

# PARANOIA™

## Extreme PARANOIA

Now, at all clearances from ORANGE through VIOLET, players can experience the same gnawing anxiety!

BY THE TRAITOR RECYCLING STUDIO ([www.traitorrecycling.com](http://www.traitorrecycling.com))

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'Extreme' doesn't begin to describe it

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## Security Clearance ULTRAVIOLET WARNING:

Knowledge or possession of this information by any citizen of Security Clearance VIOLET or below is treason punishable by some grisly fate we'll determine later, when we get around to it.

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Published by Mongoose Publishing, Ltd. Publication MGP 6638. Published August 2005. First printing August 2005.

# EXTREME Introduction

## EXPANDED CONTENTS

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Famous Game Designers talk about a roleplaying game's *core story*—a summary of a stereotypical play session of that game.

For instance, the 'core story' of the leading (non-fun) fantasy RPG: 'A party of adventurers assembles to seek fame and fortune. They leave civilization for a location of extreme danger. They fight monsters, overcome obstacles and acquire new abilities and items of power. Afterward they return to civilization and sell the loot. Next week, they do it all over again.'

The core story of any comic-book superhero RPG: 'The characters, a team of superheroes, learn of a plot that puts them or innocent people in danger. They use their special powers to defeat the villain or agency responsible for the plot. The heroes then return to their secret lives as normal people, waiting to be alerted to the next crisis.'

Everyone knows, or thinks he knows, the core story of **PARANOIA**: 'Lowly RED Clearance Troubleshooters seek and destroy traitors. They struggle with all-pervading secrecy, lethal equipment they're not cleared to know how to operate, officious bureaucrats who outrank them, better-equipped enemies and the occasional crazed scrubot. They all die multiple times before the final hose-job debriefing.'

This supplement proves none of that is essential to **PARANOIA**'s core story. (Well, yes, the multiple deaths....) Unlike these non-fun RPGs, the psychological exercise that is **PARANOIA** focuses not on characters or setting, but on the *players*, sitting around your table with their character sheets and munchies. The real core story:

'**PARANOIA** players, pretending to be various characters in Alpha Complex, experience comedic fear, ignorance, tense suspicion that other players will soon betray them and the overwhelming urge to betray others first.'

Welcome to *Extreme PARANOIA*.

We actually have a lot more to say, but it won't fit on this page. To keep pontificating, we've stolen the first part of the Chapter 1 introduction on the facing page. We'll lick this whole layout issue one of these days....



## 1. New Mandatory Bonus Duties

### Opening out the game

The original *PARANOIA* rulebook let your players create and play Troubleshooters of RED Clearance, just one step above the faceless INFRARED masses of Alpha Complex. Now, *Extreme PARANOIA* lets players create and play characters across the security clearance spectrum, from unimpressive ORANGE (one step above RED) to powerful VIOLET.

Troubleshooters at these higher clearances can become mission dispatchers or Internal Affairs investigators—undertake Civic Pride Duty or Outdoors Duty—infiltrate secret societies—eventually even become personal assistants to the most illustrious and powerful psychopaths in Alpha Complex. And now there's plenty more to do than just shoot trouble. Characters can become actors in vidshow dramas, Emergency Disaster Response Team celebrities, VIOLET executives and—yes, at last—assistant sales managers. And we've resurrected and updated Ken Rolston's 1987 supplement for first-edition *PARANOIA*, *HIL Sector Blues*, to once more let players become Internal Security BLUE Troopers.

All these new (or recycled) ways to play show *PARANOIA*'s versatility. More than a game of hysterical Zap-style mayhem, it is the roleplaying field's defining embodiment of paranoid tension. It works well for single game sessions, miniseries and now, with the material in this book, extended campaigns. Over their characters' lengthy and varied careers, players will experience new fears and new kinds of ignorance, including some kinds otherwise unknown in gaming.

But through it all, the core story holds. The players' greatest enemy remains the same: themselves.

Perfection is a magical point where the players have stopped looking at their characters and saying 'Haha, this is messed up'. Instead, they're looking at you and saying, 'How could you let us *do this to ourselves?*' They thought their eyes were wide open; they knew the *PARANOIA* routine; but somehow they still feel betrayed—extra-special betrayed—darkly, humorously betrayed.

Yet who can they really blame but themselves? Oh, that's right—they can blame *each other*.

### New MBDs (finally...)

by Eric Minton

Oh yeah—Mandatory Bonus Duties!

It was cheesy of us, we know, to slip in all that introductory material in this chapter. Sorry, we couldn't fit it all on the previous page. But now we're back on track!

Before getting to all the high-clearance excitement that composes most of the book, *Extreme PARANOIA* offers six new Mandatory Bonus Duty (MBD) assignments. Like the original six duties described in Chapter 43 of the rulebook, these are jobs a Troubleshooter is required to volunteer for, perform and enjoy as a reward for continued service.

Like the original six duties, these are optional, and they work best with players (and GMs!) already familiar with *PARANOIA*—and, in this case, also with the original six MBDs. Unlike the original duties, there is no MBD Determination Test to determine who gets which of these new duties, so have your players draw straws or arm-wrestle or something.



# Advertising & branding officer



The **advertising & branding officer** works to maintain your team's service firm endorsements, keeping you well supplied with service firm merchandise.

He negotiates with your service firm sponsor, supplying you with free equipment bearing your sponsor's logo. Naturally, you'll play a role in making sure this beloved logo is clearly seen on each and every member of your team. Don't be shy about showing off your brand! Likewise, it's his job to make sure no one on the team waters down the brand with disloyal use of competing brands. Violating the terms of your endorsement isn't just bad manners—it's treason!

You can help your A&B officer by keeping an eye on your teammates. Don't let them hurt the team with ill-advised or infringing use of competing brands and merchandise! Your success depends on brand loyalty, because a strong brand makes a strong team.

## The advertising & branding officer: All about intellectual property

At this time, not every Troubleshooter team is lucky enough to have a service firm endorsement. (This will be remedied within the next five to 12 weeks in accordance with HPD&MC initiative 214.11.26.117, 'Mandatory Troubleshooter Corporate Branding'.) Teams lucky enough to win service firm sponsorship reap great rewards, from new equipment and credit bonuses to the opportunity to participate in complex-wide commercial advertisements! But these benefits depend on the maintenance of certain standards, and it's up to the A&B officer to make sure that happens.

## Selling by proxy

With the breakup of the service group monopolies into thousands of squabbling service firms, advertising has become ubiquitous throughout Alpha Complex, and citizens have adapted to an environment saturated by sensory overload by tuning the ads out. So the service firms have diversified into Troubleshooter branding. Everyone loves to watch the wild antics of the Troubleshooters, and so service firms advertise by plastering their logos all over Troubleshooters.

When a service firm sponsors a Troubleshooter team, they provide new jumpsuits, badges, patches and stickers bearing their firm's

logo, along with an assortment of their merchandise. By wearing the logo and using the merchandise in public areas and on the news vids, the Troubleshooters improve the service firm's sales. In exchange, they get more merchandise! Everybody wins!

Of course, this only works if the Troubleshooters actually wear the logo and demonstrate the merchandise. The A&B officer is responsible for making sure this happens, and he's authorized to inflict severe fines on team members who don't live up to their responsibilities in this regard. After all, if the team fails to maintain a sufficient level of visible branding, the sponsor may revoke its endorsement. This can be a real problem if the team's endorsement had authorized them to use products normally above their security clearance.

## Total Brand Loyalty

In the cutthroat, clone-eat-clone world of service firm branding, simply adhering to one's own brand is not enough. One must also eschew all rival brands! A firm can't credibly sell IntelliFluid if its spokespeople keep on drinking Bouncy Bubble Beverage.

It's the A&B officer's job to make sure his teammates don't use any products that might infringe on their endorsement's Total Brand Loyalty clause. Sometimes this is obvious; don't go drinking HappyKaff if you've got a Coffeelike endorsement! On the other hand, these conflicts of interest can be much subtler. You may not know Fun Foods PLC manufactures a line of edible firearms, but that

won't get you off the hook when they cancel their endorsement because you used a regular laser pistol instead of a FunBeam.

And it's not just the competing products themselves that can cause problems. Other Troubleshooter teams rely on endorsements too, and fraternizing with a team sponsored by a rival firm violates the endorsement terms for both teams. Likewise, the team needs to avoid objects and places that carry advertising for rival firms. Even walking past the wrong billboard can threaten the endorsement, leading to hours of desperate bootlicking to keep it alive.

**Docbot:** What seems to be the problem, citizen?

**Troubleshooter:** Oh, thank Computer you're here! We were in a firefight... oh, my spleen...

**Docbot:** Well, let me have a look—

**A&B officer:** [interrupting] No, no, wait, sorry, please step back from the patient.

**Docbot:** For what cause, citizen?

**A&B officer:** The problem is, you've got a NutriMax logo on your chassis, and we're a VitaYum team. Regulations forbid you from interfering with our team members. You'll have to go back and send another docbot with a compatible sponsor.

**Troubleshooter:** But... my spleen!

**A&B officer:** Don't worry, we'll have another docbot here within the hour. I'm almost absolutely certain you probably won't die before then.

# 1. NEW MIBDS ADVERTISING & BRANDING OFFICER

## Product placement

As part of the endorsement, a service firm provides goodies to its branded Troubleshooter team, and the A&B officer distributes them. Each team member gets a new jumpsuit bearing the service firm logo, and enough logo stickers for everyone's weapons, toolkits and other gear. There's also enough merchandise for everyone to get some; many firms provides a variety of products. Would you rather get a six-pack of Bouncy Bubble Beverage or some experimental new Bubble Armor? The A&B officer *might* let you choose—if you're really nice to him!

Service firms expect their Troubleshooters to make extensive public use of this free merchandise. Sponsors may also require the team to fill out survey forms indicating how the merchandise performed under combat conditions. Just what kind of use can you get from a pouch of Hot Fun under combat conditions? We don't know, but when you figure it out, make sure you write it on line 294b...

## Brand Consumption Quotas

Service firms want results. Whenever the team goes out on a mission, their sponsoring service firm assigns a **Brand Consumption Quota**: a minimum number of times they must be seen using each product in public or on the vids. If the team meets or surpasses the quota, they may receive cash bonuses and other benefits. But if they fail to meet the quota, the A&B officer may fine offenders 10–25 credits per violation, and the team may lose the endorsement entirely.

Brand Consumption Quotas tend to be reasonable given standard mission circumstances, but when do your PCs ever undertake standard missions? Unusual events make the seemingly reasonable quota a challenge. If the average mission takes 5.7 hours, it's not unfair to assign the team 30 cans of Bouncy Bubble Beverage; but if a particular mission has to be finished in 17 minutes, there may be a problem.

Some service firms encourage their teams to hand out free samples to passing INFRAREDs, whereas others consider this a waste of resources and a violation of the contract; it behooves the A&B officer to find out before the mission. Disposing of extra equipment on the IR Market is always illegal, as is the loss or destruction of assigned merchandise. As with all other branding violation charges, the A&B officer distributes 10-25cr fines at his discretion. It is truly fortunate The Computer always selects a fair and impartial citizen for this important role!

Each firm bases its Brand Consumption Quotas on the constantly shifting balance of the Alpha Complex economy. Quotas may shift radically between or even during missions. If the team is lucky, an increase in the quota (and it's *always* an increase—how strange!) is accompanied by delivery of additional merchandise. Otherwise, making that one BLUE SubstiFruit beverage last for 13 public uses may take creativity....

## A typical A&B officer conversation

**A&B officer:** You're doing great, Stephanie-R! Here, have another VitaYum bar.

**Stephanie-R:** [*clutching her stomach*] I can't... I'm too full...

**A&B officer:** Listen, kid, I know it hurts. But we're on an endorsement contract and we're dangerously close to missing our Brand Consumption Quota! We're about to take on that Humanist cell, there's a film crew waiting and everyone else has their hands full with those VitaYum Assault Weapons. Everyone is counting on you. Do you want to let the team down?

**Stephanie-R:** I think I have to puke.

**A&B officer:** Good, good, that'll make more room. Feeling better? Great! Now grab that bar and get out there! Go and eat one for the team!



## Advert. & branding officer

Good work, citizen! Because of your enthusiasm and dedication to duty, you have been selected for the all-important role of **advertising and branding officer**. Surely this demonstrates The Computer's belief in your abilities!

Troubleshooters play a key role in maintaining a healthy level of competition in the economy of Alpha Complex. Each team takes on a service firm brand, and it's your job to maintain the sanctity of that brand by ensuring everyone on your team proudly displays the brand logo. You also oversee your team's **Brand Consumption Quota**, ensuring everyone eats, drinks, sprays, applies, fires, thrusts or otherwise makes use of the chosen brand.

In addition, your team must demonstrate **Total Brand Loyalty!** Use of rival brands, or items bearing the logos of those brands, is strictly forbidden. You must police your teammates, ensuring they do not weaken the sponsoring brand through usage of rival products.

To help you in your task, you will receive a supply of free service firm merchandise, along with paste-on logos to attach to all the team's clothing and equipment.

Your service firm brand is your team's best friend. Keep it strong!



# Agent provocateur



The **agent provocateur** is your teammate on the inside when you're tracking down traitors. He receives special training for infiltrating secret society meetings and for spotting the ringleaders in spontaneous criminal outbursts.

Your agent provocateur has a lot on his mind, so don't be shy about pointing him toward potential traitors! Remind him you've got his back when he's off to spy on those Commies and PURGERS. And no matter how numerous or well-armed a mob of mutants and traitors might be, don't hesitate to call upon his services. After all, that's what he's here for! And if he asks *you* to accompany him, it's your duty to help.

But most important, remember his job doesn't authorize him to *commit* treason, just to act like it. So if you see him commit treason, turn him in—but if he's merely consorting with traitors, don't worry! That just means he's doing his job.

## The agent provocateur: Team traitor-talker

The agent provocateur's job is to spot traitors in a crowd, go undercover to secret society meetings to get information on their upcoming activities, and entrap traitors into revealing their treason.

Not every citizen has the heart for this important task. After all, it's easy for citizens outside the team to mistake him for a real traitor. As a result, the agent provocateur is 238% more likely than any other MBD to be terminated for treason. But don't let this discourage him! The risks are great, but the rewards are greater—at least for his next clone.

## Ready for anything

At each mission briefing, the agent provocateur receives information regarding traitor groups he's likely to encounter, including passwords, call signs, meeting places and doctrines.

That's what's supposed to happen, at any rate; if the briefing officer isn't on the ball, this may boil down to, 'There's some traitors out there, go find 'em.'

Assure the agent provocateur this information is totally accurate and up-to-date. Give him your personal guarantee IntSec won't fob off last month's obsolete passwords, and the briefing officer would never deliberately

sabotage efforts to infiltrate his own secret society.

How much information should you give about these secret societies? If it's longer than this paragraph, it's probably too much. Unless it's dangerously inaccurate, of course, or above his security clearance.

## Mission: impossible

Whenever the team encounters traitors, or citizens who might conceivably be traitors, it's the agent provocateur's job to go in, chat them up, and collect all possible information regarding their contacts and activities. Make sure his teammates are aware of this! That way, if he neglects his duty, they'll be sure to remind him.

Of course, sometimes a single infiltrator isn't enough. As the team expert on counterintelligence missions, the agent provocateur knows when it's necessary to bring backup, and his role gives him the authority to requisition additional team members to join him for support. Like, say, whoever suggested sending him on the assignment in the first place. This tends to cut back dramatically on agent provocateur suicide missions.

On the upside, when the agent wants to contact his own secret society, he can pass it off as part of his job. On the downside, he'll then be expected to report what he's learned. A clever agent can pin everything on a third party; a slow-witted agent will inevitably flub

up and rat out his allies, leading to some angry secret society superiors and a dramatically shortened lifespan.

Now, assuming the agent's recognition signals are accurate and he successfully passes himself off as a secret society member, he's in a perfect position to uncover treasonous activities, right? Well, sure. But the traitors expect him to participate in those activities, and this MBD doesn't grant special dispensation to commit treason.

**Communist:** *Psst!* What is the password?

**Agent provocateur:** Uh... 'Borscht is best'?

**Communist:** Excellent! We've been expecting you. Here, take this propaganda and paste it up in Corridor 5780-G.

**Agent provocateur:** But that's a GREEN Clearance corridor.

**Communist:** Ah, do not let that bother you. Inequality is evil! Down with clearances! Up with the Revolution!

**Agent provocateur:** Uh, yeah. I'll be going now...

## The AP-2140 Audio Implant

To maintain contact with the rest of the team, the agent provocateur is often fitted with a new AP-2140 Audio Implant. Expert R&D surgeons implant this miniaturized com unit directly in the agent's ear, allowing his team to listen in

on everything going on around him. In addition, the team can talk to him through the implant, supplying him with advice, information and orders at any time.

(Is this a cheap ploy to ensure the rest of the players remain engaged while the agent provocateur is off on his own? Of course it is! Famous Game Designers always find elegant solutions to even the most complex gaming problems.)

The audio-only connection makes it difficult for the rest of the team to really be sure what's going on. Many secret society cells, worried about just such audio surveillance, make routine small talk while conducting their actual business in twitchtalk or writing.

## What today's fashionable traitor is wearing

R&D also supplies a range of equipment to help the agent provocateur fit in better with the twisted wretches who populate Alpha Complex's secret societies. Every agent looks forward to receiving these useful items! Here's a selection:

- ☉ **Propaganda:** Pamphlets, fliers, posters, books and vid disks containing information on a secret society's principles and doctrines. It goes without saying that this propaganda is both (a) above the agent's security clearance and (b) filled with intentional inaccuracies, to forestall corruption should it fall into an innocent citizen's hands.
- ☉ **Drugs:** Psion members peddle mutagens, Pro Tech loves cutting-edge biochem, and the Mystics take anything. To spare the agent from handling drugs above his security clearance, R&D gives him bottles of realistic placebos.

- ☉ **Cybernetics:** To fit in with Corpore Metal, an agent may be assigned fake cybernetic implants. These paste-on chunks of metal and plastic look real on superficial inspection. Impairment of the wearer's vision and movement is guaranteed to be minimal. Probably.
- ☉ **Mutations:** Pass yourself off as a pyrokinetic by using fire-spraying wristbands, or as a matter eater with intestinal nanotech! Guaranteed 100% safe by R&D. C'mon, everyone trusts R&D!

## A typical agent provocateur conversation

**Free Enterprise guy:** You wanna BLUE IntSec Agent badge? Sure, I got one.

**Agent provocateur:** Lemme see it... Yeah, looks real. How much you want?

**Free Enterprise guy:** Well, usually ten thou, but for 12 thou I'll throw in this radio jammer. Top quality!

**Team leader:** *[broadcasting to the agent's audio implant]* C'mon, close the deal, IntSec's waiting on you.

**Agent provocateur:** Sounds good, but you gotta show me it works.

**Free Enterprise guy:** No problem. Lemme just charge this sucker up, then flip da switch... *[Jammer hums; the audio implant fills with static.]*

**Agent provocateur:** Niiice. Here's da disk da capo asked for. Now you only gotta minute, IntSec's on da way...



## Agent provocateur

Congratulations, citizen! In recognition of your skill at spotting and revealing traitors, you have been awarded the decisive role of **agent provocateur**. Clearly, The Computer has enormous trust in you, for only someone with unshakable loyalty is ever granted this position.

As agent provocateur, it's your job to spot traitors and schmooze with them, earning their trust so you and your team can break up entire traitor cells and terrorist networks. You are responsible for infiltrating all such groups you encounter, especially those that might be involved in your current mission. Naturally, you will be given passwords and information to help you insinuate yourself into their misguided organizations. You are also authorized to demand backup and support from your teammates.

To aid you, The Computer has kindly provided you with useful equipment, including an **AP-2140 Audio Implant** to let you keep in touch with your teammates. Of course, if you need any other information or equipment, or a nice brainscrub after your mission is over, you have only to ask.

Remember, you're an undercover agent, so act like one!



## Alertness officer



The **alertness officer** ensures you're prepared for Commie ambushes and mutant attacks. He keeps you on your toes, so you're always ready for anything traitors can throw at you.

If you're worried your reflexes aren't quite up to snuff, or if one of your teammates isn't as attentive as he should be, tell your alertness officer! He'll sharpen your reactions with **Standard Alertness Tests**, or he'll spring an **Emergency Response Test** to keep you on the ball. What a great guy!

Don't try to second-guess your alertness officer. If you spend too much time thinking about what's a drill and what isn't, you're wasting time that could be spent shooting at traitors. Remember, he's testing you for your own good!

### The alertness officer: On his, and everyone's, toes

As loyal solution-providers of Alpha Complex, Troubleshooters are in constant danger from Communists, mutants and assorted traitors. The alertness officer ensures his team remains ever vigilant against all threats. Using various techniques, notably the **Emergency Response Test** (ERT), he challenges teammates to remain focused, ever ready to unleash withering volleys of weapons fire.

Naturally, if the team falls prey to ambush or other unexpected threats, the alertness officer is to blame. Penalties for such failure range from a slap on the wrist to complete and thorough termination. But this isn't as much of a hazard as you'd think. After all, when Commies kill the whole team, this usually includes the alertness officer, and death in the line of duty may be deemed an ample penalty for failure.

### The Emergency Response Test

Mortal danger is the only true test of a team's mettle. By invoking an ERT, the alertness officer presents his teammates with a scenario that so thoroughly mimics mortal peril that his teammates are entirely fooled. (If you can't imagine how this could lead to horrible, bloody consequences, you haven't played enough **PARANOIA**.)

The alertness officer can invoke an ERT any time the team is not actively opposing

treason. This is more often than you'd think—Troubleshooters spend an awful lot of time eating, sleeping, traveling from one sector to another, or just plain lounging. Because uninteresting stuff doesn't make for a fun game, award the alertness officer with Perversity points when he initiates a timely ERT.

Most often, The Computer administers the ERT on the alertness officer's behalf, announcing fictitious threats to which the Troubleshooters must react. Naturally, the team doesn't find out the danger is only a test until after the test has concluded (and much of the surrounding area has been filled with laser holes). Sometimes, even the alertness officer himself isn't sure what's real and what isn't!

**Alertness officer:** *[speaking softly into his PDC]* Friend Computer! Initiate ERT sequence beta-six-three!

**The Computer:** Greetings, Troubleshooters! You have 20 minutes to manually shut down Reactor Door 4327-DL in TGR Sector. Estimated travel time is 17 minutes. Failure will result in termination. Have a nice day!

**Alertness officer:** You heard The Computer! I'm watching you, so give me some good Alertness Scores!

**The Computer:** Greetings, Troubleshooters! You have 20 minutes to manually shut down Reactor Door 186A/9 in AMV Sector. Estimated travel time is 18 minutes. Failure will result in termination. Have a nice day!

**Team leader:** Um... yes, Friend Computer! *[in a low voice]* Two alertness tests?

As if one wouldn't be enough? You sadistic bastard.

**Alertness officer:** Friend Computer? Please cancel that second ERT.

**The Computer:** You are in error, citizen. Your team has not been assigned an Emergency Response Test. Thank you for your cooperation.

### Tools of the trade

In addition to bogus messages from The Computer, the alertness officer has a number of other tools to scare the bejeezus out of his heavily armed teammates:

- ☉ **Pyrotechnic grenades:** Instead of exploding, these grenades give off harmless flashes of light and emit the sounds of energy weapons firing and clones dying messily. Perfect for generating the illusion of a real battle.
- ☉ **Inflatable traitors:** These small lumps of plastic inflate with helium at the touch of a button, blowing up into life-sized dolls adorned with red Communist stars, fake fur shakos and other traitorous accessories. Startled Troubleshooters can easily mistake them for real traitors, if it's dark and the team is hopped up on combat drugs. The trick works better if you announce you're facing a bunch of flying mutants.
- ☉ **Inflatable lasers:** Much like the aforementioned dolls, these finger-sized



mylar tubes puff up into the spitting image of real laser rifles. Ideal for outfitting groups of shanghaied (and expendable) INFRAREDs to stage a mock assault on your team's position.

☉ **Inflatable bots:** You get the idea....

## The quick and the dead

On a less dramatic note, the alertness officer may administer a **Standard Alertness Test (SAT)** whenever the team seems to be getting a bit slow and flabby. By forcing team members to practice drawing and firing quickly and accurately, not only does he ensure they're ready to handle the Commie threat, but he also identifies the slowest, least-prepared members of the team. That they exhaust their ammo while *his* laser remains fully charged is just an incidental bonus.

Target shooting is the most common SAT, but there's a range of other options. Tests of running speed and endurance help prepare the team for hunting down (or escaping) Commie Mutant Traitors, or fleeing from a reactor meltdown or misused R&D device. Paranoid alertness officers favor 'Spot the Sniper', though some prefer the 'Tripwire Hurdle'. Tests with live ammunition or real monofilament wire are frowned upon due to the risks to valuable Computer property. But really (the skilled alertness officer responds), how else are you going to get results?

Poor performers on the SAT must pay small but noticeable fines, usually 15–25 credits. In addition, they must continue to practice their combat alertness, often with the aid of such ingenious devices as the

Alertness Visor, a fully enclosed helmet that projects images of traitors onto the wearer's surroundings. (Will the wearer mistake real traitors for imaginary ones, or accidentally fire upon his own team members? Watch and see.)

Depending on the needs of the mission and the whims of PLC, the alertness officer may also be issued a supply of appropriate pharmaceuticals to administer to poor performers, or even to the entire team. No, these aren't the cheerful, euphoric drugs you get from your Happiness Officer. These drugs wrap your brain in a scarlet haze of psychotic fury and don't let go until you pass out from exhaustion and slump limply onto the eviscerated corpses of your victims. What fun!

## A typical alertness officer conversation

**Alertness officer:** So you think you're ready for anything, citizen?

**Troubleshooter:** Absolutely!

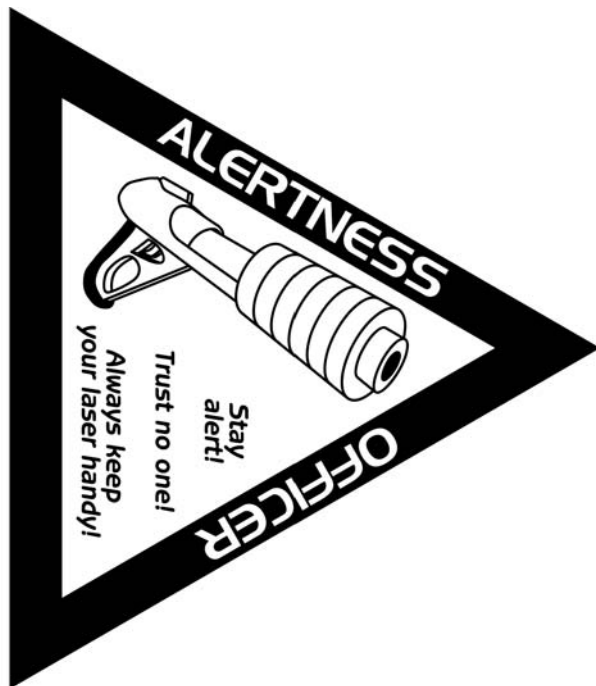
**Alertness officer:** Okay, let's test your alertness. Someone in this warehouse has a laser pistol just like this one, and he's about to shoot you—can you pick out his location? You have... ten seconds.

**Troubleshooter:** Hmm. If it were me, I'd be over... there. Yeah, he'd be on that catwalk, just behind those crates.

**Alertness officer:** Wrong. *[Shoots teammate in leg.]*

**Troubleshooter:** AAAH!

**Alertness officer:** Remember, traitors are everywhere—sometimes even on your team! You fail; that's a 10-credit fine. Now let's work on your accuracy...



