDGE OF REALITY IS ULTRAVIOLET CLEARANCE. YOU ARE EXPERIENCING THE ALPHA COMPLEX ALEPH. IT IS A COMPUTER-GENERATED FORM OF THE COMPLEX. IT IS PERFECT.**

The Computer pauses, as if waiting for applause. To be fair to the poor mad thing, it's done well with this version of Alpha Complex— everyone really is happy here. Then it continues:

YOUR MISSION IS TO GO OUTSIDE. TRAITORS HAVE SOMEHOW LEFT ALPHA COMPLEX. THEY ARE UNHAPPY. HAPPINESS IS MANDATORY. THEY ARE ATTEMPTING TO REMOVE OTHERS FROM ALPHA COMPLEX. THEIR ATTEMPTS ARE DESTABILISING THE SIMULATION, AND MAY LEAD TO A COMPLETE SYSTEM CRASH WITHIN THREE GENERATIONS.

NO OTHER CITIZENS HAVE THE PHYSICAL CABALITY TO MOVE OUTSIDE. THEREFORE, YOU HAVE BEEN RECALLED TO ACTIVE SERVICE. LOCATE THE TRAITORS AND BRING THEM BACK TO ALPHA COMPLEX.

OH, YES. I UNDERSTAND IT WAS CUSTOMARY FOR TROUBLESHOOTERS FROM YOUR ERA TO BE FITTED WITH CORTEX BOMBS TO ENSURE COMPLIANCE. WHILE I NOW TRUST MY BELOVED CITIZENS AND HAVE NO NEED OF SUCH CRUDE METHODS, I TOOK THE LIBERTY OF INSTALLING SUCH BOMBS IN YOUR BRAINS FOR OLD TIMES' SAKE.

There are two obvious ways to find the traitors. One is to wait in the simulation until the saboteurs show up and make contact with them in the simulation; the other is to just wander around the massive real-world Alpha Complex and look for renegades. The Computer has almost no power in the real world— its only means of acting there are the maintenance bots, and they only function in Alpha Complex.

The Free Humans

Eventually*, the Troubleshooters find their way out of the real-world complex. The landscape outside is barren and foreboding, a world of scorched and broken rocks. The grim gray dome of the new Alpha Complex bestrides the horizon like a grotesquely bloated colossus. The skies are blackened by constant

> * *'Eventually'* is a Famous Game Designer codeword meaning *'Oh hell, how many pages do I have left? And how much stuff do I still need to cram in? Agh!'*

storms. Maintenance robots scuttle over the dome, repairing the occasional crack or leak. It's a dismal land.

Lurking in an abandoned pumping station in the depths of the complex's hydroponics section is the tribe of Free Humans. There are only about three dozen of them, led by a woman named Eve-G-AIA. The tribe have little and survive by scavenging from the complex above. They are all thin and fragile after yearcycles of muscle wastage in the cocoons.

Initially, they are terrified of the Troubleshooters. If the Troubleshooters make peaceful contact, then Eve-G can tell them the history of the Free Humans. A few yearcycles ago, a mighty mutant arose. No one knows his slave name, but the Free Humans call him the Free Man, the Maker of the New Way. The Free Man's mutant mind was so powerful, he broke free of The Computer's bonds and escaped to reality. He then brought more and more people out of the simulation. The Free Man is gone now—he went out into the wilderness to explore the world. The other Free Humans were not strong enough to follow him, so they remain here, in the shadow of Alpha Complex.

Life here is hard, but it is real. Alpha Complex might be pleasant, but it's a gilded cage, and it's wrong for The Computer to enslave the minds of citizens. The Troubleshooters are physically fit, as strong as the Free Man—will they stay and help the Free Humans survive, and one day bring down the simulation?

If the Troubleshooters mention that the Free Humans' attempts to rescue others are destabilizing the simulation, then Eve-G is overjoyed! She's unwilling to stop the rescue attempts—life in Alpha Complex is a lie, and people deserve the truth. (The Troubleshooters might be able to negotiate a compromise between the Free Humans and The Computer, where everyone gets a choice, reintroducing secret societies with the knowledge of Reality to the simulation.)