## Alertness officer

Congratulations, citizen! Your razor-sharp reflexes have earned you the position of **alertness officer**. Your team's very survival is in your hands; surely The Computer must place great faith in your abilities!

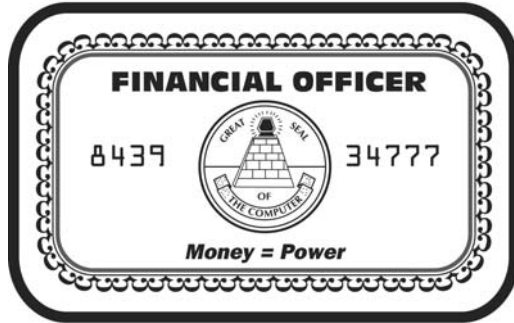
Commie mutant traitors will use traps, ambushes, and all-out frontal assaults to try to kill you and your fellow Troubleshooters. As alertness officer, it's up to you to make sure your team is at peak preparedness to deal with all kinds of danger.

At irregular intervals, surprise your team with an **Emergency Response Test (ERT)**. You'll spring a simulated threat on your team and see how they react. Then use any of a wide variety of **Standard Alertness Tests (SATs)** to improve their accuracy and sharpen their reflexes. Never let up; no matter how they complain, your teammates depend on your harsh but fair testing.

*Stay Alert! Trust No One! Keep Your Laser Handy!*



# Financial officer



Money is power, and power needs careful management. It's the job of the **financial officer** to manage your team's buying power to maximize your efficiency in the field.

If you need any special equipment to do your job properly, you can rely on the financial officer's fiscal acumen to ensure that you get exactly the budget you need. He'll also oversee your personal expenses to ensure that you buy and spend patriotically.

Naturally, not everyone on your team will manage their money perfectly. Sometimes your teammates need a little help in sticking to a budget. If they spend too much or too little, don't neglect to keep your financial officer informed!

## The financial officer: Working hard for your money

Money is essential to the proper functioning of Alpha Complex. In its infinite wisdom, the Computer has granted every citizen a fair and equitable salary. Similarly, every citizen has expenses that must be met. But financial planning is difficult and complex, and not every citizen is up to the task. This inadequacy shows itself most keenly among Troubleshooters; the very future of Alpha Complex is in their hands, and it would be a crime if their work failed through improvidence and fiscal impropriety.

As a critical guardian of the Alpha Complex economy, it falls to the financial officer to ensure his Troubleshooter team spends its money wisely, efficiently and legally. Each and every credit must be spent, and not a credit more!

**Financial officer:** Citizen! Your account is showing you have 10 credits left over this month.

**Troubleshooter:** I'm saving up for a ticket to the Teela show!

**Financial officer:** Commendable, but I'll have to fine you 15 credits for inefficient spending.

## Duties of the financial officer

To ensure the legitimacy of all team transactions, the financial officer must keep close track of

every team member's credit balance. At any time, he may call for an **Emergency Credit Check (ECC)** of any teammate. Anyone targeted with an ECC must present his ME Card and plasticreds to the financial officer for immediate inspection. Remind everyone that failing to submit to an ECC is treason.

Naturally, possessing credits with illegal licenses is treason. Possessing credits acquired through treasonous acts is treason. Spending more or fewer credits each month than your Monthly Mandated Fiscal Budget Allotment (i.e. your monthly salary) may not be treason, but it's certainly suspicious. Such improper expenditures are regrettably common, however, and Troubleshooter teams are lucky to have a financial officer on hand to help them spend wisely and legally. After all, it's better to submit to small but firm fines (say, 10 to 25 credits) from the financial officer than to have to explain these budgetary inconsistencies to The Computer.

Encourage the financial officer to perform Emergency Credit Checks. This encouragement can take the form of Perversity rewards for well-timed inspections, or cash rewards from The Computer for revealing illegally licensed credits. The Computer might also issue stern warnings that the financial officer isn't doing his job.

## Cash and carry, Charlie-R

Sometimes, instead of simply providing mission equipment, the Computer will instead offer a **Troubleshooter Mission Endowment (TME)**: a sizable private account, which the team may use to purchase equipment and supplies for their mission.

It is the financial officer's responsibility to maintain the TME and oversee the expenditure of credits from the account. Of course, the financial officer will choose his purchases wisely, not giving himself the lion's share of the best equipment or misappropriating funds. Access to the TME is granted through a plastic card resembling a normal ME Card. Woe to the financial officer who misplaces the team's TME Card!

Remember, equipment purchased in this way isn't personal property! It's all Computer property, just like every Troubleshooter's laser and reflec, or the stuff from R&D. Anyone who loses or resells any of this equipment is in for a big surprise. Then again, so is the financial officer. Why did he hand over valuable Computer property to a citizen who didn't treat it properly?

Instead of a TME, the Computer may instead provide the team with a **Troubleshooter Protracted Operation Fund (TPOF)**. This doesn't fund a single mission, but rather provides enough money for a full month or more of operational expenses. The financial officer must manage the money in the TPOF for every mission during that period, spending neither too little nor too much. Unfortunately, he has no way to know in advance how many missions there will be nor how many credits will be required for each mission. Should he buy everyone a Repeating Blaster Mk. 6 now, or save the money in case they need to rent a flybot? Decisions, decisions...

## Exact change, please

Central to the financial officer's work is the PDC **Financial Analysis** program. With one

swipe of a ME Card, he can bring up a full credit history, tracking every transaction and presenting a three-dimensional decision tree detailing the card owner's probable future purchases and likely secret society affiliations based on advanced AI analysis.

Isn't it a shame all of these advanced features are well above the financial officer's security clearance? He must make do with the card-owner's current credit total and licensing information on those credits. The financial officer must conduct constant, intrusive spot checks to keep tabs on the team's assets. It's a good thing Troubleshooter teams always trust their financial officers, showing immense patience where one might expect lesser citizens to respond with irritable brass-knuckled violence.

For team members unable to control their spending, the financial officer may prescribe attendance at Thrift Improvement Seminars, where the profligate citizen can learn techniques to control their spending. For more difficult cases, he may attach a Spending Control Clamp to the poor unfortunate's ME Card, and may then approve (with his thumbprint) any purchases made with that card.

The financial officer may assign excessively parsimonious citizens Advertising Visors, goggles that flash subliminal instructions to purchase such wonderful products as IntelliFluid and Bouncy Bubble Beverage,

or simply send them on Mandatory Spending Sprees. If all else fails, the financial officer can simply fine the tightwad repeatedly until excess credits are gone.

**A typical financial officer conversation**

**Financial officer:** Look at this, Hans-R. You have 0.71 credits unspent from last month!

**Troubleshooter:** I know, I'm sorry, but I can't find anything that costs less than 1 credit.

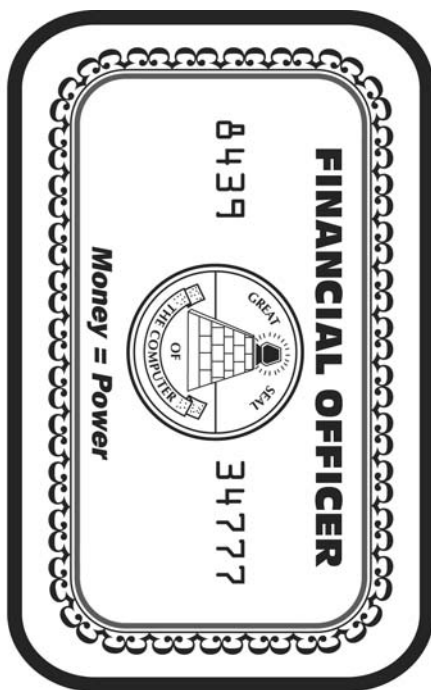
**Financial officer:** Not to worry, we'll just file a 347125/78-HJ 'Fractional Credit Rounding Form'.

**Troubleshooter:** Oh, no, not another one of your five-hour forms!

**Financial officer:** Not this time, this one's very quick. Just fill in your name here and here, write in the number of credits here and here, and initial it here, here and here.

**Troubleshooter:** *[blinks in surprise]* Hey, that was easy!

**Financial officer:** Easy as Cold Fun! Now, there's just the matter of the 80-credit filing fee...



**Financial officer**

Congratulations, citizen! Because of your trustworthiness and attention to detail, you have been chosen as your team's **financial officer**. This is a great honor! Money is the lifeblood of Alpha Complex, and your selection for this role shows The Computer's abiding faith in your abilities.

As financial officer, it's your job to make sure your teammates play their prescribed role in the Alpha Complex economy. You'll convince imprudent citizens to stick to their budgets, while encouraging thrifty teammates to spend-spend-spend! You'll especially keep an eye out for unusual or treasonous credit licenses in their accounts, as these are indications of treacherous disloyalty to The Computer.

In addition, you may need to procure equipment on behalf of the entire team. Sometimes Troubleshooter teams receive a fund of credits with which to obtain mission equipment. Your fellows will congratulate you on your shrewd use of this purchasing power. Spend their money wisely, and they'll thank you for it!



## Medical officer



The **medical officer** works tirelessly to ensure the safety and health of everyone on the team.

He's outfitted with the finest portable medical technology available, and he stands ready to use all of his equipment and know-how to save your life in case of a medical emergency. Don't hesitate to come to him for help and advice about any sort of health issue that you may have! Whether you're afflicted with laser burns, shotgun shrapnel or flesh-eating bacteria, he'll kiss your boo-boos and make them all better.

Your medical officer's job also includes seeing to your team's overall physical fitness. Give him a hand! Point out team members who may be suffering from poor diet and lack of exercise, so he can prescribe an appropriate dietary and physical fitness regimen. Remember, a healthy team is a loyal team!

### The medical officer: Ensuring health at any price

The medical officer ensures the team remains at full health. This involves an endless battery of **Preventative Health Tests** (PHTs), combined with a grueling exercise regimen sufficient to make Vulture Warriors cry. Illness, injury or lack of physical fitness on the part of any team member can spell doom for the rest, so the medical officer remains ever vigilant against even the tiniest, most insignificant medical problems.

Remind the medical officer idleness breeds ill health. Overindulgence in food, drink or drugs leads to ill health. Exposure to radio waves, microwaves and most frequencies of visible light can lead to ill health. In fact, anything and everything in Alpha Complex has the potential to weaken the team's health.

**Medical officer:** Citizen? Why are you sitting down?

**Troubleshooter:** In case you hadn't noticed, there's this bomb I'm trying to defuse.

**Medical officer:** Don't you know that sitting lowers dopamine levels and reduces blood flow to the brain, impairing cognitive efficiency? Give me 100 pushups, citizen! Get that cardiovascular system in gear!

**Troubleshooter:** But there's only two minutes left on the—

**Medical officer:** No excuses! I want to see some pushups right now! Hup! Hup! Hup!

The Armed Forces, CPU and HPD&MC have established strict fitness standards to ensure the health and vigor of the general population. Naturally, these standards contradict one another in hundreds of ways. It falls to the medical officer to lay out an appropriate testing regimen. In this, he may take direction from the Alpha Complex penchant for establishing baselines and averages. After all, it may be hard to tell whether a citizen's blood pressure is above or below 'normal', but you can certainly determine whether it's above or below average for the team.

Encourage the medical officer to perform spot checks of every team member's vital signs, or set them to doing jumping jacks until they fall over. The lowest performer on any given test (as determined by margins on Violence rolls) clearly has health problems, and no matter what the diagnosis, the medical officer has a drug, exercise regimen or invasive surgical procedure to fix it.

Sometimes averages aren't enough, though, and stricter adherence to standards can be necessary. Poor results from the entire team indicate a treasonous lack of fitness discipline! Fortunately the medical officer is well equipped to handle such a calamity. Gravitic weights, spasm-inducing exercise pills and adrenalin injections are only a few of the tools in the medical officer's arsenal. And if all else fails, he can call in a docbot to perform emergency surgery, replacing inadequately performing

muscles and organs with shiny cybernetic prostheses that are absolutely, positively guaranteed to improve performance with no defects or flaws whatever!

### A patch job

Poor lifestyle choices aren't the only source of ill health. Troubleshooting is a dangerous profession that sometimes leads to on-the-job injury. It's not uncommon for team members to lose a few gallons of blood or sever the occasional limb. It falls to the medical officer to put things right.

To facilitate these duties, the medical officer receives a **Standard Medical Kit** (SMK), a little black bag brimming with all the exciting, shiny medical equipment that anyone could possibly need! The SMK holds basic tools of the trade, from stethoscopes and hypodermics to synthflesh bandages and nanobot reconstructive paste—plus enough sandallathon and visomorpain injections to anesthetize a whale. (Troubleshooters can be *such* crybabies when they get their arms shot off.)

If none of that is enough, the medical officer may call upon the services of a docbot to perform triage and surgery. Docbots always recognize the authority of the medical officer, giving his experienced, judicious requests priority over the rest of the team. They *never* ignore the medical officer's diagnoses and perform surgery at their own discretion. Why, the idea is ludicrous!

## Ten warning signs of Inadequate Health Maintenance

Does the citizen in question:

1. Slouch, droop or otherwise exhibit poor posture?
2. Lack a healthy appetite?
3. Eat to excess?
4. Have trouble breathing after strenuous physical activity?
5. Avoid regular aerobic exercise?
6. Need drugs to get through the day?
7. Refuse to take drugs to get through the day?
8. Exhibit an unhealthy fear of docbots?
9. Act nervous or agitated in your presence?
10. Express disinterest in routine health assessments?

Any of these warning signs indicates a possible health problem. Make sure your medical officer knows he has the right—nay, the obligation—to run a full battery of invasive medical tests on a team member that

demonstrates these warning signs. Three or four biopsies and a pint of blood usually suffice, but stricter measures may need to be taken. Being trapped inside the guts of an MRIbot for half a mission is certainly unpleasant and can impair short-term team efficiency, but in the long run, everyone benefits from the assurance of maximal personal health!

## A typical medical officer conversation

**Medical officer:** Oh, no, no, this doesn't look good at all.

**Troubleshooter:** What? What's wrong, doc?

**Medical officer:** Well, your T-cell count is almost 5% below normal.

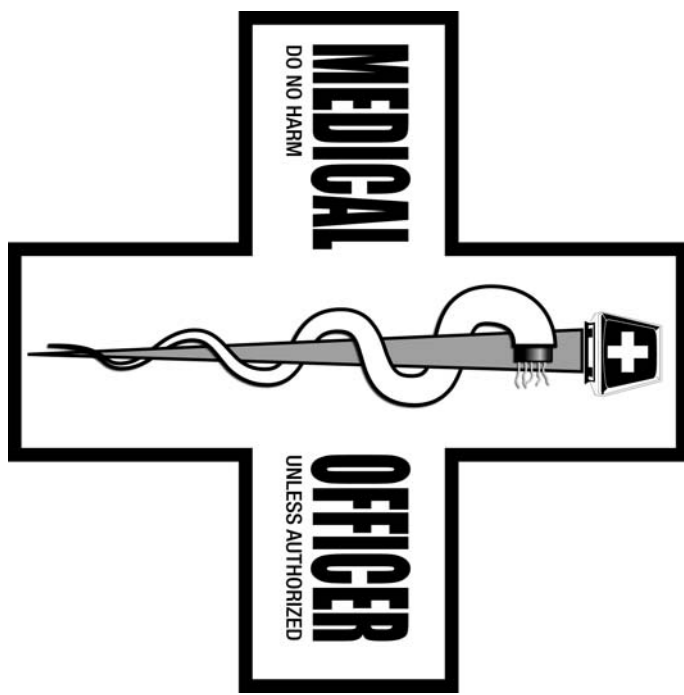
**Troubleshooter:** Is that bad?

**Medical officer:** It could be, it could be. I just have to perform a few more tests. *[Pulls a huge, wickedly pointed contraction from his medical kit.]*

**Troubleshooter:** What is *that*?!

**Medical officer:** Oh, this? It's just a core aspirator. I need to take a biopsy of your liver. Could you hold still, please?

**Troubleshooter:** What? No! Get that thing away from me!



## Medical officer

Congratulations, citizen! You've have been selected for the role of medical officer. The health of your fellow Troubleshooters is vital to the success of every mission. Surely the Computer must have great faith in your abilities to place their fate in your hands!

Your duties include administering regular Preventative Health Tests to ensure your team is ready for action, and supervising your teammates in a strict regimen of aerobic exercise and flexibility training. You must also be ready to tend to mission-acquired injuries at a moment's notice, patching up cuts, burns and severed limbs under battlefield conditions.

To help you in your task, the Computer has generously supplied you with a Standard Medical Kit, which contains all the basic medical equipment and painkillers you'll need. You are also authorized to call on and instruct docbots in any serious medical emergency.

Remember, a healthy team is a loyal team!



## Public relations guy



Your **public relations officer** handles all dealings with the public and the press.

It's important not to share classified information or disturbing news with the public. These things make people unhappy, and unhappiness is treason. Your PR guy presents a perfectly prepared face to the press; he manages and massages all information that your team gives out. He also deals with questions from the INFRARED masses, calming their fears in the face of danger.

You can help out by making sure your other teammates don't talk to anyone outside the team. The more your PR guy can control information, the stronger your team will be!

### The PR guy: Putting a good face on things

Troubleshooters are public figures in Alpha Complex. Everyone wants to know who they are and what kind of trouble they've shot. *Hey there, Mr. Troubleshooter! Did you catch the radiation readings in RON Sector? Are the Commies really murdering everyone who drinks Extra-Classic Bouncy Bubble Beverage? Can you get me Teela-O's autograph?!*

The problem with this combination of unexpected celebrity and audience interest is poor information control. How is The Computer to keep classified information under wraps if Troubleshooters blab about it to passing crowds of INFRAREDs? What happens to morale if Troubleshooters tell everyone on their residential block they think the War on Treason is failing? How do you keep team members from accidentally blabbing about their mission to Commies posing as talent scouts? And how do you keep compromised Troubleshooters from sneaking seditious coded messages into live sector-wide AlphaNet News broadcasts?

The Computer found a solution to these problems. In its infinite wisdom, it allows only one Troubleshooter to represent the team in dealings with lower-clearance citizens and the press. The public relations officer's job is to control all the information the team releases to the public.

Yeah, the PR guy is screwed. Obviously, he can't keep the team from talking to anyone about anything—that sort of isolation might

make them unhappy, and we can't have that! Also, Troubleshooters sometimes need to discuss important matters with informants. And informants spread rumors; that's pretty much an informant's job description.

To forestall possible slips of the tongue, the PR guy is empowered to listen in on his teammates' conversations with anyone of a lower security clearance. Now, it's okay to talk to the peons and the press about unimportant matters—the temperature and the latest vidshows. But anything even remotely clearance-sensitive is right out. If a fellow Troubleshooter engages in an inappropriate conversation, the PR guy is obliged to terminate it—the conversation, and (if the conversation was treasonous) possibly the Troubleshooter. Violators usually get off with a fine and a stern talking-to, if only because most PR guys really like to hear themselves talk.

The flip side of this authority comes when team members split off from the team, or if the whole team splits up to cover more ground (or to talk to their secret society contacts, or just to get away from the PR guy). Unless the PR guy has a lot of surveillance devices, he can't cover everyone's conversations. If he *doesn't* panic when everyone else wanders off, give him something to really freak out about.

**The Computer:** Citizen! Are you aware your teammate Jane-R-UQQ-1 is currently in GFR Sector?

**PR guy:** Uh? I mean, uh, sure, Friend Computer. I think she had an, uh, a docbot appointment. Yeah, that's it.

**The Computer:** An AlphaNet News studio seems an unusual place for a medical appointment.

**PR guy:** What would she be doing—? Oh, no...

**The Computer:** She appears to be discussing PURGE activity in relation to your team's current assignment. You didn't authorize her to discuss this matter publicly, did you, public relations officer?

**PR guy:** [whimpers]

### Smile for the camera

Everyone in Alpha Complex is happy. The Computer doesn't want to make people unhappy by sharing bad news. But if they must hear bad news (like, say, their apartment block is being irradiated), it's best they hear it from a friendly face. So Alpha Complex broadcasts news vidshows full of friendly, confident, trustworthy faces.

Every public relations officer has a friendly face, not to mention a brilliant smile and *great* hair. Why else would the Computer choose him? Because of this, journalists know to home in on the guy wearing the PR badge. Public relations guys can be swarmed by reporters and camera drones at the most inopportune times—when they're in the shower, trying to sneak up on a bunch of Commies or defusing a tacnuke with an exceptionally sensitive detonator.

In the corridors, in the mess hall, in the bathroom... the PR guy can never be sure

whether he's about to be interviewed, or worse, if he's being filmed *right now*. So he always has to look his best! That's why every PR guy is assigned his own **Personal Cosmetics Kit**. The PCK contains creams, ointments, oils, mascaras, lipsticks, blushes, powders, shampoos, hair tonics, hairsprays, hair gels, hair dyes, combs, brushes, lamps and mirrors, specifically to ensure the PR officer looks better-than-human. (Unfortunately, some of this stuff is terribly unhygienic, so a team's hygiene and PR officers may come to blows.)

If another Troubleshooter must appear on camera, he must submit to the PR guy's verbal coaching and cosmetic ministrations or face a hefty fine. Not that the PR guy would ever make a teammate look bad....

Even worse than these conflicts is the eternal territorial battle between the PR officer and the communications & recording officer. C&R officers love to get things on camera, and they don't need some obnoxious PR flack interrupting their voiceovers. Even worse, the PR guy's public statements to the press can contradict the C&R officer's carefully constructed narrative. Cue the exploding multicorders!

## A typical public relations guy conversation

*[The public relations officer appears on a monitor, spotless and smiling, standing jauntily in a RED corridor. Distant laser fire and screams.]*

**Voiceover:** Hi there, Troubleshooters! This is CameraBot 909081-BB, reporting for AlphaNet News! So, what are you guys up to? On an important mission?

**PR guy:** Well, hello there, 909081-BB! You know us, always busy! Ready to kick Commie butt and take Commie names!

**Voiceover:** And who's this? *[The camera turns to take in another Troubleshooter, this one laser-burned and bloodstained.]*

**PR guy:** This is Wesley-R, BB. Say hi to the cambot, Wesley-R!

**Wesley-R:** *[Twitching.]* Oh hi, uh... listen, man, Jack-R and Brenda-R are down, the PURGERS have some kind of sonic weapon, and Linda-R says you have to—

**PR guy:** That's *great*, Wesley-R! You'd better get back there pronto, so you can finish off those nasty traitors! *[Shoves Wesley-R out of the picture.]*

**Voiceover:** Oh wow, that sounds interesting! What's this about PURGE?

**PR guy:** *[Brilliant smile.]* Oh, I'm afraid that's classified information, BB! But I can tell you—let's just head over here, away from all that noise—I *can* tell you a few things about us Troubleshooters and our interesting duties! For example, did you know every mission team has a happiness officer...?



## Public relations guy

Congratulations, Troubleshooter! Due to your superior awareness of social niceties and your excellent hair, you have been chosen **public relations officer**. Only the most congenial and best-groomed citizens attain this position.

As PR guy, it's your job to ensure the public holds the highest possible opinion of your team and of Troubleshooters in general. You oversee all discussions between team members and the rest of Alpha Complex. Make sure your teammates comport themselves as befits The Computer's elite, and correct them if they appear likely to disclose classified information.

In addition, always be ready to speak to the press, encouraging all citizens with your achievements and righteous fervor without ever revealing classified data. Appearing on Alpha Complex news programs is a great honor. Your excellent performance and impeccable hairstyle are sure to make the Computer proud.

Remember to smile for the camera!



'And one man in his time plays many parts / The acts being seven clearances...'

## 2. The roller coaster

by Allen Varney

### Rising (and otherwise) in clearance

Gamemaster, attend! *Extreme PARANOIA* offers rules for playing characters in Alpha Complex at all security clearances from ORANGE through VIOLET. Before you are cleared to learn these rules, read and internalize the following vital concepts.

#### Clearance is *not* competence!

Security clearance has nothing to do with ability. Clearance in Alpha Complex is strictly a measure of how much The Computer trusts you, and *nothing else*.

Citizens of higher security clearance have no necessary or expected advantage in gifts or knowledge over those of lower clearance. That INDIGO giving you orders may be a dimwit, a pointy-haired boss, a nonentity. The RED he names as your target may be James Bond.

Rising in clearance doesn't require ability, just trustworthiness. It's like the marketing department of any corporation. Many marketers have no useful skills at all—only a great smile, a firm handshake, immaculate clothes, perfect hair and a matchless ability to suck up to the boss. Yet they exercise supreme, unquestioned authority. So it is in Alpha Complex.

One exercise always makes *PARANOIA* Gamemasters go 'aha': Think of your boss as work. Is he smarter or more capable than you? What about *his* boss?

There you go. That's security clearance.

#### Clearance is *not* (necessarily) power!

Yes, The Computer trusts you, and you can lord it over everyone of lower clearance. But high clearance may mean you perform menial duties in highly sensitive areas. High Programmers need their offices cleaned like anyone else, and if they use human labor instead of bots as a status symbol, well, who empties those purple wastebaskets? Some VIOLET Clearance janitor. He earns a huge salary, has huge living quarters and eats great food—but he's still a janitor. He's just really trustworthy.

That's right, a custodian may earn a hundred times more than a lowly RED Clearance Troubleshooter who risks his life hourly. Does that sound unjust? Not at all! The Computer rewards valor, but it greatly prizes trustworthiness. Surrounded by enemies, it extends itself to keep trusted citizens happy.

#### Clearance is *not* longevity!

There is no time-based seniority system or tenure in Alpha Complex. The Computer may

never trust you after 20 years in the food vats, or it may trust you implicitly after a month in the Troubleshooters. As shown in the mission 'Hunger' in the collection *WMD*, there is no inherent setting-based reason not to promote a PC through three or four clearances in a single mission—or demote him just as fast.

#### Clearance rises and falls unnervingly

Rising in clearance doesn't equate with 'going up a level' or 'gaining skill points' in other (non-fun) RPGs. Such benchmarks in those games are more or less permanent, like birthdays. Characters earn them and then go on, building from that stable base of ability. In contrast, security clearance can rise and fall with vertiginous speed.

By a certain limited definition Alpha Complex is a strict meritocracy. 'Merit' depends entirely on The Computer's current view of you, as of this nanosecond. The higher your clearance, the more trust The Computer grants you, and the more willing it is to give you the benefit of the doubt. But the instant you actually do lose its trust, it demotes you. Theoretically you could be INDIGO this morning, BLUE this afternoon, RED tomorrow and YELLOW the day after that. The high-clearance life can be eventful, unfortunately.

Achieving stability isn't a matter of reaching a given clearance, but of connecting with an old-boy network of powerful individuals who



will protect you for their own purposes. If you screw up, these trusted citizens go to bat for you with The Computer. Opportunities for such alliances are rare below GREEN. And the old-boy network is choosy, too; they only protect people with something to offer. They regard, say, standard-issue IntSec GREEN goons as disposable. And the PCs? What can they offer? Right, uh-huh. Doesn't sound exactly vital, does it?

An extended **PARANOIA** Straight series could focus on the PCs' efforts to hook up with likely protectors and networks. They watch NPC bunkmates rise above them—see the need for a patron, and try to find one—enjoy brief protection, until the patron himself goes down in flames and the PCs are tarred with guilt by association. They earn another patron's protection, but it depends entirely on the patron's current view of them, as of this nanosecond...

Remember, the game's atmosphere is most interesting when the players feel anxious, beset from all sides and fighting a losing battle. If they're snugly under some INDIGO's umbrella, that paranoid anxiety disappears.

### How to get promoted

If we knew that, we wouldn't be stuck writing roleplaying supplements. (Joke! Joke!)

'How do I get to higher clearance?' is the same question as 'How do I make The Computer trust me more?' Your players might think this works the same way as gaining the trust of any other paranoid schizophrenic: corroborate and extend the nutcase's delusions, manufacture evidence confirming every outlandish belief and offer undying support in the titanic struggle against Whatever.

But in Alpha Complex, everybody's already doing this. Some of them started before your PCs were decanted, and they know inside info that makes their own delusional corroborations more convincing to The Computer.

The way to advancement lies elsewhere.

### Completing Troubleshooter missions

This is the fast-track path, explained in the **PARANOIA** rulebook. Each time you successfully complete a mission without getting betrayed, censured, terminated, etc., and with due attention to good order and minimal property damage (considering prevalent situational circumstances), The Computer may decide to promote you one

or more security clearances. Piece of cake, obviously.

The rest of this section discusses options available to citizens in non-Troubleshooting professions, and to Troubleshooters who find clever ways to avoid going on missions.

### Higher-clearance vouching

Some trusted high-clearance citizen testifies to The Computer you're a trustworthy person, you have skills or abilities vital to security and good order, and you will work earnestly for the welfare of Alpha Complex. BLUE citizens can promote you this way as far as ORANGE; INDIGOs can promote you up to GREEN; VIOLETS, to INDIGO.

Those of a historical bent might call this the Horatio Alger Method. Horatio Alger, Jr. (1832–1899), the bestselling American novelist of the Gilded Age, wrote about poor but honest young boys who supposedly get rich through hard work, prudence and pluck. In fact, if you read *Tattered Tom* or *Ragged Dick* or *Phil the Fiddler* or any of Alger's 130 novels, each kid actually gets rich because he rescues some rich old guy's runaway horse, or returns the rich old guy's lost wallet, or saves the rich old guy's daughter from ruffians. The rich old guy takes a liking to Ragged Dick, makes him his ward, hands over his daughter and leaves him the family business.

In Alpha Complex that idea would work more like this:

*Tom-SVH-1, a plucky young INFRARED Tech Services janitor, happens to find in an HPD wastebasket a discarded memo, mistakenly left unshredded. Through his drugged haze he discerns a script page from the vidshow Traitor Hunt. The scene involves a corrupt bureaucrat spouting PURGE doctrines. An unidentified editor has scribbled insightful corrections over the dialogue. Tom believes the corrections suspiciously accurate.*

*Tom skips his next dose of HappyTime medicine. With a clear head and Alger-esque pluck, he traces the exec who wrote the comments. He confronts the exec, who denies everything and threatens Tom with termination. Tom loudly persists, catching the attention of IntSec, which had bugged the exec's office. Tom's finding is just what IntSec needs to convict the traitor, and they rush in as the exec pulls a laser on the plucky lad. The exec is terminated and Tom is saved.*

*An INDIGO IntSec director quickly promotes Tom to GREEN, hoping to have a GREEN citizen who's truly honest, hard-working and*

*full of all that pluck business. At that clearance, it's much easier for Tom-G to find other cases of treason. Tom-G quickly becomes IntSec's star investigator, and while his colleagues are busy playing politics, Tom-G is making Alpha Complex a more loyal place to live.*

*All this makes Tom-G a lot of enemies. Who could rise that high, that fast, without the aid of treason? A quick interview with Tom-G's old INFRARED roommate reveals Tom didn't take his HappyTime medicine the day he turned in the entertainment exec. Powerful people persuade The Computer to nullify Tom-G's commendation and bust him back down to INFRARED. Because he knows so much thanks to his meteoric rise in clearance, he gets brainscrubbed as well. Tom is given a new name, Greg-SVH-1, and plopped in the INFRARED barracks.*

*A few weeks later, Greg finds a unshredded memo from a CPU manager with a lot of treasonous writing...*

(By the way, Horatio Alger himself lived a rags-to-riches-to-rags story. His literary success subsided as others imitated him, and he died in a rundown boarding house, nearly penniless and forgotten. Not that this should in any way indicate the likely success of the Horatio Alger Method in Alpha Complex. Nonono.)

### Service firm assistance

Some citizens advance not through pull but through public politics. Make the right friends in your service firm, get your co-workers involved in your Elective Activity or Pursuit club, offer to handle your boss's catering arrangements and dry cleaning, take the minutes for your trade association's monthly meetings, and make yourself so generally useful it serves your firm's interests to get you greater access. And don't forget plenty of 'gifts' to people in high places.

Yes, sometimes goody-two-shoes behavior really does earn status—though not for your PCs, of course, because this method is time-consuming and insanely boring. Still, it might keep your players guessing about the high-clearance NPCs they meet. Does that GREEN PLC manager have connections in Psion, or does he just take good meeting minutes?

One point about this service-firm method: Though you don't need your secret society working for you, you absolutely can't get anywhere if anyone powerful is *against* you. If you're (say) a registered mutant, and it turns out your boss is Anti-Mutant, you'll never gain



## CLEARANCE ULTRAVIOLET

promotion no matter how many hors d'oeuvres you make for his party.

### Secret society assistance

This is usually the best path. In Alpha Complex as in our world, it's not what you know, it's whom. When The Computer promotes to RED an INFRARED citizen who isn't already neck-deep in conspiratorial obligations, the secret societies make an unseemly rush to recruit the new rising star. A new RED can hardly step out the door of the barracks without being bombarded by pamphlets and cryptic messages from shadowy figures.

However, much depends on your chosen society. Gareth Hanrahan, designer of the fine **PARANOIA** supplement *The Traitor's Manual*, explains:

'A surprising (to IntSec, anyway) percentage of the true movers, shakers and breakers of Alpha Complex never even rise as high as ORANGE. Dangerous conspirators hide anonymously among the INFRARED masses,

plotting from the comparative safety of crowded barracks and vanishing from the system as just another Computer-maintained ME file. (Of course, if the dastardly conspirator hasn't escaped the regular drugging of the INFRARED drones, his conspiracies consist mainly of drooling and faintly seditious grunts).

'Violent society agents such as PURGERS or Death Leopards rarely climb the clearance levels, except in the Armed Forces, R&D or Troubleshooters, where they can get access to bigger guns. Other societies do try to pull their members out of INFRARED; ambitious (Humanist, Illuminati, Psion) or acceptable (First Church of Christ Computer-Programmer, ProTech) societies stampede toward INDIGO and VIOLET, but most are content to get a few members to GREEN and BLUE.'

### How to get demoted

We have never heard of a **PARANOIA** Gamemaster who needs advice on this.

### Details of changing clearance

The Computer itself typically informs a citizen of his promotion or demotion. (Exceptions: Troubleshooters at briefings often learn the news from briefing officers.) Often The Computer makes a public announcement in the lucky citizen's workplace, cafeteria or living quarters, so all his fellow workers can express congratulations or consolation as appropriate. The Computer orders the citizen to drop everything, on the instant, and report to (1) CPU for a new ME Card and completion of appropriate forms, (2) PLC for clothing of the appropriate clearance and completion of the appropriate forms, and (3) HPD&MC for assignment of new living quarters and dining facilities. And some forms.

The entire process, absent secret society influence or bribes, usually takes three or four sleepless days. (Smart citizens heading

### Clothing: Two **PARANOIA** GMs speak

Welcome to my Complex. From INFRARED to GREEN Clearance the primary color of your clothing is that of your security clearance. Accessories are usually kept to a minimum (more by custom rather than through a legal requirement), but can be whatever color you like. (INFRAREDS tend to be too drug-addled to accessorize at all.)

Almost all higher-clearance citizens wear their security clearance color as their primary color, because it's a major status symbol. Technically, though, BLUEs and higher can wear any colors they please—except white! By law their clothing must prominently display a 'clearance patch'—often an Eye-of-the-Computer logo in the appropriate color. An armband or patch over the heart is most common. In practice, anyone who wears a lot of ornaments colored above his clearance would draw suspicion.

It is illegal for any security clearance below ULTRAVIOLET to wear a lot of white. UVs can wear anything they want, but they tend to wear all white, as a show of power.

—Wesley Williams ('Moto42' on *Paranoia-Live.net*)

In my Complex, visibly wearing clothes above your security clearance is illegal, in order to promote efficiency and remove confusion. Being caught doing so results in immediate removal of the item and a stiff fine.

You are allowed to wear things of lower security clearance, or colors that aren't a security clearance, such as metallics, or indeterminates like cyan and brown, so there's still a reasonable range of choice. But the fashion runs to mainly wearing your clearance and accessorizing with the clearance one level below: red jumpsuits with a black T-shirt underneath, or orange jumpsuits with a red shirt, etc. Also, colors tend to run the full range of saturation, so you can get very light reds, very dark reds, etc.

—Karl Low ('Kwil' on *Paranoia-Live.net*)



## 2. CHANGING CLEARANCE THE HIGH LIFE

**In a hierarchy every employee tends to rise to his level of incompetence. In time, every post tends to be occupied by an employee who is incompetent to carry out its duties.**

—**Dr. Laurence J. Peter and Raymond Hull, *The Peter Principle: Why things always go wrong* (1969)**

**The most ineffective workers are systematically moved to the place where they can do the least damage: management.**

—**Scott Adams, *The Dilbert Principle: A Cubicle's-Eye View of Bosses, Meetings, Management Fads & Other Workplace Afflictions* (1996)**

into CPU stock up on WakeyWakey pills and Emergency Bathroom Break vouchers.) With bribes (say, a month's salary at the new clearance), insider pull, or a successful Access roll, a character can condense the process to a single eight-hour shift.

The citizen technically doesn't have to interact with Power Services or Tech Services to set up utilities in his new quarters; HPD technically handles that, and they have the waiting lists to prove it. There's technically no need at all to track down and bribe some low-clearance flunky to covertly pipe in power and water. Once the citizen's name rises to the top of the waiting list, Power and Tech will install his utilities efficiently and courteously, assuming the Sun hasn't yet swollen to a red giant and consumed the Earth.

Non-player characters usually go back to their selfsame service firm, where they take up new duties based on their new clearance. It makes for a more interesting game if player characters get reassigned to a completely new firm in (they hope) the same service group. The Computer orders these lucky PCs to report to the Happy Fun Job Placement Center for reassignment; see Chapter 4.

### Characteristics of high-clearance life

The lower clearances are qualitatively identical. Sure, YELLOWs live in their own rooms and eat tastier food than do REDs, but their daily lives are broadly similar. The real change in circumstances comes only when the character crosses the wide social gulf from YELLOW and lower (98% of the population) to GREEN and higher (2% of the population). This is the Alpha Complex equivalent of getting your Oxford degree, your Harvard MBA, your

membership in the elite country club and keys to the executive washroom.

So what's it like up there?

### Efficiency?

Once they reach GREEN Clearance or higher, make your players think, 'Wow, things are working better!' Then make them think, 'Oh no. Things are working better.'

Clearance, to repeat, isn't competence. However, at higher clearances you can locate and employ citizens who actually are competent—assuming there are any.

Classic-style **PARANOIA** presents Alpha Complex as a ramshackle, trembling bureaucracy suffocating in paperwork and corruption. RED Clearance Troubleshooters suspiciously open every assigned crate of concussion grenades, expecting it instead to hold 50 gross of lip gloss. This is part of the quintessential **PARANOIA** atmosphere. In Classic style, that is. At RED Clearance.

But totalitarian governments are scary partly because they can be brutally efficient. As your PCs rise in clearance and draw closer to the workings of power, you can maintain their fear and ignorance by steadily increasing, or rather highlighting, the system's efficiency. IntSec becomes bracingly efficient at placing them under protective surveillance. Underlings are startlingly alert in apprehending any 'intruder' (actually a PC's secret society superior) and confiscating his 'contraband' (the package he was dropping off for the PC). The Computer may track a PC's whereabouts with frightening accuracy and record it with frustrating permanence.

The spotlight: One way to simulate this—only occasionally!—is to place each PC at the center of his own personal mobile zone of high Tension. Increase the current scene's specified Tension number up to a 'spotlight' level based on the highest-clearance PC: GREEN, 10;

BLUE, 12; INDIGO, 14; VIOLET, 16. Won't the Free Enterprise thugs love that when the PCs duck down the sewer to the IR Market!

Do this only rarely, when you want to keep the players in line for a while. If you keep them under this spotlight constantly, they'll feel too constrained to do anything treasonous.

### Glamour?

Vidshows that cater to the lower clearances show ravenous interest in the doings of the powerful. If you're INDIGO and in some interesting public position, like commander of a Vulture Squadron, or if you're VIOLET in any case, vidshows want to know about you, your quarters, what you eat, hobbies, gossip and so on. Often they seek hints about how ordinary citizens can rise to your lofty level.

Each high-clearance citizen can pretty much decide what media attention he receives. There are no intrusive paparazzi in Alpha Complex, for unwanted hounding or stalking is suicidal.

Citizens who go for glamour find a whole new world of parties, dinners, interviews, panel discussions, premieres, award shows, commemorative presentations, roasts, community singalongs and launch ceremonies for new warbots. Gloryhounds can go into overdrive. The cycle from rising-new-sensation to flavor-of-the-minute to legend-in-his-own-time to overexposed-sellout to checking-into-rehab fills only a couple of wild months.

Though TV vidstars are typically only ORANGE Clearance, you can get a sense of the life of high-clearance glamour from the vidstar rules in the ORANGE section of Chapter 4.

### Love and childbirth?

At GREEN Clearance you can stop taking hormone suppressants. This requires official approval from HPD&MC; IntSec promptly



puts you under closer observation, and The Computer informs your supervisor you may start flipping out. But experimenting with your primal urges is, technically, legal. Love and romance are not in themselves treasonous, but obviously anything that interferes with total loyalty to The Computer draws IntSec's strong suspicion.

Actual childbirth and parenting are treasonous at all clearances. If you get pregnant and IntSec finds out, officers administer a harmless abortifacient—forcefully, if necessary. If the baby is born before anyone finds out, IntSec confiscates the infant and assigns it to be raised in a random creche. In either case, the parents are brainscrubbed. This threat offers the same rich possibilities as does love for soap-opera melodrama. And if you're looking for a strong character motivation, a High Programmer who maintains an illicit harem and family in the Underplex will obviously do most anything to conceal and protect them.

From our perspective, the number of Alpha Complex citizens who decide to let Nature take its course is surprisingly low. Social pressure, IntSec suspicion, lack of cooperative partners, distaste for the inherent poor hygiene and pervasive ignorance of fleshly pleasures—all these make most citizens say, 'Why bother?'

Still more surprising, some who try it subsequently resume taking suppressants so they can think clearly again. Testosterone and estrogen are such sledgehammer drugs, you know?

## Ambition!

Most citizens between ORANGE and VIOLET share a deeply felt goal: Get ahead. When they hit GREEN, some of them relax. Others seem to say, 'I can almost see white from here.' These latter ambitious folks, if they're shrewd, plan ahead for the rise to ULTRAVIOLET. They line up their own personal surveillance network, they go on no-sleep drugs for weeks at a time and they make connections in a dozen secret societies.

The most ambitious climbers start their own program group.

The **PARANOIA** rulebook describes program groups as secret societies centered around and supporting a single High Programmer. But many of these groups started well before their headman ever donned white robes. A program group is just another conspiracy, as few as half a dozen like-minded individuals—say, a group of player characters—who agree to advance their common interest. They need neither charter nor manifesto, no passwords or recognition signals. They all just corroborate

each other's stories, recommend one another for promotion and share interesting tidbits of blackmail material. Often one charismatic individual unites them, a pack alpha who will become patron to the rest. In other cases there is continual tension over which one of the group will win through to UV. (And it's only one, always. Whoever reaches ULTRAVIOLET first takes steps to ensure no one else joins him.)

## Rising exposes your soft underbelly

Low-clearance citizens (and players) nurture the fond illusion, promulgated incessantly by HPD&MC's glamorous vidshow profiles of the rich and famous, that high-clearance citizens enjoy a safer and more secure life, where paranoia is lessened and life is more stable. Let your players find out the truth for themselves, the hard way.

High-clearance characters might get Access increases (see page 23) and learn their way around the bureaucracy. In that sense, life at high clearances really is better. But they don't get more skills. They get more and better equipment, but they don't necessarily know how to use it better. Sure, they can get the training manuals—but who has time to read them, let alone practice?

Either in a series or a set of one-shots using the alternate professions in this book, show the players how high clearance brings with it a range of issues they never knew as REDs....

## Responsibility

As citizens rise in clearance, they get more and more responsibility. Think what this means for Troubleshooters in particular. The Computer dispatches low-clearance RED teams to take out a nest of Commies in some remote sector, or track down traitorous messages written on cafeteria napkins. The Computer sends high-clearance teams to protect a CompNode from assault by a squad of armed PURGE Machine Empaths.

Sure, these Troubleshooters face the threat with better equipment than the REDs, and probably higher Access. But skills?

Troubleshooters at higher clearances sometimes really are genuinely more competent than their underlings. After all, they have completed many missions successfully to rise to their current lofty station. But more likely, they're simply best at backstabbing, bootlicking and shuffling blame onto their teammates. This can be self-perpetuating:

As the Troubleshooter rises, he may work more often with lower-clearance teammates, whom he can more easily (in theory) frame or terminate. So the higher he is, the higher he can go...

...Until he's on an INDIGO team consisting entirely of singleminded backstabbers and bootlickers, and they have to defeat the PURGE squad. Uh-oh.

## Data burn

The Troubleshooters are finally cleared to read the 160-page operating manual, but...

**The Computer:** Team leader, you are 56 seconds late for your assigned engagement with the Communist saboteurs. My records show you have already received the plasma generator you requested, as well as the proper instruction manual. Please report.

**Team leader:** Sorry, Friend Computer! Our equipment officer is still trying to figure out the weapon's, uh—what is it—?

**Equipment guy:** [*absently, while leafing frantically through index*] Ion Resonance Potential control.

**Team leader:** Apparently if we adjust it properly, we enhance the range by 20 percent. But if we do it wrong—uh, I mean, we want to make sure we're treating our assigned equipment properly!

**The Computer:** That is commendable, team leader. To expedite your assault, which is now one minute and 14 seconds behind schedule, I suggest you bring the manual along and follow its instructions onsite. If circumstances force you to the ultimate sacrifice in combat with the Communist menace, please ensure the manual is destroyed before falling into enemy hands. Step lively, now!

## Unreliable data checking

If competent people remain at lower clearance, they can't oversee the important high-clearance stuff. Who does that leave for fact-checking?

Say the Troubleshooters really do read the 160-page manual. They quickly realize the people who assembled it were R&D techs who can't express their abstruse ideas in plain language for non-techie ordinary folks. The scientists could have used good editors—but the editors were overworked ORANGE tech

## 2. CHANGING CLEARANCE OPTIONAL RULES

writers who didn't understand the material and never had good access to the relevant Subject Matter Experts. No one noticed the inadequacy of the manual, because no one before the PCs was sufficiently high-clearance to see it.

Customer support? We're sorry, that's been outsourced to a call center manned by reprogrammed scrubots.

### Feckless, duplicitous underlings (FDUs)

This is the killer. When the PCs finally reach the higher clearances and expect action from their contemptible underlings, remind the players constantly how they themselves acted back when they were REDs. Delight in their shudders!

To illustrate high-clearance life in the future underground city, look to the past. Humorist P. J. O'Rourke's essay collection *Holidays in Hell* (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 1988) includes 'In Whitest Africa', about his 1986 encounter with the white-supremacist apartheid regime. 'I was pretty drunk myself by the time I'd been in South Africa for three or four weeks. [...] I was fuddled. My head boiled with cliches. I was getting used to being confused. [...] I was becoming South African—used to having people all around me all the time doing everything for me and not doing it well.'

O'Rourke visits a toney whites-only restaurant on the Garden Route: '[W]hen I sat down at my table there were three teaspoons, two water glasses, one dirty wine glass, no forks, no knives and no napkin. "I need a dinner fork, a salad fork, a knife and a napkin," I said to the [black] waiter, who stared at me and then headed out across the dining room at the speed of a change in seasons. [...] He returned with another spoon.

"I need a knife, a fork and a napkin!" I said. He came back 20 minutes later with the water pitcher and filled my wine glass. "LOOK HERE," I said, "DO YOU SPEAK ENGLISH?" He thought about that for a long time. "Oh, yes." He disappeared and came back in half an

hour with one more water glass. "Is the master ready to order?"

'He was without recourse, voteless, impoverished, unpropertied, not a legal citizen in his own nation, yet he had reduced me to a paroxysm of impotent drunken rage. I left him a huge tip and ate my chicken with a spoon.'

### Optional clearance rules

#### Mission clearances

Most published *PARANOIA* missions work for basically any clearance. Even the group in *The YELLOW Clearance Black Box Blues*, or the mixed-clearance groups in *Send in the Clones* and *Alpha Complexities* (all collected in *PARANOIA Flashbacks*), take few actions specific to their clearances. In some missions The Computer dispatches RED Troubleshooters to change a light bulb; in others they must save Alpha Complex from imminent destruction. The clearance of the player group is irrelevant.

Now that your PCs can be any clearance, you may find it fun to designate a given mission as requiring a particular clearance or higher. This indicates the mission's importance to The Computer. A bulb replacement errand is still RED; forestalling complex-wide catastrophe is BLUE or INDIGO; removing a body from a High Programmer's mansion is VIOLET.

This concept can lead to all kinds of fiddly corner cases—what happens if their clearances fall in the middle of a mission, blah blah—that are completely boring. Skip these. If they keep arising, drop this rule. We may mention likely clearances for future published *PARANOIA* missions, if we remember, but it doesn't really matter, you know?

#### Need to know

If you're a BLUE Clearance service firm executive in Tech Services, does that give you the right to wander into a BLUE Clearance

Internal Security station and browse their records? Try it and see. We'll wait.

Didn't work, did it? Good thing they didn't lock you up. Don't worry, you have your own docbot now, so your bruises will heal fast.

When all the PCs were low-clearance nobodies, you could briskly assign unreachably high clearance to anything you wanted, as part of your essential duty to ration information. Now that PCs can be anything up to VIOLET, you need another tool to keep them from learning too much. That tool is 'need to know'.

The Computer or an authorized official—which is to say, any NPC you want—may designate specified information as need-to-know. This means those who seek this information must demonstrate a clear, urgent, compelling purpose in—note this vital point—in the authorized official's judgment.

'Need to know' means, not the need of the requesting player, but the official's need—the information's need, if you will. Suppose a team of BLUE Troubleshooters becomes annoyed with a YELLOW Tech Services manager who can't tell them why their assigned equipment, freshly offloaded from a transbot, has arrived in a radioactive condition. They decide to access the transbot routes themselves, and cross-index them with locations of local nuclear plants. The Troubleshooters are BLUE; the information they seek is YELLOW; no problem, right?

Problem! The Computer interrupts the PCs' data search to inform them the location of nuclear power plants is sensitive information, restricted on a need-to-know basis to authorized Tech Services technicians and repair crews. Transbots are ordered to avoid all power plants, but because they can't be told where the plants are, mistakes happen. Unfortunately, the log of mistakes, though cleared GREEN, is also need-to-know, Tech Services Internal Affairs investigators only.

Science fiction writer William Gibson said, 'Information wants to be free.' In Alpha Complex information wants to serve The Computer's idea of public good. If it doesn't, only a traitor would need to know it.

Typical mission types by clearance

RED	Minefield sweeping, terminating berserk scrubots, vehicular crash safety testing, cleanup at biohazard sites, target practice for UVs who shoot fruit off people's heads.
ORANGE	Terminating traitors, terminating berserk docbots, terminating escaped R&D lab creations, terminating Death Leopards, terminating RED Clearance Troubleshooters.
YELLOW	Bodyguards for a vidstar, terminating berserk warbots, breaking up Sierra Club meetings, field-testing especially cool weapons (that actually work at times).
GREEN	Stopping a plot to poison a sector's B3 supply, disposing of Commie leaflets, foiling PURGE, terminating Psion agents, don't let that reactor melt down.
BLUE	Extended Outdoors missions, taking out important Free Enterprise or FCCC-P agents who aren't 'cooperative', disarming 50-megaton warheads.
INDIGO	Infiltrating a Frankenstein Destroyer cabal or enemy complex bent on crashing The Computer, preventing the Moon from hitting the Earth, terminating extraterrestrials.
VIOLET	They could tell you, but then they'd have to kill you.

Thanks to David Boyle for this list.



## High-clearance PC creation checklist

For the most part, creating a player character who starts out at a high clearance is much like creating an ordinary RED Clearance Troubleshooter character, as described in the **PARANOIA** rulebook. This flowchart shows the mandatory deviations from that standard.

Page numbers in the center line of boxes refer to the original **PARANOIA** rulebook.

1. **Name and gender:** As in the **PARANOIA** rulebook.

**1. NAME/  
GENDER**

PG. 16

**2. SKILLS/  
SPECIALTIES**

PG. 18

2. **Skills:** As in the rulebook, with the exception of the **vital specialty**. All Troubleshooter characters still have the vital specialty Energy Weapons, equal to Violence rating plus 4. They retain this specialty even if they later leave the Troubleshooters for a non-Troubleshooter job.

3-4. **Service firm, mutant power:** As in the rulebook.

**3. SERVICE  
FIRM**

PG. 21

Characters created fresh for a non-Troubleshooter position start with a different vital specialty, determined by the position (see below). Like Energy Weapons for Troubleshooter characters, the PC's vital specialty is mandatory, doesn't count against his six common specialties and doesn't require a corresponding weakness. The starting rating equals the governing skill rating plus 4. (These characters can still take Energy Weapons in addition to their vital specialty, if you allow it.)

**4. MUTANT  
POWER**

PG. 23

5. **Secret society:** Determine secret society and Secret skills normally. Society degree isn't the same as clearance rank, but high clearance usually does bring more influence in one's society, with a few exceptions.

**Straight:** Increase the PC's degree by 3 for each clearance above RED (maximum 19). For instance, a GREEN character would have degree 10 [starting degree of 1 + (3 clearance ranks above RED x 3) = 10].

**Classic:** As Straight, but each clearance rank is worth 2 degrees, not 3. Or it's worth 1. Really, whatever you like.

**Zap:** Roll 1d20 to determine degree.

**5. SECRET  
SOCIETY**

PG. 23

The vital specialty for **vidshow stars:** Disguise. For **assistant retail sales managers:** Moxie. For **EDRT members:** varies by character's assigned team role. For **IntSec BLUE troopers:** Intimidation. For **VIOLET executives:** High Alert (which, to clarify, isn't 'danger sense', but rather knowledge of common schemes, traps, con games, ambushes, etc.).

**6. PERVERSITY/  
TICS**

PG. 26

6. **Perversity points:** As in the rulebook.

**7. SECURITY  
CLEARANCE**

PG. 26

7. **Security clearance:** You decide.

**8. ATTRIBUTES**

PG. 27

8. **Attributes:** Determine Power as in the rulebook. The easiest way to handle Access is to set it equal to secret society degree. It's not that all Access springs from one's secret society; rather, it's just a convenient coincidence that makes your life easier.