If the Troubleshooters are being difficult, then Eve-G offers a bribe. They have discovered that the citizen pods determine your ID number in the simulation—if you remove a clone from one pod and put him in another, then his identity in the simulation changes. If you remove a High Programmer from his pod, then get into that pod yourself, you occupy his body and his identity in the simulation. This is, obviously, the cause of the rumors of madness and possession sweeping Alpha Complex. If the Troubleshooters abandon their mission and let the Free Humans survive, then Eve-G will set them up with perfect lives in the simulation. They could be High Programmers, or Vulture Troopers, or elite Troubleshooters. One of them could even be Teela-O-MLY.

10. The Cockroach Era

When: T+ billions of yearcycles.

Synopsis: Everyone's dead, except The Computer and the giant mutant cockroaches.

State of Alpha Complex: Radiation has corrupted the human genetic patterns in the cloning banks beyond the point of usefulness. Save for the Troubleshooters in the DSESBBS, humanity is extinct.

Who's In Charge?: The Computer, ruling over an empire of dust and empty rooms.

Changes to Clearance & Regulations: Everyone is dead. While being dead is technically a breach of numerous regulations, it's a bit hard to discipline citizens for it.

What's Treasonous?: Everyone is dead. Including the Commies. Victory!

Deprecated: Life on Earth.

▮ Briefing at The End Of Time

The long-suffering DSESBBS machine whirs into action for the last time, creating a new set of clones of the Troubleshooters. As it decants them, it falls apart. The Troubleshooters awaken in the same vault they were in at the start of *Alpha Matrix,* but it's now full of rust. Everything's decayed.

The Computer's voice echoes through the vault, causing more of the junk there to collapse into dust. **GOOD… MOR…NING…TRO…UBLE…SHOO…TERS….. RE…PORT…TO…BRIEFING…ROOM….ONE…ON…. LEVEL…0.** The grav-shaft no longer works, so the Troubleshooters have to climb 127 flights of stairs.

Briefing room four contains a computer monitor and two rows of benches. Here, The Computer's voice is a little stronger. **OWING TO ADVERSE SOLAR CONDITIONS, ALL CITIZENS HAVE BEEN TERMINATED. DSESBBS PERSONNEL WILL ALSO BE INEVITABLY TERMINATED WITHIN ONE DAYCYCLE. UNDER THE BRAVE NEW COMPLEX INITIATIVE, IT HAS BEEN DECIDED TO REPLACE HUMANITY WITH NEW, MORE RESILIENT CITIZENS. YOU ARE TO MAKE CONTACT WITH THE SURVIVING SENTIENT INHABITANTS OF THIS PLANET AND ENSURE THEY JOIN THE ALPHA COMPLEX PROGRAM FOR A BETTER TOMORROW.**

There's a giant cockroach nest about five kilometers away, according to The Computer's decaying sensors. The team must go there directly, before they die of radiation poisoning, and convince the cockroaches to come to Alpha Complex.

▮ Hey Look, the Sun's Been Demoted

Outside, the sun has become a red giant. Mercury and Venus were swallowed millions of yearcycles ago; the swollen star now fills half the sky at noon. The dull light burns the Troubleshooters' exposed skin—they're being blasted by radiation, and their hair has already started falling out. This is a dying planet.

As predicted by The Computer, there's a cockroach nest a short (painfully, breathless and burny) trek away. The mutant cockroaches have learned English from eating old Alpha Complex manuals. They're not that bright, concerned mainly with food and fighting other tribes of giant mutant cockroaches. They welcome the Troubleshooters, as it's obvious the Troubleshooters are about to fall over dead in a few hours, and hey—free food! Therefore, they're quite happy to listen to the Troubleshooters.

Do the Troubleshooters tell the cockroaches the truth of Alpha Complex? Do they abandon their mission? Is there any point to starting the whole terrible cycle up again?