9. **Equipment:** The PC's starting personal equipment includes the appropriate color of jumpsuit and boots, Personal Digital Companion with built-in camera and stylus, and ME Card (identity/credit card). Troubleshooter characters start with the properly colored laser pistol (without barrel) and reflec overalls. They start with credits equal to a month's salary (see Chapter 4 of the rulebook). Encourage players to buy lots more stuff on the various Equipment Charts in the rulebook (pp. 48, 229-30, 247), in this book and from the fine supplement **STUFF**.

**9. EQUIPMENT**

PG. 28

## 2. CHANGING CLEARANCE CHECKLIST/ACCESS

### About Access

The Access attribute isn't security clearance. Access represents a character's insider info, powerful contacts and hard-won experience. High security clearance doesn't, in itself, get you that stuff—but it sure helps. With this supplement, your players may now plausibly gain Access that forces us Famous Game Designers to finally figure out what it means.

In general, a promotion in clearance will improve a character's Access so long as he (a) has sufficient time in the new clearance to learn the ways and means of getting by—call it a week or two, barring odd circumstances—and (b) knows someone with good Access who is willing to teach the secret handshakes, who to talk to when the office CoffeeLike machine breaks, etc.

This kind of samizdat data changes by the week, so if the character drops to a lower clearance, feel free to cut Access back down to a rating more in keeping with the lower rank.

So what kind of things can Access help with? Here are some representative tasks by Access rating. Some of them may sound more like Hardware or Management rolls than Access rolls. Those still work, if you want them to, but Access represents a different way of accomplishing the same task—not using a screwdriver or fast-talk, but a mutual acquaintance's name, an obscure regulation or a completed form.

Access rating	Tasks within reach
<b>1–2</b>	Operating a confession booth. (1) Knowing a guy who knows a guy who can find the IR Market this week. (2) One-time access to a particular Gray Subnet (a covert, independent, highly illegal data network). (2)
<b>3–4</b>	Knowing an IR Marketeer slightly less corrupt than usual. (3) Getting a hack (autocar taxi) late in a shift. (4) Halfway-reliable access to a particular Gray Subnet at some particular place and time of day. (4)
<b>5–6</b>	Getting a broken showerhead replaced without undue stress. (5) De-activating a confession booth's lie detector. (6) Getting the WAKEYTYME airhorn in your quarters 'repaired' (disabled). (6)
<b>7–8</b>	Getting your own booth at the IR Market and knowing which IntSec guards to bribe. (7) Safely de-activating the surveillance equipment in your quarters for a specified interval. (8) Reliable access to a particular Gray Subnet, anywhere and any time. (8)
<b>9–10</b>	Hearing ahead of time when IntSec will be doing a purge or a surprise inspection in your area. (9) De-activating a confession booth's sedation and confinement mechanisms. (10)
<b>11–12</b>	Tapping into the surveillance feed from quarters of the same or lower clearance for a specified interval. (11) Having good blackmail material on an IR Marketeer and not getting killed. (12) Reliable access to a wide range of Gray Subnets, or to the customer records of C-Bay or another auction site. (12)
<b>13–14</b>	Getting past the front desk guards at the Bright Vision Re-education Center. (13) Tapping the surveillance feed from quarters of higher clearance for a specified (very short) interval. (14)
<b>15–16</b>	De-activating a confession booth's IntSec alert and termination mechanisms. (15) Getting past the front troops at Internal Security HQ. (16) Running your own Gray Subnet or auction site. (16)
<b>17–18</b>	Having Teela-O's number on your PDC's speed-dial. (17) A High Programmer might owe you a favor or be your poker buddy. (18) Easy access to the inner workings of any given Gray Subnet or auction site. (18)
<b>19–20</b>	Learning the current passphrase (changes once every ten minutes), recognition code (changes once per minute) and required bribe (changes based on your perceived wealth) to enter this sector's Central CompNode. (19) Knowing the formula for Bouncy Bubble Beverage. (20)

*Thanks to David Boyle and Jas Strong for help with this list.*



## 3. Real estate

by Bill O'Dea

In a closed underground society carved from thick rock, real estate is understandably at a premium. Citizens squabble bitterly over the best housing available at their clearance. At lower clearances choice housing rarely meets roach motel standards, despite (or because of) all the talk about hygiene. Cramped quarters, punitive roommates and shabby appliances make citizens prize privacy and quality all the more.

### RED Clearance housing

#### Tension level 4

**WANTED:** Roommate to share modest room in FDS Sector with four other clones. AC works, transtube station just around corner. Includes bed, sheets and lower bunk. Close to cafeteria and entertainment lounge. C-mail derick@RED.nng.plc.

RED housing beats INFRARED dorms, but not by much. The communal barracks for INFRARED citizens have given way to a large room filled with five beds: two bunk beds and one single bed. REDs see the single bed as more prestigious than the bunks. Fights have broken out over who gets the single bed, but usually the citizen with the most strength or blackmail takes the prize. Each bed comes with one footlocker with a digital lock that opens to a citizen's tongueprint. These locks are as easy to pick as your own nose, and they're designed that way because The Computer doesn't trust the RED citizens with places to hide stuff.

Besides the beds and footlockers, RED rooms have one rickety chair, a battered plastic shelving unit, an inspirational wall poster, a single exposed light bulb and several security cameras and hidden microphones.

HPD&MC tries to locate RED housing near transtubes, elevators and escalators to shorten the distance between home and work. However, they must balance commute time distances with proximity to cafeterias, entertainment lounges and other RED Clearance areas. The end result: RED quarters can be found almost anywhere, but they are usually next door to one of the above. RED citizens often complain about the noise from transbots, the smell from cooking soylent or the bass from entertainment lounge videos. (But not for long—The Computer quickly busts anyone who complains about being a RED back down to INFRARED.)

Within the habitat hierarchy, RED citizens rank even below INFRAREDs in repair and maintenance priorities. This is because there are so many more INFRAREDs; it's not a slight so much as a nod to the sheer numbers of INFRARED drones. Some REDs deal with this inequality by adopting a high-handed, magnanimous attitude that mirrors their superiors' stance towards them: 'Of course INFRAREDs must be prioritized in these instances; those poor people are the backbone of our society. I say *let* them get the assistance they so dearly need!' RED citizens are expected to deal with minor problems better than INFRARED citizens. So when the air cycling unit breaks and the room starts to smell like a damp sock...get used to it, RED.

Still, RED housing lends itself to treason: Being on the back end of the repair schedule means that broken cameras stay broken for a long time. The Tension level hovers around 4, so as long as the roommates are gone, it's time to break out those comic books for a quick read.

Where would a RED citizen hide those comic books from his roommates? Traditionally, in the mattress. RED mattresses are recycled plastic foam packing materials wrapped in a polyurethane bag, and a quick slice with a knife allows lots of stuff to be put inside safely and without noticeable bulges.

### ORANGE Clearance housing

#### Tension level 6

**WANTED:** Looking for clone to share room. You pick which bed and dresser is yours. Elevator and shopping nearby. Vents clear of blockage and room stays warm. Bathroom only shared by 15! C-mail joanna@ORANGE.itr.armf with offers.

Things start to improve. ORANGE citizens share a moderately-sized room with only one other ORANGE citizen: the dreaded roommate. When only two people share a bedroom, they focus much more on each other's faults and annoying habits. Ask any ORANGE citizen whom they secretly hate the most, and most will name their roommate.

Yet because utopias frown upon strife, citizens cannot openly hate their roommates — plus there's still plenty of surveillance in that room. Soon enough, the two roomies settle into

### Tension levels in your quarters

Your room's Tension level increases as you rise in clearance. The Computer trusts you more, and wants to protect its reliable citizens from the traitorous rabble outside your door. Clearly, quality surveillance provides the best protection.

Consequently, most perspicacious high-clearance citizens learn the ins and outs of room surveillance. The first thing they do—and you should do—when moving into new quarters is rewire the cameras and install non-treasonous vidloops.

Alternately, you can go the official route. Try convincing The Computer you don't need the video protection, or the surveillance is compromising your work on The Computer's behalf. You may be allowed to shut off the cameras.

But make such requests prudently: Sometimes The Computer makes it its mission to protect you all the more. It may ask PLC to install additional cameras in your room, just to watch the other, suspect cameras. It may bug your appliances and clothing. It may send a scrubot escort decked out with industrial cleaning ordnance. It may set a grumbling, 24-hour Vulture Guard watch just inside your door.

Alternately, The Computer may completely withdraw protection, leaving you without resources should you actually need them:

**Dave-B:** Computer, please send immediate backup; our forces are being overwhelmed by the mutant insurrection in Sector GHL.

**Computer:** I'm sorry, Dave-B. I can't do that. The real Dave-B warned me that all protective measures may be compromised. Please optimize the forces currently at your disposal. Out.

— Beth Fischi



## 3. LIVING CONDITIONS

a cold war of passive aggressive battles. Does he hate the smell of Hot Fun? Hot Fun Party in my room! Does she fold her spare jumpsuit with meticulous care? Oops—accidentally knocked it off the shelf and onto the dirty floor!

Rooms come equipped with a pair of single beds, a small closet, a cheap dresser for each citizen and an audio feed for Computer-approved music and advertising jingles. A scorched plastic, mildly decorative shade usually covers the light fixture, and a folding chair may sit in the corner. A bathroom is never more than a few minutes' walk away. Ah, *luxe!*

In general, environmental conditions compare favorably to RED rooms, but are still suboptimal. Temperature is set by averaging a block of rooms together. Newly promoted ORANGE citizens find themselves assigned to the 'cold room' or the 'hothouse'. The transtube is closer than with RED rooms, and the occasional autohack swings by.

Treason is harder to commit in an ORANGE room, but not unheard of. Cameras are still broken or unpowered, but roommates always look for something to call The Computer about. Rooms have no footlockers or other storage with locks, so ORANGE citizens hide illegal items under their clean socks in their dresser. Why not the dirty ones? They used to do that, but it became so commonplace IntSec started sniffing for dirty socks when conducting Surprise Joyful Inspections.

### YELLOW Clearance housing

#### Tension level 8

**JUST PROMOTED!** Take advantage of this offer! Clean & maintained single-room unit with bed, closet and private terminal. Shared washroom two doors down. Autohacks on-wait one level below! INFRARED cleaners each month! tanya@YELLOW.wss.tech

Finally, a clone can be by himself! Well, himself and the hidden cameras. A citizen at YELLOW Clearance gets a room that's slightly smaller than his ORANGE room, but at least he's the only one authorized to live there. The typical YELLOW room has a bed with a mattress and pillow made from real synthetic foam, a relatively comfortable chair, a desk, a dresser, a table lamp and a closet big enough for a clone to stand in.

Wall posters have given way to framed pictures of famous FunBall stars or dramatic sector landscapes. While there's no thermostat in the room, temperatures remain relatively comfortable. But perhaps the biggest glory,

**But perhaps the biggest glory, the one item most prized by YELLOW citizens, is the light switch.**

the one item most prized by YELLOW citizens, is the light switch. At lower clearances, the ceiling lights turn on and off according to curfew mandates. Having a glow coming from an ORANGE room after hours draws IntSec agents like scrubots to dirt. Not so for YELLOW rooms, where a citizen can switch the lights on and off as he sees fit. The first Tech Services repair call for a new YELLOW citizen's room is inevitably wear-and-tear on the light switch. Hence Tech Services' most dreaded job assignment: the Light Switch Division.

One big perk at this level is a private terminal. Because YELLOW citizens have greater need to access AlphaNet and The Computer, they are allowed one monitor, one keyboard, one connection to AlphaNet and 27 pieces of spyware to monitor their every digital move. Speaking of being monitored, these rooms are where smart traitors are separated from stupid ones. Having a room of one's own entices the obtuse to more open treason, despite the working, upgraded hidden cameras in the ceiling and walls. Some citizens crumble to temptation and start composing their Communist Party leaflets at the provided woodlike desk. These clones don't stay YELLOW without some terrific dirt on a supervisor.

The bathroom is still shared, but this time between only four YELLOW citizens. Rooms are laid out in mini cul-de-sacs: the corridor ends at the door to the bathroom, and two doors line either wall away from the bathroom. These clusters are always placed near transtube stations and autohack stands; sometimes close enough to feel the bots pick up and drop off citizens. The four YELLOW neighbors are usually called Fellow YELLOWS and they often spend time together after work in Activity Clubs and FunBall matches.

For YELLOW citizens who have risen above their peers through hard work, loyalty and well-placed bribes, a single INFRARED citizen is sent by to clean the room once per week. These maids are heavily drugged and almost never bribed by jealous Fellow YELLOWS to plant evidence of treason inside the room.

### GREEN Clearance housing

#### Tension level 10

**UPPER CVN SECTOR** 1-bedroom avail. immed. in 40-unit bldg. Includes bath, lvg room & w-2-w carpeting. Mark 7 housebot in-unit. Four autocars for owner use, private laundry. <http://GREEN.cvnrealty.hpd.cvn/vacancies>.

Now we can stop referring to housing as a room. At GREEN Clearance, a citizen gets an honest-to-goodness apartment, complete with bedroom, bathroom, eat-in kitchen, even a small living room. Assigned furnishings have improved as well: comfortable beds, indirect lighting, a private vidscreen and terminal, a Hot Beverage Dispenser (featuring CoffeeLike, TeaSir or HappyKaff) and even a comfy sofa with matching chair.

For the first time, a citizen will feel something beneath his feet besides plasticrete; wall-to-wall carpeting in subdued earth-tones is in every room, even the kitchen. (Which means that GREEN citizen had better be careful when getting his morning cup of TeaSir, or he'll pay for damages.) There's even a washing machine and clothes dryer in the apartment.

GREENs are housed in apartment blocks located near entertainment and shopping. These blocks range in size from small three-unit 'greenstones' to monolithic 80-unit structures that pierce through so many levels that the bottom and top units may be in different sectors. Larger buildings have private autocars for residents' use, but all have a fleet of autohacks waiting in line outside.

But all is not perfect in the GREEN apartments. The walls between apartments can be very thin, especially in the larger buildings. Sometimes you don't need to bug your neighbor's apartment; just put a glass against the wall and listen. And while many flats have private autocars that residents can sign out and use individually, citizens always risk bearing responsibility for the previous user's misdemeanors. Borrowers are supposed to log what the autocar was used for, but the chances of a GREEN citizen writing,



**A perfect life...except for the suspicious bots zipping around everywhere.**

'Borrowed the silver R-Type EX to make my Sierra Club meeting on time' are, uh, slim.

Lastly, there's the housebot. As a reward for such loyal and industrious behavior, The Computer assigns a housebot to every GREEN apartment. This is a modified scrubot that cleans, microwaves meals, does the laundry and other simple household tasks. It also records everything it sees and hears using a bewildering array of sensors. Ostensibly, this is to protect the GREEN citizen from crime. In reality, it's so his BLUE superiors can keep a good eye on him.

BLUE citizens use any treason committed in front of the housebot—or at least within the scope of the housebot's infrared and subsonic sensors—to blackmail the GREEN into compliance or to bust him back down if he gets too pushy. Funny how Tech Services' Bot Retrieval Division gets lots of calls to repair housebots that have accidentally fallen down elevator shafts. The sheer number of calls causes complex-wide bot replacement delays. Generously, GREEN citizens rarely inveigh against these service delays.

## BLUE Clearance housing

### Tension level 12

*LUXURY penthouse avail. in exclusive NNG subsector. 2-bed, 2-bath, formal dining rm, stainless steel appliances. J-Type autocar, bot staff & YELLOW programmer included. Private entry/exit, flybot landing, restaurant. Visit <http://BLUE.bluerooms.hpd.nng/luxury> for pictures and community rules.*

You can't call anything this nice an apartment; only the word 'suite' will do. The Computer assigns BLUE citizens luxury suites in a subsector renowned for being safe, clean and home to the Alpha Complex elite. Though unnecessary, these suites usually have two bedrooms and two bathrooms. They also have a spacious living room with a decent entertainment center, a dining room with a table made from mostlywood, walk-in closets, a full kitchen with stainless steel appliances and, most importantly, a thermostat. BLUE

citizens can make their homes as hot or as cold as they want.

BLUE suites are located near each other, with a central BLUE Clearance area as a hub. This hub can be anything not directly related to service firm work, such as a restaurant, vidscreen theater or fitness center. Carpeting, hand-laid tile and marble fountains, along with framed art and sculptures, compete for the attention of style-conscious citizens. An elegant spiral staircase connects the two or three floors that comprise the suite. This is the life.

Except for the suspicious bots zipping around everywhere.

Each BLUE citizen is assigned one YELLOW bot programmer and several bots to serve his needs. His experience as a GREEN citizen installed a fear of household bots, and now he's got several of the things clanking about. A BLUE citizen feels a prisoner in his own home, hiding in the downstairs bedroom because the bots are mucking about in the kitchen. At least the YELLOW programmer lives separately some distance away and can be sent on errands all the time.

By this clearance, a citizen has a solid understanding of the hidden camera situation in Alpha Complex housing. Although there are still many working cameras and microphones in a BLUE residence, the occupant has rewired them into prerecorded loops featuring treason-free behavior. BLUE suites would be hotbeds of treason were it not for the bots and YELLOW programmer lurking about. So while the suite's Tension level is high, this applies only to visitors or burglars.

Each suite comes with its own high-end autocar, and many have a hoverbot or flybot landing on the roof. However, these are technically bots, so a lot of BLUE citizens walk to work—with a heavy security detail, of course.

## INDIGO Clearance housing

### Tension level 14

*HEART OF AAA SECTOR residence. 20-room corridor with labs, exercise room, pvt PLC store, guardbots, human servants. Bay windows & balcony w/view of picturesque Hall of Records and Files. Chauffeur & limobot, chef, security detail on-call 24/7. Visit <http://INDIGO.inresidences.hpd.aaa/residences> for video of unit.*

At this level, the difference between home and Alpha Complex begins to blur. INDIGO citizens are assigned an entire corridor of rooms, sometimes up to 30 of them. With all

this space, an INDIGO often converts some rooms to private work spaces; a bedroom might be next door to a research lab, firing range or interrogation chamber. These residences also include private stores, top-notch security systems and a garage with several limobots and human chauffeurs.

If the decor of a BLUE suite was opulent, this is positively decadent. Marble floors, Jacuzzis and walk-in freezers are considered standard. For the first time, a residence will have a view of something inspiring and beautiful. (Heck, just having a view is an upgrade.) To gain this view, INDIGO corridors are located on the edge of large, open areas in a sector. Given the unique three-dimensional nature of Alpha Complex construction, sometimes good views require bay windows in the floors.

One other decoration is notable: plants. For the first time, a citizen can have plants from the Outdoors in his residence. These need to be well watered, fertilized and lit, but that's why the INDIGO has a staff. Some are bots, specially designed and made for the INDIGO to calm his fears of household bots, while others are humans, usually ORANGE or YELLOW. If a BLUE citizen has gotten around the hidden camera issue, an INDIGO citizen has gotten around the bot issue. Tension levels may vary when the INDIGO is not there or has lower-clearance guests.

Which is not often. In fact, the INDIGO lives a lonely life. Despite such spacious living quarters, even with the bot and human staff around, he often lacks social partners. Other INDIGOs feel the same way, so they spend most of their time in exclusive, members-only social clubs where they can enjoy a drink and maybe a few rounds of Power Golf. INDIGOs rarely stay home to enjoy their sizable estates.

When home, INDIGOs plot against BLUE underlings and VIOLET supervisors. Resulting run-ins with staff end in brainscrubs; INDIGOs run through household staff like INFRAREDS run through Cold Fun. Consequently, enemies find ample opportunities to send in secret agents disguised as new staff members. This is the real reason the Tension level is so high—so the INDIGO can monitor his own staff.

## VIOLET Clearance housing

### Tension level 16

*NO BOTS! Subsector N-12 rezoned for private residence. Gardens with real plants, video theater, rubber-ball courts, sub pen. Will redesign room layout to suit. Current residents convert to staff upon selection. Select now and receive one free*

### 3. LIVING CONDITIONS

year of Vulture Squadron guards. <http://VIOLET.acrealty.hpd.nct/subsectors>. Serious inquiries only.

From rooms to apartments, from suites to entire corridors, and now to something even larger: an entire subsector, sometimes two if they're deemed too small for a VIOLET's needs.

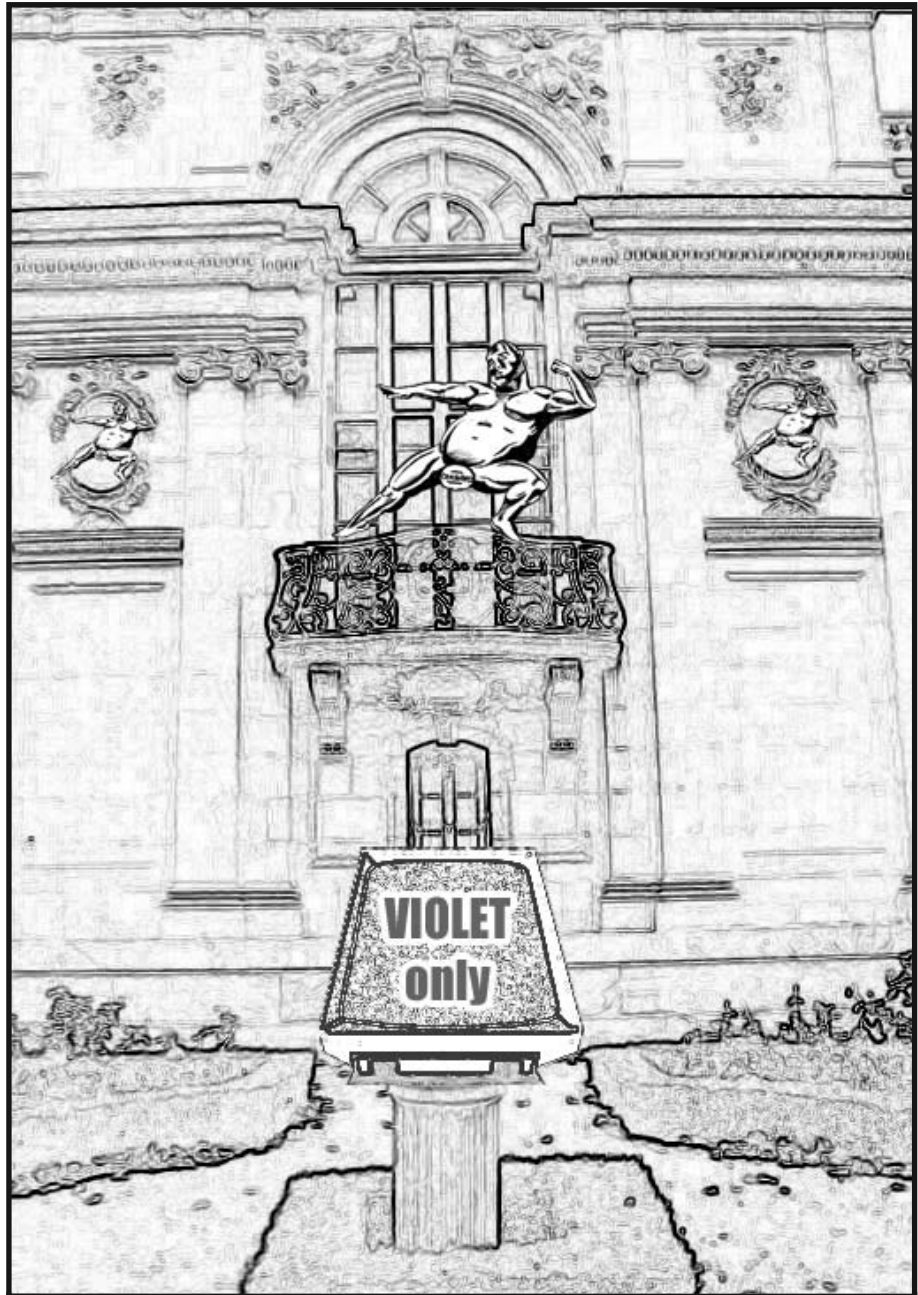
A sector is divided into any number of subsectors, depending on the size and main business of the sector in question. The Computer assigns a VIOLET a subsector as his residence. It would be pointless to count this residence by number of rooms or even corridors, and many VIOLETs aren't even sure how many they have. Ironically, a VIOLET residence is often less opulent than even a BLUE citizen's suite. There are just too many rooms to decorate with statues, gurgling fountains and exotic plants.

These residences are sectors unto themselves, with private shopping malls, factories, hydroponic gardens, submarine pens ... if it exists, then chances are a VIOLET has a private version. Transportation is notable only for getting around the estate; when a VIOLET sits down to work for the day, he makes the work come to him. The only exception to having it all lies in bots, which VIOLETs view as being too low-clearance for them. GREEN citizens may have bots zooming around their residence, but a VIOLET is expected to show a little more class.

The Tension level in a VIOLET subsector residence is unique. By virtue of being VIOLET, the occupant can say and do almost anything and not get in trouble. It's assumed that they have a very good reason for whatever they happen to be saying or doing. But anyone of a lower clearance, even INDIGO citizens, are watched like hawkbots. Every move, phrase and sometimes thought is recorded. This is to protect the VIOLET from jealous citizens out for their position.

In other words, VIOLET residences have it all—and yet, many VIOLET citizens are unhappy in their homes. Growing up in Alpha Complex means living in close quarters with lots of fellow citizens. There's always someone to talk to, eat with or accompany to the vidscreen theater. Late at night, as the VIOLET citizen walks through an empty FunBall stadium on his way to a bedroom somewhere in the subsector, he can feel very alone.

That's usually when the assassination team strikes. VIOLET citizens are extremely competitive and always scheme to knock out the competition for High Programmer. Hacking into security feeds is child's play for a VIOLET citizen to arrange, so they often keep tabs on



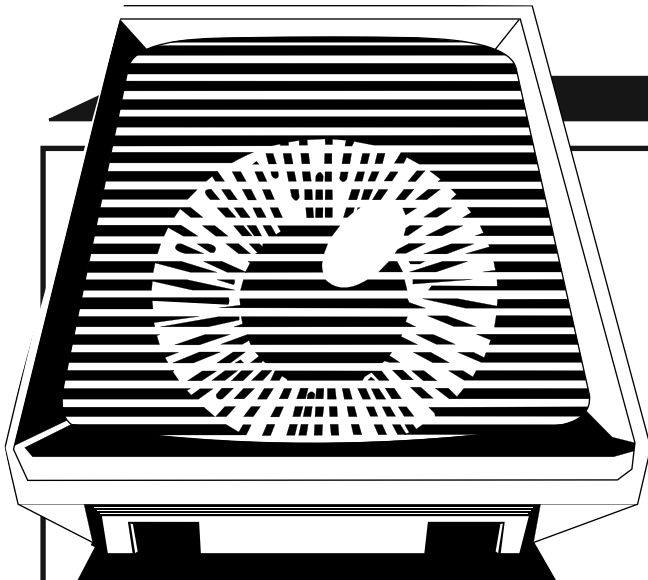
**Late at night, as the VIOLET citizen walks through an empty FunBall stadium on his way to a bedroom somewhere in the subsector, he can feel very alone.**

each other. If a VIOLET shows signs of being too maudlin and depressed, the others worry he'll do something rash like treat the lower-clearance citizens with respect or question

whether this whole Alpha Complex system is unfair and needs drastic changes. And when VIOLETs worry, someone gets terminated.

Illustration by Beth Fischl, with elements from a Jim Holloway illustration

## CLEARANCE ULTRAVIOLET



**GREETINGS, CITIZEN! JOYOUS NEWS! IN RECOGNITION OF YOUR SERVICE TO ALPHA COMPLEX, YOUR FRIEND *THE COMPUTER* HAS PROMOTED YOU TO A HIGHER SECURITY CLEARANCE.**

**YOU'RE WELCOME.**

**AT YOUR NEW SECURITY CLEARANCE YOU WILL PERFORM NEW DUTIES. TO DETERMINE YOUR OPTIMAL CAREER OPPORTUNITY, PROCEED**

**IMMEDIATELY TO THE *HAPPY FUN JOB PLACEMENT CENTER*, CONVENIENTLY LOCATED BETWEEN THE NEW BIOCHEMICAL RECLAMATION CENTER AND FOOD VAT SPECIAL SECTION 206. AFTER YOU ARRIVE, YOU WILL UNDERGO A PLEASANT BATTERY OF MARGINALLY INVASIVE EXAMINATIONS DESIGNED BY HPD & MIND CONTROL TO DETERMINE HOW YOU CAN BEST SERVE ALPHA COMPLEX AND CONTRIBUTE TO THE PUBLIC GOOD.**

**YOU *DO* WANT TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE PUBLIC GOOD, DON'T YOU? EXCELLENT.**

**REMEMBER, THE HIGHER YOU SCORE, THE MORE CHALLENGING YOUR NEW DUTIES. BECAUSE I HAVE APPROVED ALL TESTING, REST ASSURED YOU WILL NEVER BE PLACED IN A POSITION BEYOND YOUR CAPACITY OR YOUR TRAINING. NATURALLY, INCREASED RESPONSIBILITY WILL BE REWARDED WITH COMMENSURATE COMPENSATION.**

**HAVE A NICE DAY!**

## 4. Happy Fun Job Placement Center

by Steve Gilbert

### Job placement: Ideal world

Until that bright and shiny day when all citizens are equally interchangeable, perpetually loyal cogs, Citizen Placement Officers in HFJPC match a job seeker's abilities with the plethora of career opportunities in Alpha Complex.

Job candidates at the HFJPC are assigned a **Citizen Placement Officer (CPO)**. This case worker does an intake interview with the 'client', identifies his interests, then sends him out for aptitude testing to verify his skill set. Upon his return the CPO evaluates the test results and matches the client with a suitable job. After the newly employed citizen leaves, the CPO

neatly files all interview notes and test results under the client's name. A candidate returning to HFJPC goes back to the same CPO to take advantage of their pre-established personal relationship and procedural continuity, thus increasing efficiency by minimizing the need for knowledge transfer.

That's the way it's *supposed* to work.

### Job placement: Real world

When a player character approaches the HFJPC for the first time, read this aloud:

**You enter the Happy Fun Job Placement Center's large crowded foyer. 20 meters in front of you is a shoulder-**

**high counter with 16 windows, 15 of which are sealed shut and covered in dust. Overhead, a digital display reads 'Now Serving Number 2,231,428'. Dozens of job candidates, both people and bots, mill around listlessly.**

The PCs join a waiting line before an enormous cubicle area. Beyond the cubicles are corridors leading to specialized testing areas. Winding rope handrails funnel the job candidates in a snakelike line, near the cubes... away from the cubes... near employment... away from employment... it's like a ride. Occasionally one of the HFJPC Citizen Placement Officers leaves his cube and walks up the aisle with a small group of job candidates he just found work for. Some

candidates look terrified, pale, muttering 'The Computer believes in me' over and over while clutching an appropriately colored Mandatory Employment Form; others don't take it so well. Fortunately, plenty of Job Acceptance Bots (JABs) can escort unwillingly successful job candidates to the exit door. JABs look a lot like combots, but with painted smiley faces.

Eventually the PCs make it to the front of the line. After five minutes an ORANGE Citizen Placement Officer strolls up and asks the entire group of PCs to come back with him for a little 'get-to-know-you' chat.

### Those who can't work... give others work

The turnover of Citizen Placement Officers almost rivals that of Troubleshooters. The nice thing about working in HFJPC is, if a really good job comes along you can take it for yourself. Because of the rapid turnover your PCs are guaranteed never to see the same Citizen Placement Officer twice... unless he is their boss at their next assignment.

But this doesn't mean CPOs have it easy. CPOs are supposed to make about 24 job placements per 12-hour work shift. That doesn't sound too bad – until you consider testing sometimes takes up to an hour. Tack on an intake interview, biobreaks, snacky time, mandatory departmental meetings, and, most important, time for his own personal job search (at least 60% of each work shift), and a CPO has about 52 hours of work to fit into a 12-hour shift. The solution: multitasking.

Rather than see one client at a time, CPOs work with groups. For the 'get-to-know-you chat' (intake interview), the CPO herds all PCs into one tiny cubicle with two extra chairs. There the harried and perpetually distracted CPO explains the function of the HFJPC and tells the players he receives dozens of exciting job opportunities every day. The intake interview can either be informal and conversational, or a series of rote questions designed to size up the job candidates and judge how well they'll survive in the cut-and-slash world of middle management. As the players speak, make them aware the CPO is recording all their answers in their permanent record file.

Here's a few easy sample questions, but feel free to make up your own:

- ☉ Tell me about yourself.
- ☉ What's your ideal job? Are you aware that the job you just named is normally X security clearance? Would you be willing to do that job if we did not give you a corresponding bump in security clearance? How about if we demoted you? So when you said this was ideal, what did you really mean? Is The Computer ideal? Would you describe Commies as the 'ideal' menace? Why or why not? If not, who do you think is the ideal menace? Have you told Internal Security about this yet?
- ☉ What do you think is your greatest asset that differentiates you from the other job candidates? Have you always been different? How does that make you feel? What other ways are you different? Are all differences bad? Give me an example of a good and a bad difference in yourself... how about in the clone to your left... what about me... The Computer? Interesting answers, I may have some different testing for you.
- ☉ What is your biggest flaw? I'm sorry, saying you work 'too hard' is simply rephrasing an asset; please do not avoid questions...

What is your biggest flaw? What is your second-biggest flaw? What is your fourth-biggest flaw? And your third?... No, I'm sorry I can't accept that answer; I think your fourth biggest is worse than that, but I will note that one also. Please try again: What is your third-biggest flaw? Wrong. Trust me, citizen, when I say I have full and complete records on the screen in front of me now... Once again, what is your third-biggest flaw?

- ☉ How many secret societies can you name? Don't you pay attention to The Computer's frequent bulletins warning you about specific secret societies? Do you think a citizen who fails to note important bulletins deserves a position of greater responsibility? What other important messages have you ignored?
- ☉ Think about this very carefully. In one word or less: Do you consider yourself decisive? Why did you hesitate?
- ☉ How successful has Alpha Complex been in adapting to the ever-changing Commie threat? Do you think citizens who encounter new types of treason should report them to The Computer? Would you? How would you know it was new? If you only had one second to live, would you report an old form of treason or a new form of treason? Again, citizen, how did you know which one was the new one?
- ☉ How many of your 14 mandatory Light Grey Fuzzy Treats have you eaten in the last month? Did you notice anything different about the last batch of Light Grey Fuzzy Treats? Did the last one you ate taste... especially fuzzy? At what point is 'more fuzzy' too fuzzy?
- ☉ What is the most treasonous activity you can think of that should result in re-education but not termination? What is the least treasonous activity you can think of that should result in





immediate termination? Why do you feel that action in particular should lead to termination? Are you aware the loyal workers in HPD & Mind Control are coming up with better and better ways every day to turn once disloyal citizens into productive loyal citizens? What do you have against HPD & Mind Control? Who are you to judge?

Make sure to ask each player a couple of questions, just enough to get them squirmy. Feel free to ask different players the same questions. Praise one of them for their answers; frown and type furiously whenever the other players answer, roll some dice where they can't see it. Ask them to repeat their answers. Torment.

Should a question lead to two or more players trying to cap each other, kindly explain to them HFJPC has a wireless weapons suppression system, which turns off all laser and projectile fire control systems as well as all explosive electronics. In short... no guns or grenades. Of course, this can't stop them from bludgeoning each other with chairs and fists. If a fight does break out, two or three Job Acceptance Bots step in to pacify the situation.

**What color is your security badge?**

To assist Citizen Placement Officers, HPD & Mind Control has created a variety of aptitude tests. As GM, feel free to use these procedures at your discretion. As PCs complete job assignments, you may want to bring them back to the HFJPC for supplemental testing, sort of like a Troubleshooter debriefing. It's easy to fit a visit to the HFJPC between each of your players' career achievements.

After the intake interview, the CPO asks our increasingly nervous job candidates to take a few simple Placement Aid tests. He also tells them not to worry, because 'Placement Aid fatalities have declined .03% this year'. Before the players can digest this last bit of information, up scoots a bot wearing a brown lab coat -- a Test Prompter Bot Model M.A.X. 843 (AKA 'Max'). Max escorts the job candidates back to the testing area -- rooms of various sizes beyond the bullpen area. The bot eyes the players cautiously, like they're accused of treason and apt to bolt.

Where you go from here is up to you. If you think your players will revisit HFJPC frequently, give them one or two tests, then have Max return them to their CPO's cubicle to receive

**HFJPC JOB CANDIDATE OPPORTUNITY BULLETIN**

**Job title: Citizen Placement Officer**

**Location: Happy Fun Job Placement Center**

**Sector: ZRN**

**Service group: HPD & Mind Control**

**Minimum security clearance: ORANGE**

**Prior work experience: None required**

**Education/special training needed: None required**

**Recommended skills: None required**

**Job description: Have no skills? Enjoy telling other citizens how to live their life? Then the Happy Fun Job Placement Center is for you. Match up job candidates with their ideal mandatory work assignment, bringing them immediate employment and making Alpha Complex an even more perfect utopian society. No prior work history? Don't worry—HFJPC has one of the most advanced on-the-job training programs in HPD & Mind Control, thanks to our plug-and-play epidermal memory enhancement modules. Within minutes you'll be an expert on every type of employment imaginable. In addition, our recruiters enjoy excellent benefits, including our daily Happy Time Singalong led by our own HFJPC Singers, not to mention an industry-low 14-hour work shift. HFJPC and You!!! A team only The Computer could dream up.**

**Start date: Immediate**

**Job code: 68DO-IUIF3800i11II**

their new job assignment. On the other hand, if playing a non-Troubleshooter is a one-time gag, feel free to bury the PCs alive in test after test. Have The Computer interrupt occasionally to ask the player why they haven't reported to their next assignment yet. Encourage them to take tests faster. Ask them if they really 'want' to work.

### Sample aptitude tests

Here are a few typical HFJPC tests. Use these or make up your own.

#### Emotional volatility testing

This test was developed by Internal Security to measure a citizen's investigative skills and stress reaction. It's based on the old Telephone game. Max whispers a message into character A's ear, who whispers the message to character B, and so forth until the last PC whispers the message back to Max. The initial message Max whispers to A: 'Three citizens go into a room. A and B see C destroying Computer property. They report him to the nearest Internal Security agent, and C is arrested. A and B are rewarded. Pass this on.'

Normally you would expect Max to repeat the last message aloud, giving everyone a good laugh and an important life lesson about the unreliability and volatility of rumors. Great, fine, shut up. This is **PARANOIA**.

The final message Max says aloud: 'Unfortunately, the final message relayed to me has an unacceptable variance from the original. Please find the source of the deviation. The message I just received is: "Act normal... I am a member of a rebel group battling The Computer. My secret mutant power informs me you may be sympathetic to our cause. Would you like to attend a secret society fundraiser and new member mixer? Think about it."'

So how enthusiastic do your super-sleuth players get in their investigation? Once the players identify the traitor responsible for the communications failure, Max blows its whistle. Six Job Acceptance Bots zip in, grab the guilty party and whisk him out the door. If the 'guilty' citizen doesn't do anything too stupid, they bring him back after a couple of minutes. This was, after all, just a test.

#### Obedience training

Ever play 'Simon Says' when you were little? You remember—if the leader says 'Simon says, "Sit down"', then all players must sit down

### A couple more things that *never* happen at HFJPC

- ⊕ No need to limit the intake interview to just your players. Include an NPC job applicant in the group. Do *not*, of course, make him an irritating higher security clearance smooth talker. Do *not* have the CPO favor this job candidate. Do not have them share in-jokes or common acquaintances. Do *not* have the job candidate deliberately flunk tests and then overtly switch results with the players. Do *not* have him pull rank and claim both chairs, one to sit in and one for his feet. Most important, do *not* have the CPO give this interloper the players' dream job while patting him on the back and saying 'I think we can leave the rest of that testing stuff for the menials.' Do *not*... well you see where we're going with this.
- ⊕ At some point during the intake or job assignment interview the CPO sees a new job come in that he himself wants. 'Well, I must say, you all did really great on your tests. These are some of the best scores I've seen this week.... Hey, look at this. A brand new position just opened up—good pay—nice promotion—low risk... Wow, this is...' The CPO stops speaking, looks furtively at the players and says, 'I'll be right back.' That's the last they see of him.  
Sit quietly. Stare at your players. See how long they're willing to wait. If they ask someone about their CPO, they are informed the lucky bastard took a great new position in the Extended Rest and Relaxation Development Center. Eventually the players figure out they must start all over.

right away; if they hesitate, they are out. But if the leader says 'sit down' without first saying 'Simon says', and you do it, then you're out. It's a great way to help kids develop their listening skills. It's also a great way to find out whether a PC is mindless enough to do practically anything without question.

**Max:** The Computer says: 'Sit down'... very good... stand up... excellent, I tried to trick you there. The Computer says: 'Stand up'. Okay, everyone know how to play now? Great, let's get started—The Computer says: 'Which of your fellow job candidates is most likely to be a traitor?' [After they shout out a few names:] Why?... Excellent reasons, but I didn't say 'The Computer says: Why?' Still, those are good reasons. [Jots down notes.] Let's play again ... The Computer says: 'Hit Job Acceptance Bot #275 with a chair'. [Pause.] Yes, citizens, you are still in the game; please proceed with the last directive. It's that big dumb-looking bot over there. Also, right before you hit it, The Computer says to yell: 'Hey! Scrubot wannabe, the next time you pick on Max, you and I are gonna tango.'

So how obedient were your players?

#### Paranoia test

Loyal citizens stay alert for potential treason. Are your players alert? Let's find out. Each round of this test Max thinks of something a number between one and ten. Whoever guesses closest wins a voucher for a bonus Bouncy Bubble Beverage ration. The trick is, the same citizen will be 'correct' each round. How many times in a row can they win before other job candidates get suspicious?

- ⊕ **Citizen voices suspicion after two consecutive wins:** Max says, 'Excellent insight, citizen! I was deliberately declaring your fellow Job Candidate the winner each round to test your Treason Alertness Threshold. Your hyper-paranoid alertness to potential treason has been noted. Have you ever considered upper-level management?'
- ⊕ **Suspicious after three or four consecutive wins:** Average alertness.
- ⊕ **Suspicious after five or six consecutive wins:** Useless. Send 'em to the food vats. Tell them it's a promotion. They probably believe it.
- ⊕ **No suspicion expressed after six consecutive wins:** Check for pulse; if found, check for secret society ID card; if none found, ask a few pointed questions: 'Do you think it's odd he seems to keep winning each round? You do? Then why



haven't you reported these feelings? What other 'odd' things have you failed to report? Is there anything 'odd' about yourself you'd like to talk about?

Oh yeah—feel free to take away the Bouncy Bubble Beverage vouchers at the end of this exercise.

## Hooray for Hollywood

Have our job candidates ever thought about being vidstars? Sure they have. This test was created by HPD & Mind Control to help find tomorrow's vidstars today.

Start the test by having the players perform a couple of simple warm-up actor exercises:

- ☉ 'Pretend you are eating one of those delicious YumYum Kelp Cakes.' [Pause.] 'Aww, you can do better than that... Now pretend you're eating the New Improved YumYum Kelp Cake.' [Pause.] 'Now pretend you're eating the New Super-Improved YumYum Kelp Cakes.' By now they should be crying, they're enjoying it so much.
- ☉ 'You've just been lasered by a traitor... die in slow motion... slower... *ssllloowwerrrr*.' Encourage your players to act out. Praise them liberally. Have Max say things like, 'We may have found your special talent.'

Then have Max give them their big chance, a whole improv scene. Suddenly Max whips out a map that is, to all appearances, an official Tech Services hangar map marked BLUE Clearance.

**Max:** Don't worry about the BLUE marking—this is just a prop. In this scene you're a traitorous secret society trying to infiltrate hangar 614 in BOM sector. In hangar 614 there are six Mark 2 combots, unjustly deactivated by purblind meatheads. The combots are located in the northwest corner, next to a two-meter spillway. Vidcams are [pointing] here... here... and here. Two more guards stand watch in the hall outside the door, rotating every four hours. In this scene you must talk your way past the two guards outside the door without arousing suspicion. Ready... action!

**PC:** Um... okay... 'Hi, I'm here to clean the hangar...'

**Max:** Cut, cut, cut, won't work, we tried that... I mean, talented citizens like you can think of something better. Okay... ready... action!

Max pushes the job candidates mercilessly to both act like real traitors and get past the guards cleverly. The moment they do, Max shouts:

**Max:** Cut! Cut! Magnificent! That was brilliant! You were so ... *real!* So... *in the moment!* Loved it. Where, um... did you draw your inspiration from? Uh-huh, yeah... interesting. That was unique—it's almost like you've practiced it before. Have you? How did acting like a traitor make you feel? Did it feel... natural? Who do you think made the most believable traitor in your group? Why? Anyone else have an opinion?

## Code recognition

Have Max tell the job candidates this is a timed test to determine their verbal pattern recognition skills. Write the following on a piece of paper and show it to your players. Give them a minute to 'break' the code and write down their answers.

I HTAE TEH COMPUTRE  
ALPHA COMPLXE SI DOOMDE  
RISE PU OWRKERS OF TEH WORDL  
AND UNITE  
COMMIES RUEL, TEH COPMUTER  
DROOSL

Should any player correctly decipher these, have Max go on and on about how no one else has ever deciphered these messages so quickly. 'How did you manage to do it, citizen? Are you familiar with these phrases? How many times have you heard them before? Have you ever used them yourself?'

Failure to unscramble the letter jumble is equally bad. 'I'm sorry, I know you did your best. Just a general question -- do you feel you're good at spotting treason? Why did you answer that way? What if I told you this test indicates you're not very good... Do you think The Computer should still put you in a position of responsibility? Are you aware of the many thrilling job opportunities in Food Vat 206 next door? What's that? Another chance? Sure.'

## The 10,000-Credit Pyramid

Remember that old game show? This is a lot like that game's final round. Citizen A knows the category but B doesn't. Citizen A rapid-fires clues at B to help B guess the category. Once he guesses the category, A goes on to the next category. If your players get all six categories right in two minutes they win. For example:

**A:** The color red... yellow... orange... ultraviolet...

**B:** Security clearance levels!

**Max:** Correct, next!

**A:** Cold Fun... Hot Fun

**B:** Foods?

**A:** Umm... Hot Fun... um... a second helping of Cold Fun...

**B:** Oh, oh... I know this... Bonus food treats you get for completing missions?

**Max:** Correct, next!

Give your players categories that encourage them to say treasonous things: Secret Society Names, Treasons You Normally Don't Report, Citizens You Don't Trust, Reasons Why The Computer Might Lie, Service Groups Citizens Hate and so forth.

## Their new careers

When you get bored torturing the players with these tests, Max the bot takes the PCs back to the Citizen Placement Officer's cubicle. There the CPO assigns all PCs the same new job—one of the jobs in this book, or some even more devious and deadly position.

The CPO answers the PCs' protests that they've never been trained to do said job with repeated assurances The Computer has full faith in them. Furthermore, their test results indicate they are fully prepared to take on their new responsibilities. They don't doubt The Computer's test procedures, do they?

With that, the CPO gives all PCs a Mandatory Employment Opportunity Acceptance form and points them to the nearest exit.

What's that? How do the tests help you decide what job they get? Oh, we're sorry, you've never played this game before. The tests are meaningless. In Alpha Complex all jobs are filled based on intimidation, bribery, connections and immediacy of need. Failure to use these techniques means the PCs only get the job droppings.

Never let the players know this. They may figure it out eventually, but that's just one of those Alpha Complex life lessons, which probably costs them several lives.



## 5. EAP clubs

by Gareth Hanrahan

The Computer cares deeply for the happiness, well-being and hygiene of every citizen. The Old Reckoning ethos of grueling self-sacrifice—where all citizens were chained to cubicles and worked until they dropped from exhaustion or lead poisoning—are long gone. Now, after completing assigned duties at their service firms, Alpha Complex citizens have a median 4.45 hours of Mandatory Fun Time before the sleep gas is pumped into the INFRARED dormitories.

Many citizens spend much of this Mandatory Fun Time watching Teela reruns, the Friendship Lottery and the *Daily Execution Show*, but The Computer worries about citizens spending too much time alone. Solitude breeds aberrant behavior, and aberrant behavior breeds treason. A citizen alone is a suspect. (Also, the all-important citizen/camera ratio requires Internal Security to cram as many people as possible into one room.) Therefore, most people spend part of their Mandatory Fun Time in **Elective Activity or Pursuit clubs**.

These clubs are dedicated to a particular sport, hobby or pastime. The Computer assigns each EAP club an Activity Center, which it time-shares with other EAP clubs or other functions (this morning's R&D test firing chamber is tonight's 'Wallscrubbing Is Fun' meeting room). IntSec monitors the Activity Center, of course, but the level of surveillance is considerably lower than in other places, like dormitories, corridors or bathrooms. The Computer expects club members to cheerfully and loyally rat on their treasonous fellows, and to some extent they do—unless they're all conspiring together. Some clubs are hotbeds of treason; the rest are merely simmering mattresses of dissent.

The Computer allots EAP clubs a small budget for equipment, administration costs and so on—the budget is proportional to the number of club members, so most clubs recruit enthusiastically.

HPD&MC gives every club 100 credits per year, as well as use of an Activity Center room for two hours per week. The club earns an extra 5cr per year for each member beyond the first 20, to a maximum of 1,000cr. To ensure that a club actually has the stated number of members and is not trying to bilk money out of long-suffering HPD&MC, secret inspectors visit each club annually and count attendees. (HPD&MC is considering outsourcing this duty to a new EAP club, the Club Volunteers Volunteer Club.)

Fraud and theft of club funds are sadly common. The Computer has decreed that, to counter such unlawful theft, an EAP club leader must have at least RED Clearance. Should a large group of INFRARED citizens wish to form a local branch of an EAP club in their sector, they must accumulate the requisite number of signatures on HPD&MC Form 05/EAP/56430/A and must find a RED or higher-clearance citizen willing to volunteer as club leader. In rare cases where no willing citizen is available, The Computer brevets one of the INFRAREDs to RED Clearance for the duration of the meeting.

**Editor's note:** Mongoose Publishing staff writer and Famous Game Designer Gareth Hanrahan wrote this chapter for his 2004 *PARANOIA* supplement *The Traitor's Manual*, a comprehensive treatise of all the major secret societies in Alpha Complex. We had to cut the chapter for space.

In *The Traitor's Manual*, the clubs described here were portrayed as the prime recruiting ground for the secret societies. That still holds, but the clubs also help newly promoted arriviste PCs to make acquaintances at their new clearance. So when we had some space available in *Extreme PARANOIA*, we thought, Why not? Maybe Gareth will put us back on his Christmas card list.



In *FunBall Tournament Variant #145a* (rev. 211.09.04.04 13:45), each team tries to persuade the FunBall's bot brain their team is happier than their rival. Here star standstmen of Sectors GYI and WQP face off in their 205th Annual Friendly FunBall Rivalry.



This does not, of course, lead to hordes of INFRAREDs trying to start every imaginable EAP club in hopes of forcing a promotion.

## Approved EAP club types

HPD&MC maintains a list of approved club types. HPD normally approves one of each club type in each sector, although they make exceptions for especially popular clubs, overpopulated sectors or when the HPD&MC clerk really can't be bothered going through the bulging filing cabinet filled by HPD&MC/05/EAP/56430/As filed by hordes of INFRAREDs trying to start every imaginable EAP club in hopes of forcing a promotion.

IntSec periodically updates the Approved list; clubs that fall off the Approved list become treasonous and either die out or move underground as secret societies. In some cases, IntSec blacklists a sector's EAP club even when it still generally approves the EAP club concept. For example, Creative Writing Club members must beware of displaying their badges in SRD Sector. IntSec encourages citizens to consult the ever-growing list of Unapproved EAP Clubs, available on request at INFRARED Clearance.

The list of Approved Clubs is also quite lengthy (in astronomical terms), but most EAP clubs fall into a limited number of categories:

- ☉ Sports clubs
- ☉ Hobby clubs
- ☉ Pastime societies
- ☉ Community Observation Groups
- ☉ Junior Citizen Brigades
- ☉ Service firm sponsored clubs

## Sports clubs

The Computer expects citizens to maintain a minimum level of fitness, which can be difficult on a diet of Hot Fun—what it lacks in actual nutrients, it makes up for in Double-Plus Xtra-Sweetener. The Computer assigns citizens who fail HPD&MC fitness checks to a Sports EAP club; other citizens can go voluntarily if they have extra energy to burn off.

The Computer expects citizens to take pride in the record-breaking accomplishments of their athletes. HPD&MC elevates especially skilled sportsmen as role models for other citizens and puts them on a fast track to promotion. However, treasonous, unregistered mutants occasionally use their mutant abilities to win, so doing *too* well in a sport arouses HPD&MC's suspicions. The latest ad motto for athletes: Be the best you can be within a single standard deviation of average!

**Strangely, the injury rate in FunBall matches between competing service firms is some 800% higher than normal.**

Though most EAPs fit neatly into the standard Activity Center, some sports clubs need their own special centers. Not all clubs are so inconvenient—Extra Calisthenics Volunteers or Rubber Ball Bouncing Groups use standard Activity Centers, and kudos to them!

Rivalries among different sports clubs are common. The specialized equipment needed for sports often prompts theft, sabotage and long-running turf wars.

Examples of common sports clubs:

**Corridor running:** Hordes of track-suited citizens stampede down corridors, trying to beat their best time for getting from the Commissary to the Bathroom Complex. HPD&MC service firms post times and places set aside for Corridor Running on notice boards. They advise citizens not to stand in the path of three dozen overweight INFRAREDs charging full-tilt down a ten-foot-wide corridor, particularly when spoiled HotFun adds incentive for runners to beat their times to the bathrooms.

The similar sport of transtube running is also on the approved list, but has been deprecated due to clogs and cleaning delays.

**Vat swimming:** Alpha Complex lacks any large, open areas of water, but swimming is still a vital citizen skill, as well as an excellent all-body workout. Vat swimmers use standard food/bio-organic vats filled with water or an approved chemical substitute. Following their enthusiastic club leader, swimmers circle the vat or swim down the connecting tubes to other vats. HPD&MC sometimes requires vat swim teams to serve their complex by acting as replacement stirring devices when the food vat Churn-O-Matics break down.

**FunBall:** Ancient records show that before Alpha Complex, citizens used to engage in a bewilderingly large array of ball-based games. Some games involved kicking a ball, or punching it, or carrying it, or hitting it with various implements. The rules for these games were equally varied and obtuse. Even the balls varied in size and hardness. HPD&MC acknowledged the popularity of these sports and the desire of citizens to continue playing

## FunBall rules

The Year 214 revision of the Official FunBall Commission FunBall Rulebook has been published. Some notable changes:

**Rule #124/a:** Only CNH Regulation funballs may be used. (CNH Regulation funballs consist of a bot-brain, audio sensors and ultra-high velocity gyroscopic guidance mechanism, all wrapped in a rubber composite and covered with a YumFeel coating that is soothing to the average citizen's grip. The shape is that of a Cartesian oval (egg shape) weighted toward the larger end. The bot brain responds adequately to audio stimuli that manage to make it through the various coatings and adjusts the gyroscope to lean or direct the ball toward the loudest source. The louder the source, the happier the ball is, with one caveat... if the funball detects sarcasm or anger in the modulation, it gyrates away from the sound. The end result is a ball that wobbles, bounces and strives to get to the happiest sounding thing out there by any possible means.