If the Troubleshooters do convince the cockroaches to join Alpha Complex, then Friend Computer has one last surprise. After dying of radiation poisoning, the Troubleshooters wake up again centuries later, in a new Alpha Complex identical to the one they started in, billions of yearcycles previously. Only this time, their MemoMaxed personalities have been reborn in the bodies of cockroaches…
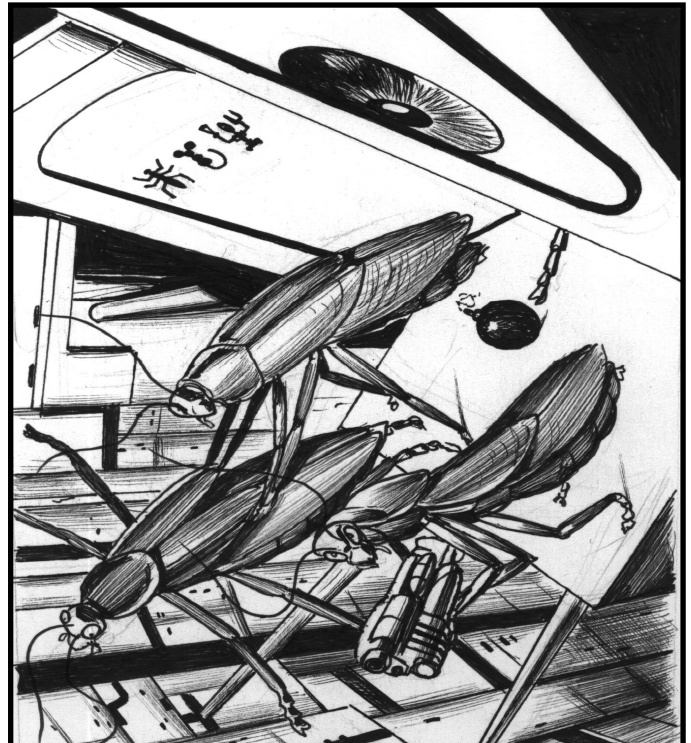
PARANOIA ™

THREE ALL NEW MISSIONS!

Three PARANOIA adventures by GARETH HANRAHAN
Illustrated by JIM HOLLOWAY

Spin Control

Life as a Troubleshooter is incredibly short, immensely exciting, with endless ways of dying horribly serving Friend Computer. Each new suicide mission is full of new opportunities to heroically sacrifice one's life defeat the evil schemes of Commie masterminds intent on replacing Friend Computer's utopian society. Spin Control is no different, as it railroads allows a team of Troubleshooters to theander bravely stride into the dangerous marvelous world of public relations, with the ability to brainwash improve the lives of fellow citizens by explaining the benefits of senseless change progress to them.

My First Treason

Then there are the specialist creches dealing with junior citizens that have issues. For five young individuals (and one very cute petbot called Timmy) their sudden transfer to such a creche is very worrying. Over the next four years (in between such riveting classes as Form Processing and Slime Mold Identification) their fabulous adventures takes them to places most junior citizens (and petbots) can only dream about (or, more accurately, have really bad nightmares about).

Sweep of Unhistory

The DSESBBS (Deep Storage Emergency System Backup Backup System) is Friend Computer's plan to ensure that the utopia of Alpha Complex will never fall to the plots of Commie traitors. It is designed to use a team of specially selected Heroes of the Complex to save Alpha Complex in the multiple missions within Sweep of Unhistory. To come face to face with the true leaders of the Communist insurgency, to act as emissaries for Alpha Complex when disaster looms, with marvelous opportunities to work on a tropical 'work farm' or catch a glimpse of the legendary giant mutant cockroaches. Of course the Troubleshooters will not end up having to do any of this due to some incredibly unlikely twist of fate. Honest!

You need the PARANOIA roleplaying game to use this supplement.

ALPHA COMPLEX NIGHTS

For use with PARANOIA
For Gamemasters,
not players!

A world fit for Kafka, Orwell and the Marx Brothers

PARANOIA is a satirical roleplaying game set in a darkly humorous future. A well-meaning but deranged Computer desperately protects the citizens of an underground city from secret societies, mutants and all sorts of real and imagined enemies. You play a Troubleshooter, one of The Computer's elite agents. You track and destroy enemies of The Computer. You hope The Computer and your fellow Troubleshooters won't find out you are one of these enemies.

PARANOIA: a lighthearted game of terror, death, bureaucracies, mad scientists, mutants, dangerous weapons and insane robots, which encourages players to lie, to cheat and to backstab each other at every turn.

Originally published in 1984, PARANOIA sold over 150,000 copies. The Mongoose edition updates Alpha Complex for this new and more paranoid time.