Past funballs used in impromptu games throughout the complex have been 'Any damn thing we can throw around that can survive more than 20 minutes of such abuse.' Everything from 'official funballs', to wadded-up sheets of PaperLyke portable writing surface, to small bots and even grenades have been funballs at one time or another. Such funballs are now banned.

**Rule #213/c:** A player is outside, and therefore in violation, when he is closer to the inner sanctum, or the outer stratum, without first being presented with an offered play, or where his current position means he is not on the opposite side of the opposing team's second last standsman or third outer kickback, or where his position is level with at least two left-handed, offset center-quarters making a play for the third quarter sixth.

them, but the lack of large open spaces within the complex forced a compromise.

R&D engineers studied the various games and developed a new sport that combined the statistically most important and enjoyable aspects of all of them. HPD&MC depreciated the original name ('FootHandCrickTenBaseBasketHockBallPro') in favor of the modern term, 'FunBall'. The sport is officially wildly popular within Alpha Complex, and HPD service-firm-conducted surveys have placed tremendous pressure on HPD&MC for the construction of new FunBall arenas. When HPD&MC can't meet this demand, citizens sometimes construct impromptu arenas in dormitories or on factory floors.

The vid networks televise matches between the larger clubs, with HPD-sponsored subliminal ads encouraging citizens to support one club or another. MNU Sector boasts the current champion club, although the Service Firm Sponsored team from R&D's Steroid Combat Drug Development Group is mounting a surprisingly forceful challenge.

**Electromuscular Sequencing:** An innovation from R&D, Electromuscular Sequencing provides all the benefit of exercise with only 84% of the effort. HPD&MC service firm physiobots attach each participant to an Electromuscle Sequencer (called a 'rack' by aficionados of the sport), which directly stimulates each of the major muscle groups using precisely timed jolts of electricity. The resultant writhing gives a complete workout. Power Services firms enthusiastically sponsor many ES clubs.

**Marital arts:** A misprint in the Approved List led to the banning of the once-popular Self-Defense and Self-Offense classes. At Marital Arts clubs, pairs of citizens stand around looking confused and faintly embarrassed. In rare sectors where citizens have not properly applied their hormone suppressants, these clubs are considerably more active and popular.

**PowerGolf:** Golf's association with high-level executives endured even the disasters that led to the foundation of Alpha Complex, probably due to Romantic or Free Enterprise intervention. However, the same lack of wide-open spaces that blights FunBall also caused problems for PowerGolf. HPD&MC solved this problem by creating an indoor variant of the game. Instead of a simple, brutish club, the PowerGolfer uses a complex, reversible vacuum hose to suck or blow the ball around Alpha Complex.

The aim of the game is to get the ball into a PowerBall receptacle, which is normally mounted on the back of a convenient bot

(or citizen in a pinch). The rules strictly state that a ball must be played where it lies, so low-clearance citizens are used to the sight of over-exerted BLUE executives rampaging around and firing high-velocity balls at nearby scrubots. Another sport once popular among high-clearance citizens is squash, but the name turns most sensible citizens off immediately.

## Hobby clubs

Of all the EAP clubs, IntSec watches the hobby clubs most closely, the general consensus being they must be covers for *something* treasonous. In truth, most hobby clubbers are just very esoterically minded and actually do take interest in their insanely dull pastimes. Treasonous activity typically takes place half an hour into the club meeting, when IntSec surveillance agents have switched off out of mind-numbing boredom.

**Chess clubs:** Two chess variants are in vogue in Alpha Complex. People still play standard chess, but rumors of its association with Communism have tainted enthusiasts in the eyes of most right-thinking citizens. The usual replacement is Clearance Chess, where each piece represents a security clearance and can only be taken by another piece of equal or higher clearance. The eight Troubleshooters are INFRARED, the Observation Towers are RED, the Things That Look Like a U-Bend in the Plumbing System Only With Eyes are GREEN, the Loyalty Officers are INDIGO, the Supervisor is VIOLET and the High Programmer is ULTRAVIOLET. Clearance Chess games can take a long time to play.

**Technology interest groups:** These study a particular field of science or technology. Nuclear physics, lasers, biochemistry, metallurgy, genetics and so on all have their EAP TIGs, all under extremely close IntSec surveillance. Meetings generally take the form of lectures, readings or supervised experiments. R&D is

heavily involved with the TIGs, showcasing new developments to interested citizens.

INFRARED pressure in creating approved EAP clubs is especially noticeable in the list of EAP TIGs: The Physics of Scrubot Cleaning Bristles Appreciation Group, the Society of the Study of Vaporization Residue, the What's in Hot Fun Anyway Group, the Learning About Corridor Wall Fungi Is Fun Group, the Air Currents Within the Ventilation System Tracking Team and so on.

**Creative writing clubs:** Creativity, in general, is not terribly prized in Alpha Complex. Independent thought isn't suppressed, *per se*; it's just seen as, well, it's a little bit... troublesome. Still, the muse does strike even the lowly INFRARED, so the Creative Writing Clubs distribute approved Fiction Framework Forms. These forms each contain a specially formulated story, designed to be Educational, Morally Sound and Emotionally Uplifting. The Creative Writer fills in a number of blanks on the form. The club includes a list of approved words with each form; instances where club members attach the wrong list of words to a Fiction Framework Form are within an acceptable margin of club personnel shrinkage rates.

**Scale model enthusiasts:** This EAP club enjoys making very small copies of things. The original SMEs built models of bots and other vehicles, or occasionally significant buildings within Alpha Complex. However, the current generation of SMEs have moved beyond such restricted subjects and now busily build smaller-scale models of everything, from termination booths to famous Troubleshooters to other SMEs. SMEs judge models on two criteria: miniaturization and accuracy. The best SMEs work on the nanoscale, and breathing too heavily in an Activity Center can earn you the entire club's undying hatred.

## Pastime societies

The various pastime societies engage in activities that skirt the edges of Approved Behavior. Out of all the EAPs, the pastime societies have traditionally been the most likely to end up on the Unapproved List. They are also the second-largest subsection of EAPs, after the Community Observation Groups.

**Amateur dramatics:** These societies produce and stage amateur versions of popular vidshows. Rarely do they perform original, uncensored plays; HPD&MC-censored scripts from existing vidshows reduce the risk of treason.

Props, sets and acting ability may be lacking, but members compensate through

### Fiction Framework Form

A \_\_\_\_\_-clearance citizen uncovered a nest of Commie \_\_\_\_\_ Traitors engaged in the \_\_\_\_\_ crime of \_\_\_\_\_-making using \_\_\_\_\_-bots with \_\_\_\_\_ intent, not to mention \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_. Springing into \_\_\_\_\_, the \_\_\_\_\_ citizen drew his \_\_\_\_\_ and fired, terminating the Traitors in a \_\_\_\_\_ fashion. \_\_\_\_\_! 'I \_\_\_\_\_ My Friend, The Computer!' \_\_\_\_\_ the citizen. *The End.*



sheer enthusiasm. AmDramSoc members are sometimes overheard saying apparently treasonous things; citizens should ensure that these statements are actually treasonous and not just part of a rehearsal for the role of a traitor in an approved entertainment. (Valid methods of ensuring truth are available from IntSec's Truth Encouragement Division.)

**Photography society:** As practically every square approved-unit-of-measurement of Alpha Complex is within view of either a security camera or a Recording Officer's CamBot, relatively few Photography Societies bother taking their own photos. Instead, they sort through the massive archive of declassified surveillance footage, looking for frames that are noticeably beautiful, harmonious, inspiring, artistic or just good blackmail material. Normally, it takes up to five years for a particular piece of footage to be declassified, but especially non-essential areas take less time. Members therefore spend a lot of time going through 50,000 hours of surveillance of an empty corridor or inactive pipe factory. They project noteworthy photographs onto the wall of the Activity Center for admiration and appreciation.

Some branches of the society do purchase cameras and go out in search of scenes worthy of posterity. These branches tend to share Activity Centers with branches of the Collective Information Synthesis Friends.

**Citizens United Through Song:** This society promotes music and singing. As with AmDramSoc, most of the approved songs are taken from vidshow advertisements or programs. Of course, they also practice an extensive list of Computer anthems and loyalty-affirming songs ('Hail Computer', 'Six Citizens Hanging On The Wall', 'Die You Commie Mutant Traitors', 'A Is for All Things The Computer Has Declared Begin With the Letter A', 'I'm Happy That I'm Happy' and many more...\*). Songsters rarely use instruments other than synthesizers and their own voices, although some branches have made great strides in the use of very large airhorns.

**Debating societies:** These societies tackle the thorny issues of the day, like 'Hot Fun vs. Cold Fun' or 'Transbots vs. Walkways'. Occasionally, some well-meaning yet foolish citizen suggests a topic like 'Is it right for The Computer to drug and/or terminate us for the most trivial offenses', but he is quickly shouted down and his next clone is much quieter. Rumor has it that some aberrant Debating Societies allow Free Thought, which is why many IntSec spies are irritatingly argumentative.

\* Not available in any stores. To order, call...

**Fan clubs:** Level-headed citizens (and IntSec) justifiably fear the seething, roiling chaos of bitter love that is Teela-O fandom. If united, it would be among the biggest power blocs in all of Alpha Complex. Fortunately, Teela fandom is fractured into dozens of small, opposed factions. Still, every vidshow has its rabidly obsessive fan club, from *Shower Cleaning Time* to the *Daily Transbot Delay Report*. The fan clubs watch classic episodes of their favorite shows, discuss trivia, speculate about future episodes and collect information and souvenirs of the cast and crew.

**Product or service appreciation societies:** These happy people really enjoy a particular product or service, such as Bouncy Bubble Beverage or Jumpsuit Cleaning. They try samples of the product or service, visit the places where the product or service is produced or serviced, discuss the production or service of the product or service and are generally enthusiastic in a rather creepy way. They ask those who do not have quite the same level of commitment to the product or service to leave the meetings.

A slightly saner variant of these societies is the Yummy Food Group, sampling fare from different sector commissaries and food dispensers. Membership in a Yummy Food Group means a citizen can discover where the best 'food' is available, a vital skill at low clearances. Some Yummy Food Groups even organize excursions to far-off sectors of Alpha Complex to eat at famous cafeterias.

**Botspotters:** They spot bots. No bot goes unspotted near a Botspotter botspotting spot.

Reams of Tech Services analysts actively wonder why anyone would want to spot bots; the consensus was, 'it takes all sorts.'

**Genuine Credit Opportunity Clubs:** Currently under investigation, these clubs encourage citizens to contribute their credits towards senior club members. The citizens then recruit other citizens, who contribute their money towards the previously junior but now increasingly senior citizens. The largest of these clubs has several thousand members and is rapidly growing, as it attracts citizens through its genuine credit opportunities. The founder mysteriously vanished off to CBN Sector after winning The Computer's Choice Award for Happiest Citizen.

**TopWare parties:** One of the more impressive R&D innovations, TopWare is a practically invulnerable, immortal and impenetrable storage container. At TopWare parties, hosts encourage guests to buy TopWare boxes and tubs to store foodstuffs. Given that Cold Fun is about the only thing that lasts longer than TopWare, the point of

this is somewhat esoteric. R&D discourages storing Hot Fun in TopWare unless you have a burning desire to sear the lining of your lungs. And, while you can keep algae chips 'fresh' in TopWare, the chips taste just the same when fresh or stale. However, recent R&D service firm research shows that TopWare can serve as makeshift armor plating in the more troubled sectors. (It costs 100 credits to buy enough tubs, and gives armor 2 against Impact and Energy attacks. TopWare armor may attract Armed Forces or IntSec queries.)

### Community Observation Groups

The *lickspittles* concerned citizens of the EAP COGs selflessly volunteer their time to make Alpha Complex a *better* place to live. They watch fellow citizens constantly, making suggestions and reports on how fellow citizens could improve their work ethic, cleanliness, thought processes or loyalty index. Other COGs keep watch over the maintenance of Alpha Complex—if a painter misses a speck, he can expect to have a COG wagging its collective finger at him within the hour. COGs are high on the Approved EAP list. Be a part of Alpha Complex and become a COG!

**Spontaneous Loyalty Demonstration Organizers:** The Computer wishes its citizens to be so happy they burst into song-and-dance routines on the spur of the moment, or parade in perfect unison down the corridors carrying heart-warming banners sporting approved touching slogans. Such spontaneous demonstrations generally take weeks of planning and pressure to organize.

**Collective Information Synthesis Friends:** These clubs share information about other citizens, looking for signs of treason or disloyalty. For example, citizen John-G-ABC may seem unimpeachably loyal with his shiny new cone rifle—but if one Information Synthesis Friend tells the group that John-G got demoted at work, another advertises the correct salary level for a citizen of John-G's new pay grade, a third knows the price of a new cone rifle and the fourth has heard rumors of a Free Enterprise cell operating in the sector... well, it may be time to impeach John-G after all. Essentially gossip circles reporting to IntSec, Collective Information Synthesis Friends spy on all their dormitory mates and coworkers.

**Volunteer Form Checkers:** The Volunteer Form Checkers provide a vital backup to normal CPU Form Checkers and related service firms. Overburdened CPU and service firms can only check for the most important factors on a form (*Did the Troubleshooter fill*

out every item? Did he check the box marked 'Do not check this box?'), but Volunteer Form Checkers review forms with the zealotry of the convert. VFCs scrutinize everything from poor grammar to graphology analysis for signs of subconscious treason. Normally, local CPU service firms ship them forms to check, but some overly trusting Troubleshooters have taken to dumping their half-completed forms at VFC meetings and hoping the society members fill in the blanks.

**Smiling Club:** A big, wide smile is the best and most obvious sign of a truly happy citizen. Members of Smiling Clubs study and imitate the best smiles. Stretch those cheeks—and if you can't, there's always the option of smile-enhancement surgery! Spinoffs of the Smiling Clubs include the Cheery Humming Teams and the Enthusiastic Little Hop-Skip as You Walk Down the Corridor Club.

## Junior Citizen Brigades

Recently decanted clones spend most of their time being educated, but they too get to participate in EAP clubs. Volunteer(ed) RED citizens oversee junior versions of the various sports clubs. Some other forms of EAP have junior versions. Volunteered club leaders generally regard assignment to a Junior Citizen Brigade as cause to break out the extra-strong happiness pills, as young people tend to be surly, vicious, biting little brats who have not yet had their wills broken, yet harbor a fanatical desire to report others to The Computer. The Computer holds RED Clearance club leaders responsible for the Junior Citizens in their charge, and requires them to bring the same number back to the crèche as they left with at the start of the club meeting. Desperate club leaders sometimes kidnap young people as replacements.

## Service firm sponsored clubs

The EAP/56430/B amendment that allows a service firm to create an internal EAP club was originally made as part of the 'Healthy Competition Has Been Deemed Non-Treasonous' initiative. The idea was that having workmates play sports or watch reruns together would build team spirit and increase productivity. This was somewhat successful, and inter-firm FunBall matches are common. (Strangely, the injury rate in FunBall matches between competing service firms is some 800% higher than normal.)

However, some bright citizen who doubtless has a future in the termination booth had

an idea: Why not 'outsource' firm activities to eager club members? Instead of, say, checking the serial numbers of every guardbot in FAR Sector, why not use the EAP/56430/B amendment to form the FAR Sector Guardbot Spotting Society? The firm then just has one of its employees attend society meetings, write down the numbers, and the job is done. True, the firm (not HPD&MC) has to pay the club's costs, but this is normally a considerable savings over actually paying workers.

Not all firm-sponsored EAP clubs are dodgy credit scams; a few have valid reasons for existence:

**Citizen's Home Guard:** Sponsored by the Armed Forces, the Home Guard consists of volunteer citizens armed with cast-off, surplus or defective weapons. They drill constantly, knowing they are the last line of defense

against Commie takeover, and nothing repels a horde of evil Commie invaders like *close-formation drill marching*. The Home Guards (a.k.a. Vulture Reserves) are absurdly arrogant and self-important, but have the unstable firepower to justify some of this attitude.

**Complex Laser Association:** Believing every citizen has a right to bear arms and vaporize much of the scenery, the CLA meets to discuss and trade weapons. It also operates firing ranges in the Activity Centers. R&D sponsors the CLA and uses it to bypass testing regulation on newer, shinier weapons. IntSec closely observes the CLA to ensure weapon trading doesn't violate citizen clearances.

**Power Conservation Brotherhood:** A corrective measure that took on a life of its own, the PCB was sponsored by Power Services in an attempt to stop a series of

## Random EAP club generator

There are literally as many EAP clubs as there are citizens with an avid interest or equally avid self-interest. The lists here scratch the surface; a Troubleshooter wandering through an Activity Center could encounter groups like Happiness Through Synchronized Laughter, Finding the Inner You Society, Remedial Nuclear Safety, Boot Polishing for Beginners, Efficient Note-taking for Reporting Your Neighbors and so on. Roll on the following tables for a random club name, combining either components 1, 2 and 3, or 4, 5 and 6.

Roll	EAP Name Component 1	Component 2	Component 3
1-2	Algae Chip	Appreciation	Club
3-4	Bot	Cleaning	Society
5-6	Bouncy Bubble Beverage	Collecting	Organization
7-8	Camera	Spotting	Group
9-10	Corridor	Historical	Team
11-12	Dormitory	Touring	Union
13-14	Lightbulb	Discussion	-ers
15-16	Teela-O	Analysis	-ists
17-18	Troubleshooter	Enthusiast	-ismists
19-20	Sewer	Support	-ismisters
Roll	Component 4	Component 5	Component 6
1-2	Volunteer	Citizen	Exercise
3-4	Junior	Computer	Improvers
5-6	Special	Corridor	Scrubbers
7-8	United	Vidshow	Monitors
9-10	Sector	Commissary	Hobbyists
11-12	Official	Dormitory	Verifiers
13-14	Authorized	Mental	Reporters
15-16	Citizen's	Map	Analysts
17-18	Collective	Reactor	Focus group
19-20	Local	Loyalty	Agh! Troubleshooters! We are discovered! Get them!



troubling brownouts. Members were taught basic power conservation tips, like switching off lights when they leave a room and unplugging devices not in use. The PCB didn't stop there—now the members spy on dormitories to see if residents have left on lights, rush to unplug vidshow monitors the microsecond a program finishes, turn magnetic containment fields down to the barest minimum level, cut power lines to industrial sectors...basically, the society is heading straight for Unapproval if anyone can actually find the PCBs in the lightless, unair-conditioned, eerily quiet Activity Centers they call home.

## Clubs and traitors

EAP clubs, an institution designed to reduce the opportunities for treason, have become the foundation for most conspiracies and secret societies in Alpha Complex. Consider the sorry tale of poor young INFRARED Joe-NIH, just out of Junior Citizen training. After a first day at his exciting new service firm assignment at Reactor Coolant Pipe Fracture Assessment, Joe-NIH goes down to the local Activity Center to join his assigned quota of Elective Activity or Pursuit clubs. Wanting to improve himself, he signs up for the Algae Appreciators Club, where like-minded citizens gather to talk about all the ways algae is our helpful friend. He

pays the modest membership fee and agrees to go on the club's upcoming hike down to see some really fascinating algae pools in an outlying sector.

Can you see why Joe-NIH is a traitor?

Let's read that again, the way IntSec records have it:

*Citizen Joe-NIH (file #NIH-535888392/c-INF) visited the NIH Sector Activity Center at 1943 hours, Oneday, 214.01.05. There he joined the Algae Appreciators Club (file #HPD&MC/05/EAP/295543/NIH41) and made contact with four members of the traitorous organization 'Sierra Club' (file #IS/58/SC/1). Joe then contributed a sum of money toward the illegal activities of the society. Furthermore, he conspired to meet with the Sierra Club members during an unauthorized intrusion into a sensitive industrial sector. IntSec assessment is that Joe-NIH should be recruited as a double agent and used to infiltrate the society cell before mass corrective action is taken.*

The EAP clubs are one of the few areas when a citizen's personality and choices actually matter to some minuscule degree; service firm, housing and so on are assigned, possessions are virtually identical from citizen to citizen, but the EAPs are *elective*—a person can freely choose which clubs he joins. Secret societies use the clubs as recruiting grounds and covers for their treasonous activities. Not

every club is riddled with traitors, but the local meetings of COMINTERN are more likely to be held over TeaSir and NearChocoBiscuits in the Activity Center than in some lightless hidden cellar.

## Using EAP clubs

Grip the club firmly in one hand and raise it to head height, bending your elbow at... oh, wrong sort of club. Apologies.

## Networking for newly promoted citizens

With *Extreme PARANOIA* you'll soon be sending your PCs on the clearance roller coaster. After a newly promoted PC drops off his gear at his new residence, eats and checks his C-mail, the player may ask, 'So, who do I know now? Who can tell me how to [learn the ropes at my new service firm / buy weapons I'm cleared for / get into the BLUE washrooms]?'

EAP clubs can be a background resource for characters to draw upon or trip over, just like secret societies. Every citizen is a member of at least one EAP club, even VIOLET executives (they make good shelters for illicit funds). If you're starting with new PCs, you can determine each character's EAP during character generation. If your PCs just got promoted, have someone in their new service firm drop a hint that there's lots of good data to be found at the local chess club, corridor running group or, heaven help them, the Botspotters Club.

## Secret society recruiting grounds

The EAP clubs are the soft edge of treason in Alpha Complex, the path from loyalty to sedition. Characters who want to rise in their secret society use the clubs for making contacts and recruiting others; characters investigating treason do the same.

If you feel cruel, you can put your player characters in charge of a club, like the Junior Citizen Campers or the OAP Sector Knitting Circle. Not every Troubleshooter mission has to end with explosions, chemical spills and recriminations, but such disasters will come as blessed relief after petty club politics, grubby little vindictive kids and backstabbing with knitting needles.



Though *The Computer* considers Botspotter club members benign eccentrics, some bots (particularly those in *Corpore Metal*) object, on principle, to being spotted.

# EXTREME ORANGE

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## ORANGE life

**Salary:** 2,000 cr/month

**Food:** FunFoods,

ORANGEyouGladMeals with Soyilent  
Orange, all the B3 you want, real  
food weekly.

**Housing:** Room shared with one  
other citizen.

**Transport:** Feet. Transtube.  
Transition. Autocar hack once in a  
while.

**Staff:** None.

**Authority:** You can coerce the  
occasional INFRARED.

**Perks:** Well, you're not RED.  
Some free time.

**Demographic:** About 6% of the  
population.

*Each clearance chapter includes a list of occupations or positions typical of that clearance. These lists expand and replace the lists in Chapter 4 of the PARANOIA rulebook. We screwed up those earlier lists—er, that is, Commies sabotaged them—so just pay no attention to them. Use these instead.*

## Typical ORANGE citizens

Office supervisors, many vehicle drivers; Armed Forces corporals; CPU or R&D technical writers; PLC cooks, taste testers; HPD junior journalists, news analysts, Random Civilian Entertainers, vidshow actors (see this section); in Power Services, the guys who dispose of spent radioactive control rods from the power plants; Tech Services air-conditioning repair people, transbot supervisors on INFRARED routes, Waste Recycling sewage divers (who mostly wish they hadn't gotten promoted).



## Ah, management

At ORANGE, citizens receive their first taste of the joys and hardships of management. When your players reach this lofty goal and remain alive, they may be stunned. If you've been doing your job well, they'll be expecting the other shoe to drop at any moment, squashing their characters.

Keep them in suspense. The longer they're waiting, the later they'll realize they're already under the heel.

Citizens at ORANGE level are junior management. They have no real power other than to pass on orders from people who don't want to be caught with the blame. As a group, ORANGE citizens are almost universally shunned. Those above them see them as buffer material, those below see them as useless middlemen, and both are correct. Because of this, they tend to form tight-knit groups among themselves. The one benefit of being ORANGE is that other ORANGE citizens will go to great lengths to back up the stories of their peers to their bosses, so long as it doesn't put them in personal danger. Of course, what endangers a citizen in Alpha Complex is up to you to decide.

However, the real fear of the ORANGE citizen isn't what his superiors will say, it's what his underlings will do. From the Troubleshooter dispatcher to the vidstar, ORANGE citizens are really at the mercy of the citizens below them. Did you ever wonder why the team dispatcher always seems to hate the team? It's because a smart Troubleshooter team usually means a dead supervisor. Even when the team manages to put all the blame on the Communist menace, the ORANGE supervisor may still get blamed for not anticipating that and notifying his superiors.

But let them revel in the idea of being ORANGE. They'll soon figure it out. Or maybe their next characters will.

Refresh

Print

Print Setup

Save

Close

C-mail a friend

CLEARANCE GREEN CLEARANCE GREEN CLEARANCE GREEN CLEARANCE GREEN

## Dossier: Timothy-O-GBC-5



### ORANGE Clearance

Reference #: 789-53-893-589

[Last Update: 214.04.15 11:48]

Name: Timothy-O-GBC-5

Decantationdate: 187.11.24

Service group: HPD&MC

Service firm: AlphaNet News

Occupation: Sports Reporter

Last known location: HIL Sector,

Subsector 8A, Corridor 98-c

Height: 177.8 cm

Weight: 104.3 kg

### ACTIVITIES & AFFILIATIONS

**Activities:** Botspotting, FunBall, Fraternizing: With lower-clearance citizens, Illegal drug use: ethyl alcohol, Recreational drug use: qualine, xynonull, Vid-watching: sports, game shows

**Affiliations:** GBC Sector Botspotting League; HPD&MC AlphaNet FunBall Team

### TREASONS & COMMENDATIONS

**Treasons:** Entering higher-clearance areas (4), filesharing (2), possession of unauthorized pharmaceuticals (12) (see records)

**Commendations:** Most Cheerful Announcer award (1), team MVP (1), superior hygiene (10), exceptional happiness (3) (see records)

### GENETIC PROFILE & CREDIT RATING

**Genetic Profile:** Class 5F/17; anomalies at 0108g, 0306a, 7782a. [12% chance of metabolic mutation]

**Credit Rating:** 12-ORANGE (5,012cr)

### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Known member of Mystics secret society. Known to have low-level contacts with Free Enterprise and Romantics. Suspected of Communist sympathies. Protected by several higher-clearance citizens in HPD&MC due to high ratings. (see records)

### ANALYSIS

**Primary drives:** need for affirmation, fame. **Secondary drives:** fetish for physical activity and those who indulge in it. Socializes with INFRAREDS to fulfill these needs; obtaining access to secret society contacts and potential secret society recruits is incidental. Requires pharmaceutical aid (obtained from Free Enterprise) to reduce inhibitions in social contexts. PsychEst estimates a 55% chance he will discontinue use of hormone suppressants within the next six months.

### RECOMMENDATIONS & COMMENTS

**Threat level:** low. Intensify surveillance, take no other action.

**Comments:**

[[ Possible stalking horse; apply pressure and see who he runs to? — Anni-B ]]



## Troubleshooters: Mission dispatchers

So, your Troubleshooters have lied, murdered, bribed or even competently earned their way to Security Clearance ORANGE. Like any proud parent, you the GM may well wonder, 'What now?' Surely, you think, it cannot be just shiny new reflex overalls and deadlier laser barrels. Surely it's not just the same confused, ignorant, desperate terror?

Of course not. ORANGE Clearance brings all-new forms of confused, ignorant, desperate terror.

The single most common Troubleshooter duty at ORANGE is assignment to mission dispatch for a given sector. Here Troubleshooters are responsible for the distribution, fulfillment, and assignment of incoming missions to teams of RED Clearance Troubleshooters in their sector. Working in dispatch is less a paper-pushing desk job and more akin to managing a kindergarten where all the children have lasers.

Mission Dispatch duty, like the other Troubleshooter duties featured in this book, can be described as a combination of slaps and bennies.

## Bennies

- ☉ Being held responsible for their dispatched missions gives MDs ample opportunity to steal the credit for the success of others.
- ☉ Sector Mission Dispatch is an ideal position from which to tamper with mission assignments to further secret society or service firm goals.

## Slaps

Mission Dispatchers (MDs) are personally responsible for the distribution and assignment of all missions allocated to their sector. This is the root of all MD stress.

- ☉ MDs fill requests for mission teams. This means tracking down available RED Troubleshooters. In a crisis, this can force them to undertake the mission themselves.
- ☉ MDs are held accountable for their dispatched missions. Though mission failures won't, by themselves, get an MD terminated, poor success ratios reflect badly on the MD's chances for promotion and longevity. It may also invite an investigation by YELLOW Clearance Internal Affairs Troubleshooters (see the YELLOW section of this book).
- ☉ MDs arrange mission briefings. Usually this means simply sending the team to the right room. Unfortunately, the proper briefing officer is sometimes unavailable (napping, busy, unexpectedly assassinated or executed), and the MDs may be forced to brief the team themselves. Now, if only the mission requisitions actually contained the necessary information....

—Joshua Moretto

## ORANGE secret society life

Not just in the Troubleshooters but in all Alpha Complex duties, ORANGE citizens often supervise RED teams. For those who haven't yet figured out that clearance level has about as much to do with secret society rank as a tentacled mutant horror has to do with Total Genetic Purity and Stem Cell Lemon Freshness Initiative compliance, having an ORANGE supervisor in charge of a cell of newly recruited REDs adds much needed legitimacy to the secret society. However, given that ORANGEs have only minuscule authority over REDs (as evidenced by the temporary brevet promotion given to Troubleshooter team leaders), this supervision usually degenerates into petty squabbling, con games and endless arguments, which further degenerate into violence, betrayal and quoting of regulations.

When not abusing their minor authority, ORANGE secret society members convey similar missions to RED conspirators—'similar' being a synonym for many other words that begin with 's', like 'suicide' or 'seditious'. Or 'so horribly badly planned, it is all going to go very very wrong'. Though any secret society member can be assigned a messy (aka Troubleshooter-style) mission, most members are expected to aid their society in the course of routine day-to-day activities. As the day-to-day activities of REDs and ORANGEs tend to be messy and dangerous anyway, most missions get dumped on them.

But there is a bright side. ORANGEs are rarely expected to get anything done in time or efficiently, which makes them ideal instruments for secret society propaganda and plots. If a team of technicians is going to be stuck in the bowels of Alpha Complex's wiring tunnels arguing about who has the authority to open panel QRX-7X for hours, that gives plenty of time for their ORANGE supervisor to install a handy data tap without having his unusual activity logged.

## Societies with a heavy ORANGE presence

**Communists:** The Commies don't have any ideological or operational reason not to advance in rank, but The Computer's crazed paranoia about communism means Commie cells get terminated considerably more regularly than other societies. Not that they don't deserve it. Damn Commies.

**Death Leopard:** Death Leopards rarely care or live long enough to advance very high in clearance, but when their suicidal violence is mistaken for heroic bravery they can inadvertently get promoted to ORANGE. They generally just use the clearance to get better guns or access to better stunt targets.

**PURGE:** PURGE's terrorists need anonymity for their work; chaos and fear stem from the thought that anyone anywhere could be a member. Therefore, they shy away from promotion, trying to avoid attention and blending in with the crowd. They bide their time and wait until the time to overthrow The Computer is nigh...

—Gareth Hanrahan

Slogans at the bottom right of each two-page spread (we call them 'fortune cookies') contributed by **Allensh, John Kenyon, Bruce Moffatt, Jarle Pahr, John Spann and Allon Vringer.**

**ORANGE opportunities**

So, citizen, how does it feel to actually make more money than you pay in fines each week? Pretty good, right? How'd you like to try a few things you theoretically could have done while you were RED, but never seemed to have the spare creds for?

**Food, drink and consumables*****Calm-n-Coat antacid liquid: 8cr per bottle***

Some days are harder than others, of course, and your increased responsibility means last night's dinner doesn't always sit well. Soothe that troubled tummy in minutes! Guaranteed non-hallucinogenic if taken exactly as directed.

**Drugs and recreation*****General admission tickets: 10 – 25cr***

Sure, you could still go to those free Randy & the Rokbots concerts in the INFRARED plaza, but why not try something in a smaller venue, with more 'mature' content?

***Board games: 15 – 30cr each***

Now that you have more leisure time, spend it with your teammates in a fun and harmless game of Slides & Ladders, Word Blender or Slaggammon. Many other titles to choose from, as well as picture puzzles of varying complexity—good for occupying many hours that would otherwise be wasted in counterproductive thought.

***Vidshow discs: 15cr for one episode, 75cr for season box set***

You can see all your favorite past episodes of Teela, *Shooters*, *Tunnel Rangers* and more—now with all-new, never-before-seen advertising content!

***Bootleg discs: 5 – 10cr each  
(ILLEGAL! Probation if caught)***

Past episodes and even not-yet-released content, stripped of advertising entirely, not that we'd know where you could find such a thing.

**Hygiene and maintenance*****Softlimbs moisturizing lotion: 12cr per bottle***

Keep your skin looking rosy and clear, protect against mild radiation exposure and conceal unsightly spots, blemishes and surgical scars. Supposedly popular among mutants trying to hide their affliction, but we're not responsible for that.

***Custom haircut: 15 – 50cr***

You may not have known this before, but there are a number of ways to cut your hair that are still within regulations. Have a professional find just the right 'Look' for your head!

***Hair dryer: 18cr***

Don't wait around for others to finish with the WallBlower; bring your own! Also useful in other situations where you need to dry something off quickly, such as fresh ink on forged documents. (Illegal use of product not recommended by manufacturer.)

**Clothing and accessories*****Better-quality uniform: 40 – 80cr***

For a little extra, your standard job uniform can be made from EZ-Kleen Fiberware. Never let your clothes be the cause of a failed hygiene inspection again!

**Survival and technology*****Desk fan: 30cr***

Stay cool during those rare periods when the ventilation is out.

***Escort to the Outdoors: 1,000 – 7,500cr  
(ILLEGAL! Medication if caught)***

Some Sierra Club members make a good living escorting Citizens who want to get away from it all. Beware bargain prices, though—probably an Internal Security trap!

**Services*****Autocar cab-ride: 5cr + 10cr per kilometer,  
within same sector only***

Those days of wandering around lost, looking for your briefing room, are over, citizen! These fast, efficient, comfortable vehicles get you there in a snap.

***Express delivery: 5cr for document, 10cr per  
kilo for packages or food***

Why take the slidewalk all the way down to your local supply depot and wait in line when you can have it brought straight to your room in approximately an hour? Bribes for faster service strictly optional.

# Vidshow stars

by Eric Minton

Who wouldn't want to be a video star? They're rich and famous, surrounded by sycophants eager to cater to their every whim. It's a lot better than being, say, a Troubleshooter.

Or is it?

## Background

As the staple form of entertainment and education in Alpha Complex, the vidshow combines the qualities of blockbuster movies, network television, religious cable networks and a morphine intravenous drip. It is The Computer's propaganda tool of choice; it's the opiate of the masses (not to be confused with visomorpain—the all-purpose synthetic *non*-opiate narcotic of the masses). Vidshows keep the lower clearances sedate with mindless entertainment and subliminal propaganda. This of course is difficult for a modern TV viewer to understand, so here is some background.

With a few exceptions, all vidshows come from the studios and other entertainment development agencies of HPD&MC. Since the earliest days of Alpha Complex, citizens of an artistic or histrionic temperament have congregated in this service group. The Computer tolerates significant unorthodoxy from these creative types, possibly as a result of early Humanist or Romantic programming, but mainly because it believes these zany neurotics can't possibly do any real damage.

In addition to writers, directors and performers eager to push the envelope, the studios also attract many secret society types who want to push their own treasonous messages through the media. And with the spinning-off of service firms from the old service group hierarchies,

the studios have drawn in a horde of mid-clearance entrepreneurs eager to cash in on a new trend. These two-bit businessclones want credits, not art! They're impatient to sell out by pandering to the lowest common denominator of INFRARED taste (or lack thereof).

New vid channels have proliferated under the new pseudo-capitalist system, to the point where the Internal Security firms responsible for overseeing their orthodoxy have been overwhelmed. Some lower-rated shows can slip improper and irregular ideas into their scripts. Such novelty tends to increase their popularity. This draws exactly the sort of IntSec scrutiny whose absence allowed the show to thrive in the first place; after terminations and many brainscrubs, orthodoxy soon reasserts itself.

Break the rules or rot in obscurity. Conform or die. Sounds just like the life of a Troubleshooter, doesn't it?

## Content

What kind of programming do you find on the vids? Everything. Citizens of Alpha Complex have much the same tastes as today's TV watchers, and most plotlines and formats are cannibalized from archived Old Reckoning footage. Screwball comedies, crime dramas and action movies abound. Just about the only thing you won't find is romance, but even that's been sublimated in programs about 'best friends', which try to elicit the same passion.

Like everything else in Alpha Complex, the vids are stratified by clearance. Each of the hundreds of vid channels has its own clearance, and as a citizen rises in security clearance, he gains access to a whole range

of new channels. Vidscreen technology uses a 'C-Chip' to block access to these higher clearance channels. The user need only swipe his ME Card through the vidscreen's card reader to access all channels of his clearance or below. It's not hard to disable the chip, but such an action carries penalties (treason codes JJ, MM, PP and occasionally LL).

Most INFRARED shows are lowbrow edutainment and info-ganda, sanitized of anything that might prompt an original thought. High-clearance shows cover a broader creative spectrum catering to their viewers' more sophisticated world-views. After all, high-clearance citizens know well that Alpha Complex has troubles with bureaucracy and that traitors sometimes win (at least in the short term), and many of them appreciate seeing this sort of realism in their entertainment. Still, at any clearance there's little more subversive than, say, a Christian rock radio station.

## Ah, this is the life!

It's great to be a vidstar! Everyone knows your face; everyone wants to take your picture or to get your autograph. Actors often get free meals or unexpected discounts from starstruck vendors, and even Internal Security is inclined to give them a break—after all, who wants to be the cop shown on the vid as having arrested Teela-O-MLY?

But it's not all NuWine and roses. Some citizens belong to a rival vidstar's fan club ('John-Y-RTN-1 can kick your ass!'); others might despise him for some action his character took on the show ('How could you shut down Funbot #311-7a, you *monster*?!').

## Trauma Ward

Life, love and a great deal of death in the emergency area of a Tech Services clone recycling plant. Our heroes:

- ☉ **Jericho-Y-SLB:** The dashing chief surgeon. Served in Armed Forces. Suffers from shell shock seizures during major surgery.
- ☉ **Amanda-Y-PRT:** The lovely young nurse who can't stand to see clones suffer. Has a happy pill addiction. Has a habit of holding pillows over the heads of suffering clones.
- ☉ **Frank-Y-ZYT:** He's utterly mad! He uses chainsaws as surgical instruments!
- ☉ **Buzz the sparking Docbot.**
- ☉ **Rob-BRT-7:** The unfortunate janitor who dies every episode.

**This week:** Jericho-Y forgets to take his hormone suppressants. He starts locking himself in closets. Amanda-Y helps a citizen with a broken arm see the light at the end of the tunnel. Frank-Y drills a hole in his own head. Buzz thinks he's a vending machine. Rob accidentally walks down a UV corridor.



## CLEARANCE ULTRAVIOLET

And if the scriptwriters make him a traitor... whoo, he'd better not go out in public soon!

### Nobody knows the clearance I've been

Vidstars are known better as their roles than as themselves. Citizens routinely mistake PCs for the characters they play on the vid. This helps if the actor plays the role of a respected high-clearance citizen. It's not so good if he has the role of a traitorous mutant INFRARED.

An actor's life also varies with the clearance of his show. If the show is Clearance INFRARED, many high-clearance citizens won't even recognize its name, and thus give no special allowances to its stars; they may consider the actors to be gauche, scarcely better than INFRAREDs themselves. If the show has a high clearance, the INFRARED masses may not know about it; this lets the actors move about in public without being mobbed, but it also robs them of many of fame's benefits.

In addition, the lowly ORANGE actors are exposed to all sorts of information usually unavailable to citizens of their security clearance. Having a head full of technically treasonous information can be stressful.

Luckily, vidstars have access to a wealth of psychological and pharmaceutical support to help them get through. Isn't Alpha Complex wonderful?

### Vidshow star rules

Players take on the roles of actors on an Alpha Complex vidshow. You know Teela-O-MLY? Yeah, like her, only not as famous... yet. The player characters can aspire to such dizzying heights of fame, sure, but they'll have to fight each other to reach that pinnacle. There can only be one star on the show, and if you're not a star, you're a loser.

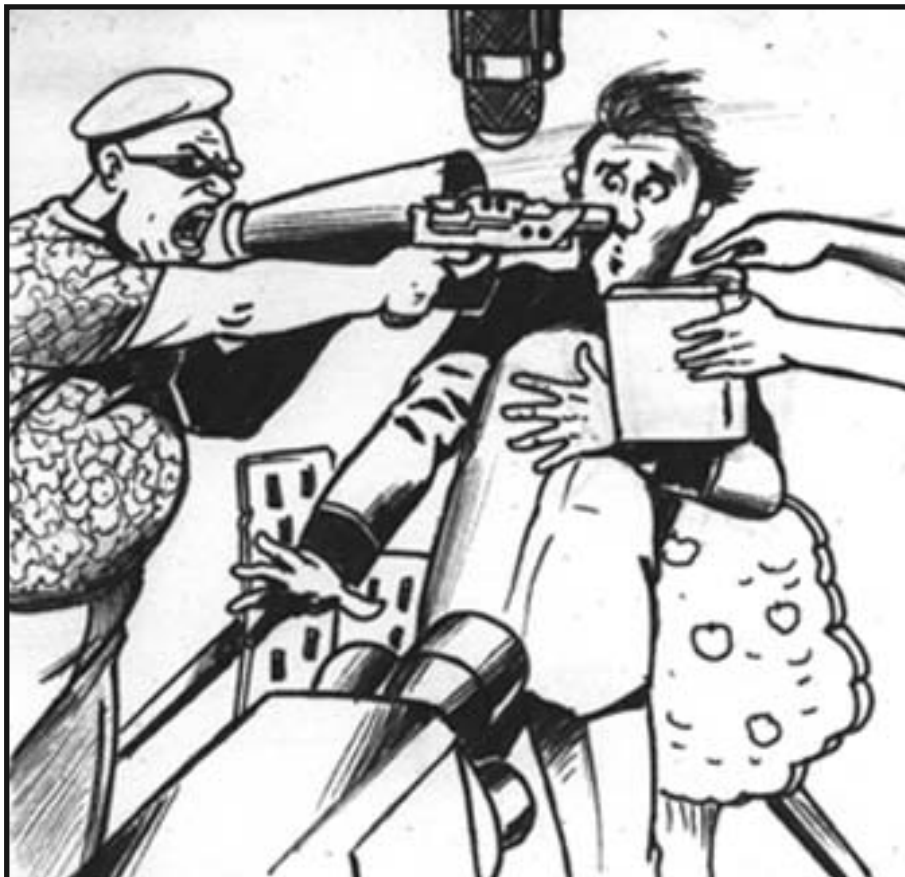
Vid actors aren't Troubleshooters. They have no Commies to hunt down, no service services to perform, no MBDs. In fact, they only have three things to worry about.

- ☉ **Popularity:** A rating from 0–20 that measures a PC's celebrity. The more popular the actor, the higher the show's ratings—and his bosses love that! Popularity cannot go higher than 20. Any extra Popularity instead raises the rating described next, Stress—it's tough being

a celebrity! The less popular the actor, the lower the show's ratings—and if he reaches zero, he's fired and must go back to food vat duty. Unless the PC is brought back in a plot twist... nah, he's finished.

- ☉ **Stress:** Another rating from 0–20 that describes how a PC is handling the celebrity life. The less stressed a PC is, the happier and healthier he is—and that can lead to better performances. The more stressed he is, the more likely he'll forget his lines or make mistakes—or snap and go postal.

- ☉ **Ratings:** The show's lifeblood. People watch the show to see real live vidstars in action, so the show's Ratings equals the average Popularity of the entire cast. High Ratings means the show is popular, which means the actors are popular—and still employed. This is good. Low ratings means no one is watching the show, which means the actors are losing popularity—and the Program Directors will make some drastic changes. This is bad. *Someone* could get fired!



Don't forget, this takes place in Alpha Complex. Secret society plots abound, as do jealous rivalries, backstabbing and good ol' fashioned violence for violence's sake.

Actually, we were wrong. Vidshow actors have a lot to worry about.

### Getting started

First, choose the actors' vidshow. It's a regular weekly show—not a reality or news show, but a standard episodic program starring the actors as fictitious characters. Is it a sitcom about the wacky misadventures of an eccentric R&D scientist and his crazy bot sidekicks, or a serious drama about an elite Internal Security team hunting cunning traitors in the other service groups? Don't be shy about asking the players for suggestions.

Next, figure out everyone's starting stats. To determine starting Popularity, each player rolls a 20-sided die (1d20), and whoever rolls lowest has a starting Popularity of 4. The next-lowest roller has a Popularity of 5, and so on up. As for Stress—Alpha Complex vidstars are just as flaky and neurotic as real-world actors. Each PC starts with a Stress of 10.

It'll help to know important NPCs and their stats, too, as your PCs are guaranteed to suck up to them at some point.

## Play

The object of the game is to gain Popularity, lose Stress and keep your show on the air.

Vidstar play proceeds in weekly turns, which consist of two phases: **filming** and **downtime**. Each player gets one onscreen action during filming and two offscreen actions during downtime. In each phase there are six permitted actions: **simple Popularity boost**, **risky Popularity boost**, **relax!**, **support another actor**, **screw another actor** and **general**.

In a phase, all players simultaneously pass you a note listing the action(s) their characters take. It's important they register their actions secretly! If players announce their actions in the open, they are less likely to backstab. Cooperation and teamwork are boring—so much so, they lower the show's Ratings. Alpha Complex audiences want to live vicariously through the actors' struggles and scandals. No one watches a show where the actors actually get along!

After all players have handed you notes detailing their action(s) this phase, read them all aloud in any order. For each, ask the player to explain the form his chosen action takes—stepping on a rival's lines, hitting the spas, doing an interview, etc. Interpret each action as a die roll (explained below), then roll 1d20 secretly to help you decide whether the action succeeds. All effects happen simultaneously after you have resolved all actions. Then begin the next phase.

## Action guidelines

We'd considered spelling out an explicit list of actions, but instead we came up with a brilliant idea; the players tell you what they want their characters to do, and you wing the results using the following list of handy-dandy guidelines. No more trying to memorize exactly what each action does! After all, the details are far above the players' security clearance. All they know is the names of the permitted actions.

Clever players routinely devise twisted ideas, so if the guidelines don't cover a character's activities, or you think circumstances demand a different result—or if you just can't be bothered to look—handle things in traditional **PARANOIA** fashion: Roll some dice, ignore them and make stuff up.

In general, every action should include a die roll. Often you roll against the character's current Popularity or Stress rating, just as you would roll against a skill or specialty rating. **All rolls have a Boost of 5.** For instance, if a guideline says a successful roll adds 1–3

## Eat This!

Five clones open up a new cafeteria and try to make it the best in Alpha Complex. Unfortunately, they chose an abandoned sector to open their cafeteria! Since they're not selling food, they can't hire any INFRAREDs. Now they have to do the work themselves! How will they get customers? How will they get back to managing?

- ☉ **Daniel-G** is Co-supervisor and founder of Eat This. Straightlaced, orderly, loyal.
- ☉ **Hanna-G** is Co-Supervisor and founder of Eat This. Wild, chaotic, but still loyal.
- ☉ **The RED janitor** is a janitor. Full of wise sayings – very wise for a RED. Could be an IntSec secret agent, wisely keeping everyone orderly and happy?
- ☉ **Tabitha-O** is the marketing specialist assigned to Eat This. Was previously in Armed Forces and is quite violent, but probably loyal.
- ☉ **Oliver-Y** is the head (and only) cook. Dreams of one day having lots of employees to push around. Loyal but potentiall corruptible.
- ☉ **Grumpy the Guardbot** is sad there are no customers to guard. Easily annoyed, hence his name.

## Episode guide

- ☉ **Week 1: 'Premier!'**—Daniel-G and Hanna-G receive their permission to open a new cafeteria called Eat It in FUD sector. When they get there, they find the sector is abandoned due to an old radiation leak. The Computer says it's safe and there's no other cafeterias available. Daniel-G and Hanna-G open the cafeteria as ordered, are joined by Tabitha-O, Oliver-Y, the RED janitor, and Grumpy the Guardbot. Hilarity ensues.
- ☉ **Week 2: 'Another Job'**—Since there're no customers, Daniel-G gets a second job when he should be at Eat It. Just after he leaves for his other job, a busbot full of Junior Citizens on a field trip show up and demand food. Oliver-Y and Tabitha-O try to serve them all, Hanna-G tries to find Daniel-G and good old Grumpy gets angry when the kiddies start calling him cute.
- ☉ **Week 5: 'Traitors?'**—Desperate for customers, Tabitha-O convinces a group of citizens to try out the cafeteria. They love it and become regulars, visiting for every meal. After the RED janitor discovers what could be a secret message to a secret society in the bathroom, everyone suspects the regulars are really traitors. Daniel-G and Hanna-G eventually get the citizens arrested, but it turns out the message was just a recipe for Oliver-Y's Soylent Surprise.

Popularity, then a roll that barely succeeds gives +1 Popularity; a roll with a margin of ten or more gives +3 Popularity. Feel free to tweak the Boost; a higher Boost helps keep things under control if there's a lot of Perversity floating around, whereas a lower Boost value speeds things up if Perversity is scarce or near the game's end.

If a player can come up with a good excuse to spend money on an action, every 100cr he spends gives a +1 bonus to the roll. Failing any roll results in +1 Stress.

- ☉ **Simple popularity boost:** If the character makes a successful specialty check (usually Management) or Popularity check, he gains 1–2 Popularity. *Examples:* softball interviews, talk show appearances, staged press conferences, hog the spotlight on the set, talk the scriptwriters into giving you a few good lines.
- ☉ **Risky popularity boost:** If the character makes a successful specialty check (usually Management) or Popularity



## Scaling the numbers

These rules contain lots of numbers. Ignore them.

No, seriously. As you've come to expect from **PARANOIA**, the system exists as a tool to inculcate a sense of fear and ignorance in your players. You know your players better than we do; you're certainly better equipped to estimate what levels of Popularity and Ratings will set them at each other's throats, or what levels of Stress will have them clawing at the walls. So fudge the numbers at each and every opportunity! Do what you have to do in order to generate the desired effect. It's not like your players are in any position to complain; these rules are classified ULTRAVIOLET...

check, he gains 2–4 Popularity. If he fails, he loses 0–2 Popularity and gains a point of Stress. *Examples:* hardball interviews, wacky publicity stunts, ad-lib some lines on the set, talk the scriptwriters into giving you a Shocking Plot Twist.

- ☉ **Relax!**: The character must make a successful specialty check (usually Stealth) to lose 0–2 points each of Stress and Popularity. As an alternative way to roll this, the character can intentionally *fail* a Popularity check to gain the same benefits. *Examples:* shopping spree, visit a spa, therapy, hide from the press, phone in your lines on the set.
- ☉ **Support another PC**: If the character makes a successful specialty check (usually Management) or Popularity check, another PC gains 1–3 Popularity. If the target also attempts to support the acting character, both get +1 Popularity and –1 Stress, even if one or both characters fail their checks! *Examples:* help another PC practice his lines, be seen together in *All The Right Places*, support his performance on the set.
- ☉ **Screw another PC**: If the character makes a successful specialty check (usually Management) or Popularity check, another PC loses 1–3 Popularity or gains 1–3 Stress. In addition, if the target is trying to support the acting character, the acting character gains

1–3 Popularity; the target gains a point of Stress and must make a Stress check. *Examples:* publicly snub another PC, spread rumors of his Commie sympathies, step on his lines on the set.

- ☉ **General action**: If the character makes a successful specialty check, Secret skill check or Popularity check, the desired action takes place. If the check fails, there are repercussions—unfortunate, dismal or calamitous. You may choose to play out the scene, or use the margin of success or failure to determine effects. *Examples:* use twitchtalk to send a secret society message during filming, plant Commie propaganda in a co-star's dressing room, sell autographed photos on the IR Market for a few hundred illicit credits, bribe an IntSec officer to get a Malfesance Control Device removed, convince a groupie to shoot a co-star in the head.

## Tension on the set

It's hard to think of a place where you're more likely to be observed than a TV show set during filming. That's kind of the whole point. So is the Tension a constant 18 or 19? Are the players constrained from even contemplating anything remotely criminal? Have we lost our minds?

Leaving aside that last bit for later discussion, there's an easy solution to the Tension problem. Just as IntSec tolerates quite a lot of moral laxity in HPD, so the workers in the service group, and particularly the tight-knit crew on a single show, go to lengths to cover for one another to IntSec. Sure, they all may hate each other, but bet your life, every single one of them hates IntSec more.

So there's an unspoken but serious code on any vidshow set: 'What happens on the set, stays on the set.' Assume, for the sake of smooth play, NPCs don't rat the players out to higher authorities except in extraordinary circumstances. True, if some outside observer blunders onto the set just as the star throws a tantrum about her dressing room, that could make its way into her permanent record. But you can handle that with ordinary Tension rules, so set Tension levels around 4 to 6, despite the huge number of working cameras.

## I'd kill for another point in the ratings

Vidstars die on occasion, just like everybody else. Their job isn't nearly as lethal as a

Troubleshooter's, but accidents do happen, especially when the Popularity race is tightening up and someone really needs to put the screws to the competition.

When a PC dies, his new clone comes in with the same levels of Popularity and Stress. Usually. We encourage you to play irresponsibly with the numbers as the situation warrants. And when we say 'if the situation warrants it', we actually mean, 'if you're bored or feel the need to mess with your players.'

**GM:** What, you mean you didn't make a MemoMax backup after you learned your lines for this week? That's a shame.

## Star power

The character with the highest Popularity is the **Star** for that week. (If there's a tie for highest Popularity, flip a coin. This should serve as an effective simulation of the keen aesthetic senses of the vid-watching masses.)

Stars get even more perks than run-of-the-mill vid actors. Most notably, The Computer and Internal Security are loath to prosecute a Star for treason, lest this trouble the haze of joy that enfolds the minds of 99% of the citizenry. Other citizens also love to help Stars, perhaps in hopes some fame might rub off.

Give the Star a sizable temporary bonus—equal to half his Popularity, perhaps—to his Access rating. He also draws crowds of adoring fans; this should appeal to his ego, as well as impairing his Stealth. In addition, give the Star's player some kind of prop, like a medal or a shiny statuette, as a physical token of his Complex-wide fame. This doesn't have a rules

## Stress tests

Of all the rules for vidstar play, the most important are the Stress tests. Ensure the players feel as much stress as their characters! If they're keeping their Stress scores low, you aren't assigning enough Stress tests. Remind them they can spend Perversity to make other PCs fail Stress tests. Impose random penalties on Stress checks. And if all else fails, just start adding Stress directly to their totals. When your makeup artist's trying to blackmail you about your secret society activities and the director's threatening to turn you over to Internal Security, there's no rest cure big enough to keep your blood pressure down.

function, but it's fun to force the player to hand it over to his successor when his Popularity drops. And it will.

### No one said the vid business was easy

As his Stress goes up, an actor finds it harder and harder to deal with the pressures of his high-rolling, fast-living lifestyle. Whenever a PC embark on some difficult task or undergo some traumatic experience, or another actor surpasses him in Popularity, or whenever the show's Ratings slip, or whenever you think it would be amusing (okay, yeah, that's a given), call for a Stress check. *Failing* the check is actually *good*—it means the PC shrugs off the stressful event with no effect. But if he 'succeeds'—that is, if you roll under his ever-increasing Stress rating—then the stress gets to him, and he must choose one of these two options:

1. **Suck it up!** The PC swallows his anxiety, bottling it up inside. Nothing happens, but his Stress goes up by 1. (Particularly stressful incidents may induce more than 1 point of Stress gain.)
2. **Let it out!** The PC does something crazy or stupid to let off some steam. Maybe he mumbles some secret society propaganda, or punches a cambot. Perhaps his mutant power goes off. Or he might just overdose on a fistful of happy pills. Allow the player to suggest what might happen, but if you think he's softballing it, we encourage you to add more stress reactions to whatever he's proposed. The PC should also lose 1–3 Popularity as a result of his indiscretion.

When an actor's Stress hits 20, he snaps! Roll on the Insanity table. The PC spends the next week in a clinic for overstressed vidstars. He may remain at the clinic for as long as he likes, but he misses filming during that period. For each week spent in the clinic, the character gets –3 Popularity and –2 Stress. Even better, his insanity is absolutely, positively guaranteed to be cured by his stay in the clinic; if it recurs, they'll give him his money back! Just fill out these forms, and HPD&MC will be sure to send someone to check out that claim as soon as possible...

### Money for nothin'

As an ORANGE citizen, each vidstar receives a paltry 2,000cr every month, earmarked towards 2,000cr in monthly living expenses. But popular vidstars also get bonuses from the producers and all sorts of gifts from enthusiastic fans. These are even legal, at least until you decide otherwise.

After calculating the Ratings each game week, give each PC an additional (Popularity x 100) credits. Unlike his Computer-given salary, this money is the PC's to keep and to use as he sees fit, though The Computer would really rather he blow it all in vivid displays of conspicuous consumption.

### Leaving the show

When an actor's Popularity hits 0, he's fired for dragging down the ratings. The scriptwriters remove his character from the show in some dramatic fashion (Eaten by cannibal Commies! Dropped into the center of the Earth! Genetic template erased!). He leaves the cast, never to return.

...And as he returns to his old life in the food vats, he seethes with hatred for those poseurs who got him kicked off the show. Yes, he continues to play his character, and can take off-camera actions in both filming and downtime phases. Now he's not tied down by petty rules and screaming crowds of fans as he schemes to get his revenge!

As the ratings drop towards cancellation, or as the season lurches towards its final episode—or if you're bored and want to bring

### Inside Out

The dramatic story of heroic INFRAREDs stranded Outdoors due to Commie traitor sabotage. It's a harsh landscape: red skies, thunder and lightning, radioactive mutant cockroaches and no air conditioning. The group, facing insuperable odds, must fight their way back to their beloved home of Alpha Complex and the warm loving embrace of Friend Computer. The cast:

- ☉ **Bill-DRN:** Armed Forces cadet. Handles the majority of the physical labor, such as clearing the path, going hand-to-hand against the four-legged, orange-and-black-striped mutants which attacks them, etc.
- ☉ **Paulette-PJS:** Internal Security trainee. Secretly keeping track of all the things everyone's doing, so appropriate rewards and punishments may be meted out when they get back to Alpha Complex. Early on Paulette decides to be insubordinate in order to save another citizen's life, then agonizes over whether that was the right decision.
- ☉ **Harvey-AGK:** Tech Services intern. Bereft of his normal high-tech equipment, Harvey nonetheless is able to cobble together crude weaponry from the remains of their flybot. Has the group on the lookout for certain pieces of tech so he can construct a homing beacon to lead them back to Alpha Complex.
- ☉ **Yolanda-SIO:** HPD&MC gopher. Tries to keep morale up by acting out vidshow plots. The stories occasionally accidentally give ideas to other strandeers.
- ☉ **Phil-LWG:** CPU Form Alphabetizer. Leader. Organizes the group to maximum efficiency, even in this strange, forbidding locale. Has extra trouble adapting to irregular weather patterns, lighting, etc.
- ☉ **Sal-KAB:** R&D lab assistant. Uses the natural resources available to construct safe, effective tools for dealing with the environment. Her brilliant innovations more than once save the day.
- ☉ **RK-84:** Docbot. Heals the injuries sustained during the initial sabotage, then runs out of power.

(Note that Power Services and PLC are not represented. Guess they didn't bid enough.)



**Ratings 15+:** The show is **A Hit!** Everyone gets +1 Popularity and +1 Stress.

**10–14:** **Muddling Through.** Nothing happens, good or bad.

**5–9:** **Close to the End.** Everyone gets –1 Popularity and +1 Stress. Be prepared for the Program Directors to make drastic changes in a desperate grasp for higher ratings—like firing the actor with the lowest Popularity.

**Less than 5:** The show is canceled. Game over. Go back to the vats, you no-talent hack.

back the dropped player—the executive producers try to raise the ratings with all sorts of shenanigans and goings-on. Among other things, they may bring back fired vidstars, resurrecting their characters in the most improbable ways.

### The show must go... We're canceled?

At the end of every week, add up everyone's Popularity and divide the total by the number of PCs on the show (rounding down). Then add a point or two for every exciting scandal or plot twist that's taken place in the past couple of weeks (either on or off the show), and subtract a point or two for every actor who's done nothing exciting or scandalous lately. The total determines the show's **Ratings**—that is, whether the show is **A Hit**, **Muddling Through**, **Close to the End**, or **Canceled**. See the box nearby for the breakpoints.

For example, let's say Biggles and Saulres are starring in *CSI: CSI Sector*. Biggles managed to raise his Popularity to 10, whereas poor Saulres only managed a Popularity of 2. The total is 12, divided by two PC actors, which equals Ratings 6. *CSI: CSI Sector* is **Close to the End**. Time to bring in a cute kid as a sidekick!

But don't sweat the numbers! Feel free to twiddle the Ratings numbers as you see fit, raising them if the PCs have done something

controversial to draw audiences to the show, or lowering them if the PCs antagonize someone high up in HPD&MC. And if long division makes you choke, just make up the Ratings numbers out of whole cloth! We won't tell.

When you end the campaign, either with the end of the season or the show's cancellation, the PC with the highest Popularity remains employed, and may even go on to bigger and better things, like a supporting role on the *Teela-O-MLY Show*. The rest of the PCs get to spend the rest of their lives doing late-night infomercials or scrubbing the studio floor.

### Secret society taint

Secret societies love to get their grubby little mitts into the vidshow business. Corrupting the weak little minds of the proletariat—what could be sweeter? Few of them actually succeed, but by remarkable coincidence they *did* succeed with the PCs' own show. We recommend you pick one or two societies to infiltrate the show's management and crew. A PC who belongs to an infiltrating society will get some bennies; for instance, he'll probably get good plots and good lines, giving an occasional boost to his Popularity. But he'll also have extra obligations to the society, and he'll be first against the wall when Internal Security probes for secret society taint.

Everyone else still gets secret society missions, too. These generally involve twitchtalking and ad-libbing subtle society propaganda on camera. Other common tasks include sneaking coded messages into replies to fan mail, money laundering, conspicuous consumption of goods produced by society-tainted firms and convincing other vidstars to join the society.

The probable impact of each society's taint upon the show:

**Anti-Mutant:** All mutants are portrayed as irredeemably evil. Even registered mutants get a bad rap, appearing as malicious schemers gnawing away at Alpha Complex from within. And what of a vidstar who's a registered mutant? His role dwindles constantly until he's barely an extra, or he falls victim to strange on-set accidents, or both—Anti-Mutant is nothing if not thorough.

**Communists:** In Commie-tainted vids, the **INFRARED** masses are portrayed as particularly strong, wise and virtuous; low-clearance citizens shine forth as heroes. By comparison, the higher clearances appear as a refuge for incompetents and fools—loyal to The Computer, perhaps, but thoroughly inept, or even corrupt.

**Computer Phreaks:** Information wants to be free, citizens! Phreak taint in the vids tends to be of the old-school data-sharing variety. Sets depicting restricted or high-clearance areas are scarily accurate, while the dialogue crackles with obscure factoids about Alpha Complex history and law. Sometimes a Phreak will attempt to hack the censors to get blatantly treasonous material on the air. This works more often than you'd think, but rarely more than once.

**Corpore Metal:** These guys love bots, and it shows. Many crew roles that would normally be filled by humans, like makeup and lighting, are run by bots or entirely automated. Scripts portray bots and other mechanical intelligences in the rosiest possible light, while bot-haters appear as either backward fools or outright traitors. Most of the good roles are cyborgs and

### That's My Commie

Each week six hapless **INFRARED** Commies try to overthrow Alpha Complex. Their wacky plans are hopeless! At the end of each episode, they're all killed. Tonight: The Commies meet in an abandoned PLC warehouse, unaware that's it now being used as an Armed Forces training range. Next week: Igor-CMT-2 loses his hat. Hijinks ensue as the Commies try to retrieve it from some Junior Citizens before Mandatory Nap Time.

### Science Triumphant!

A five-citizen team uses amazing new R&D inventions to fight OverHuman, an evil and pervasive group of powerful mutants bent on destroying Alpha Complex. Watch each week as the villains are played by genuine real-life dangerous mutants!



bots, and cast members often find themselves 'encouraged' to buy implants of unnecessary, and possibly illicit, cyberware.

**Death Leopard:** Massive property damage is the rule here. If this involves the demolition of real property, so much the better! These guys are just as happy to blow things up on film as they are to do real damage elsewhere in Alpha Complex. This means that most of the budget gets spent on real guns and explosives. The guy with the key to the props closet is a very popular fellow.

**FCCC-P:** These shows resound with fulsome praise for The Computer and all its works. No matter how bleak the script may seem, *deus ex machina* or ordinary human faith in The Computer solves everything. Internal Security rarely investigates firms with FCCC-P taint, but they hardly need to; secret society members will gladly nose out treason and report it to the proper authorities.

**Frankenstein Destroyers:** Most every plot on these shows revolves around a bot that's gone frankenstein or some dangerous virus that's killing via PDC. Good bot roles are nonexistent, and the only bots you'll ever see on the set are the ones that get blown up as part of the big fight scene.

**Free Enterprise:** Product placement abounds on Free Enterprise-tainted vids. Both on and off the set, the actors must wear clothes and badges blazoned with all sorts of corporate logos. They also get lots of commercial deals. At times, it's hard to tell where the vids end and the commercials begin—in the most sophisticated cases, they blend seamlessly.

**Humanists:** In the vid business, the Humanists are more into networking than propaganda. Vidstars find themselves invited to swanky soirées where eccentric high-clearance types chat them up about how they think the current system might be improved.

**Illuminati:** Who? No, seriously... if the Illuminati are active in vids—which they assuredly are—they keep a low profile, working through other secret societies to accomplish their aims.

**Mystics:** Drugs are good! Characters on these shows never seem to function properly unless they're drugged to the gills, while the villains are, like, totally straight-edge, man. Product placement for drugs abounds—that guy isn't just taking happy pills, he's taking NEW! MelloWake PD, now with 25% more xynonull! Actors are strongly urged to attend drug parties and to indulge in various mind-opening substances... sometimes without their knowledge or consent.

**Pro Tech:** Characters on these shows can accomplish anything with the aid of Science!



Technology solves all problems, even those created by technology. The heroes tend to belong to R&D (or, to a lesser extent, Power and Tech), and vidstars with a scientific background get the best of everything.

**Psion:** Is mutation a bad thing? This question comes up often on Psion-infiltrated shows, where mutants are misunderstood, mutagens are good for you, and mutant-haters never have the best interests of Alpha Complex at heart. Registered mutant vidstars can go far on these shows—with the caveat they'll be first against the well when IntSec comes calling.

**PURGE:** Propaganda? Vidshows? This is all too subtle for PURGE, whose members would rather blow up a vid studio than infiltrate it. But if any PCs belongs to PURGE—or can be converted to the cause—eventually they'll get the exciting opportunity, during a publicity stunt or press junket, to take out a sensitive target in a widely publicized suicide bombing!

**Romantics:** Everything was better in the days before Alpha Complex, so why bother coming up with new plotlines? These shows totally rip off Old Reckoning programs, giving us such shows as *CSI: CSI Sector* and *Survivor: Outdoors*. These guys love retro,

and they labor to resurrect such exciting cultural staples as space battles, drag races and ninjas.

**Sierra Club:** These guys want to make the Outdoors seem like a fun place. Unfortunately, that's against regulations. But they can make it the source of imaginary wonder drugs, an exciting testing ground for fictional Vulture Squadrons, and an inviolable refuge for those who wish to escape Alpha Complex (because everyone needs to get away sometimes). They also cheerfully encourage vermin infestations and fungal growth in the vidstar dressing rooms.

**Playtesters:** Jonathan R. Bailey, Michael W. Barilla, David C. Brusstar, Thomas W. Dorsey, Amanda Potter, Dan Potter, Robert Rodger. Thanks!

Thanks also to **Adam-R-LON-1**, **David Boyle**, **Ben Engelsberg**, **Bill O'Dea** and **Saul Resnikoff** for vidshow ideas.

# EXTREME YELLOW

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Assistant retail sales managers (Bill O'Dea)	55

**Salary:** 3,000 cr/month

**Food:** FunFoods,  
MelloYELLOWmeals with Soylent  
Yellow, real food once daily.

**Housing:** Your own room (under  
surveillance). Shared bathroom.

**Transport:** Transtube. Autocar  
hack.

**Staff:** Whomever you can  
threaten.

**Authority:** You manage a small  
group at your service firm.

**Perks:** You set your own schedule  
(subject to higher-clearance  
demands). You can request changes  
in your pharmathery.

**Demographic:** About 2% of the  
population.

## Typical YELLOW jobs

Mid-level bureaucrats, human  
resources directors; Armed  
Forces sergeants; CPU mundane  
programmers, form redundancy  
specialists; HPD archivists, content  
providers, history correctors (which  
should be INDIGO Clearance, but  
since when has anyone considered  
writers that important?), Junior Citizen  
creche supervisors, news censors,  
propagandists, trend analysts; PLC  
artisans crafting handmade trinkets  
for High Programmers, assistant retail  
sales managers (see this section),  
cooks in BLUE dining rooms; in  
Power Services, the guys who install  
new control rods in the power plants;  
Tech Services bot trainers, garbage  
collectors in GREEN+ areas, home  
surveillance equipment monitors,  
warehouse foremen; low-power or  
unwitting Machine Empaths.



## Resources, responsibility, planning

Two out of three isn't bad, they say. And they're right—it's horrible. For the YELLOW citizen, life is that nightmare where you show up at school, walk into class and suddenly find out it's your final exam. At YELLOW Clearance, players are no longer given orders. Oh no—at YELLOW, players are given objectives. They're given the responsibility for meeting the objectives. They're given the freedom to plan *how* they're going to meet the objectives. What they're not given is the resources.

YELLOW Clearance citizens are mid-level management. Alpha Complex relies on YELLOW Clearance citizens to transform

the vague ideas and goals of higher clearance citizens into concrete and specific reality. Players of YELLOW Clearance citizens have to deal with poorly-defined objectives, heavily filtered reports from ORANGE citizens interested only in self-preservation and a lack of resources from GREEN Clearance citizens interested only in, well, their own self-interest. An extra percentage point on a budget can mean the difference between easy success or demotion. It's rare you'll find a YELLOW unless there's a higher-clearance citizen nearby he's sucking up to.

On the other side of the coin, for the YELLOW citizen, a life of luxury is finally in sight. Let your YELLOW players get a taste of it once in a while. Describe for them the easy arrogance of their GREEN superior. Let them see how he casually orders supplies, even mildly traitorous ones, that your players have been trying to get for weeks—and then grants them like trinkets to a few of the fawning citizens around him. Show them the life of a GREEN is a cut above their miserable existence.

Who knows? They may even believe it.

Refresh

Print

Print Setup

Save

Close

C-mail a friend

CLEARANCE GREEN CLEARANCE GREEN CLEARANCE GREEN CLEARANCE GREEN

## Dossier: Susan-Y-EFS-2



### YELLOW Clearance

Reference #: 783-64-667-235  
 [Last Update: 214.04.19 16:58]  
 Name: Susan-Y-EFS-2  
 Decantationdate: 192.02.03  
 Service group: Armed Forces /  
 Troubleshooters  
 Service firm: Vulture Squadron  
 Bravo 9  
 Occupation: Vulture Warrior /  
 Troubleshooter  
 Last known location: FST Sector,  
Subsector 22F, Room 20854-c  
 Height: 168 cm  
 Weight: 73 kg

### ACTIVITIES & AFFILIATIONS

**Activities:** target shooting, vermin hunting, MindRoom combat simulations, recreational drug use: asperquaint  
**Affiliations:** Vulture Squadron Bravo 9 SimuLazer Team

### TREASONS & COMMENDATIONS

**Treasons:** Assaulting a lower-clearance citizen (6), threatening the physical or financial safety of a lower-clearance citizen (8), threatening the physical or financial safety of an equal-clearance citizen (2), possession of unauthorized armaments (8), possession of unauthorized material from Outdoors (4), possession of a mutation [registered] (1) (see records)  
**Commendations:** Valor in combat (8), highest alertness rating in squadron (1), highest accuracy in squadron (2), terminating a traitor of lower security clearance (9), completing a Troubleshooter mission successfully (2) (see records)

### GENETIC PROFILE & CREDIT RATING

**Genetic Profile:** Class 3N/440A/12; anomalies at 1089t, 3148a, 3400c, 6226a. "Regeneration" mutation, type 5 [registered]. [28% chance of one or more additional metabolic mutations]  
**Credit Rating:** 7-YELLOW (6,100cr)

### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Known member of Sierra Club secret society. Known to have low-level contacts in Pro Tech and Free Enterprise; suspected affiliation with same. Suspected of Psion sympathies; prior clone terminated for assassinating Anti-Mutant activist Leon-G-RRA-4. Funds purchases of unauthorized weaponry via threats and extortion. (see records)

### ANALYSIS

**Primary drives:** craving for danger, excitement, adrenalin rush. **Secondary drives:** asserting dominance; fetish for weaponry. PsychEst indicates that, if invited to join an aggressively violent secret society (such as PURGE), probability of accepting offer exceeds 80%. TreasEst estimates a 60% chance of such an invitation within the next year.

### RECOMMENDATIONS & COMMENTS

**Threat level:** moderate. May prove dangerous if recruited by a Class C secret society; this is likely, given her known Psion sympathies. Recommend brainscrub, followed by recruitment into an infiltrated Death Leopard cell.

**Comments:** [[ We'll have to terminate this one, I think. Too much potential for damage.--Anni-B ]]  
 [[ I suggest turning her over to Unit K for deep programming. Let her join Psion or PURGE, then take them apart from the inside. --Chang-B ]]  
 [[ Deep programming against Psion? Too risky. --Anni-B ]]  
 [[ PURGE, then. She's a liability, so let her do some of our work for us before we terminate her. --Chang-B ]]  
 [[ No. She's getting sloppy; PsychEst says she's heading for a crack-up, and we can't be sure how long she'll last. --Anni-B ]]  
 [[ Then pull some strings, get her a Code 7. --Chang-B ]]



# Troubleshooters: Internal Affairs

by Joshua Moretto

Having survived the horrific ignorance of RED Troubleshooting and the responsibility-sans-authority terrors of ORANGE Mission Dispatch, your players may well expect a little comfort as they climb the ladder to YELLOW.

It is time to disabuse them of this notion. They'll thank you later. Probably.

YELLOW Clearance Troubleshooters may be assigned to Troubleshooter Internal Affairs. Strictly a Troubleshooter-focused agency, Internal Affairs (IA) roots out corruption in the ranks. Despite its relatively narrow jurisdiction ('corruption', not 'treason'), this brings IA into occasional—well, frequent—actually, *constant* conflict with IntSec firms. Corruption, as the IA defines it, lies in the little things, the questionable but not necessarily treacherous shortcuts, cheats, deceptions and abuses of power that arise in any hierarchical organization. (In game terms, for Straight games, accusations with minimum correction codes of Censure or below are the right idea; for a Classic game, revise this upwards. Zap players won't pay attention to this distinction in the first place, so don't worry about it.) Internal Security objects to such delicate distinctions, but so far The Computer has wholeheartedly endorsed IA operations.

IA agents often have a heavy case load (because they are yet another weapon in covert conflict between more powerful citizens), but in the absence of specific orders The Computer encourages them to 'keep busy'. This means an IA agent without a case is likely to start investigating any Troubleshooter he bears a grudge against, which doesn't help IA's image much.

## Bennies

- ☉ The sight of an IA agent inspires fear and even guilt in patriotic citizens. Many citizens, even non-Troubleshooters, willingly provide dirt on others to deflect the attentions of agents. This makes IA fertile ground for gathering blackmail.
- ☉ Though IA agents lack authority, they do have license to snoop. Because of this, IA agents caught where they don't belong or gathering info they aren't cleared for (looking through files, wiretapping, putting cups to doors, etc.)

get away with a wrist-slap, as long as they can justify it as their duty.

- ☉ Similarly, The Computer trusts IA agents above and beyond what their clearance would normally warrant. If an IA agent makes an accusation of treason in the course of duty, it is likely to stick. By the same token, they are somewhat more likely to escape punishment for such accusations. In game terms, you can impose a generous modifier in favor of the IA agent when his opponent is of equal or lower clearance, and a smaller modifier when dealing with citizens above their clearance. When two IA agents accuse each other, these modifiers cancel. IA turning on itself saddens The Computer, but serves as proof the system works.

## Slaps

- ☉ Everyone hates IA. Troubleshooters think of IA agents as, in a sense, betrayers of a fraternal bond that unites all Troubleshooters. Even higher-clearance Troubleshooters who have served in IA feel this way, as the frustration of dealing with them overrides any sympathy for a shared experience. Besides, they remember all too well what they themselves were like back then....
- ☉ IA agents are required to self-identify, unlike IntSec spies. They wear badges prominently displayed on their jumpsuits, and must respond truthfully if asked about their current duties. The Computer believes this fosters trust in their fairness and a desire to cooperate. IA agents feel somewhat differently.



*Internal Affairs agents naturally possess the same charming demeanour as any other Troubleshooter.*

# YELLOW TROUBLESHOOTERS / SECRET SOCIETIES

- ④ IA agents are tasked with investigating corruption at all levels, bringing them into frequent conflict with higher-clearance citizens, and providing plenty of reason to make them angry.
- ④ Additionally, IA agents lack most investigatory powers. Though authorized to question anyone on any subject, and to conduct observations in the course of their investigations, they have no authority to supersede security clearance or need-to-know restrictions on information, locations or items. Imagine the police conducting a murder investigation without the ability to get a warrant, but still constrained by privacy laws, and you'll start to get the idea.
- ④ IA agents also lack enforcement powers. If they uncover outright execution-worthy treason, they may of course act with

the usual ruthless zeal, but they must report evidence of lesser transgressions to Troubleshooter headquarters for analysis and action. The resulting delay can make life exciting for IA agents who have made powerful enemies on the job.

- ④ Remember how everyone hates IA? Internal Security really, *really* hates IA. Troubleshooter Internal Affairs is an incarnated, perpetual turf war between IntSec and the Troubleshooters. When an IA agent so much as spits on the floor where an IntSec trooper can see it, you can time your watch by the three seconds it will take the trooper to issue a fine. And when there's actual crime to be stopped, in a jurisdiction arguably uncertain—say, an IntSec agent and a Troubleshooter have killed each other, not that *that* could ever happen—the turf war can get brutal, with the IA agents caught in the middle.

## YELLOW secret society life

Unlike ORANGES, YELLOWs actually have some real authority in middle-management positions in service firms and factory floors. YELLOW society members are rarely wasted on missions; instead, they're expected to remanage, divert, creatively account for, and basically steal what they can. Minor changes at the middle-management level can ripple up and down throughout Alpha Complex; a tiny alteration to the printing matrix for the new cafeteria napkins ('Now Not So Absorbent They Suck The Moisture From Your Face!'), and suddenly there's Communist Propaganda served with every lunchtime Happy-Meal.

YELLOW Troubleshooters often serve as auditors and investigators, which is an excellent entree for secret society influence. Pinning the blame for your own society activities on your enemies is a fun game for all the clone family. Like GREENS, YELLOWs are often society troubleshooters (with a lower-case 't') and spin controllers, dealing with the problems caused by failed society missions and experiments.

One common practise for the conspiracies is the 'protective shell' – a YELLOW supervisor might not know exactly what RED members of his society are doing, but would use his influence to protect them from investigation. Similarly, a GREEN or BLUE society member would block or divert attention from the YELLOW. No one knows what's going on or who's doing it, but the assumption is that something's getting done for the society.

YELLOW and GREEN conspirators work closely together. The YELLOWs oversee the subverted service form or office while the GREENS fake the paperwork and reports to make sure their BLUE superiors notice nothing. Some of these scams have survived for years; IntSec has yet to uncover the crazily tangled network of Squeegie-Klean, Incorporated, which currently contaminates these institutions among many, many others:

- ④ The RFC Sector Housing Office
- ④ RadAway RD, an R&D lab that specializes in decontaminating used nuclear reactors
- ④ The Free Wheelers, a tight-knit corps of frankenstein transbots

- ④ And seventeen thousand subverted Cloned High-Yield Individual Cell Kernel Embryo Nodes that have supplied drugs to Mystics across Alpha Complex since time immemorial, or at least as long as the Mystics can remember, which is generally about ten...what were we talking about?

## Societies with a heavy YELLOW presence

**Anti-Mutants:** The Anti-Mutants are one of the most orthodox societies—The Computer thoroughly approves of mutant containment, though it would prefer the A-Ms to arrest and terminate the muties in orderly fashion instead of bludgeoning them to death in darkened corridors. However, a given Anti-Mutant's rise beyond YELLOW is often stunted by the society's rival, Psion, whose psychic masterminds are far better at intrigue and conspiracy than the thugs.

**Frankenstein Destroyers:** The Destroyers try to get into positions where they either never have to see the hated machines (some offices, some vidshows, working for high-clearance citizens) or to where they can sabotage bots (bot factories, machine shops, repair facilities) or—if all else fails—to where they can get serious weapons to blast the bots.

**Mystics:** Mystics rarely bother to advance beyond middle management. The best drugs are illegal anyway, so why work for promotion when you can just turn on and drop out? True, the connections and travel permits of higher clearances do make the Mystic drug distribution network easier to run, but that only takes a few highly-placed trusted agents.

**Romantics:** Romantics actually have an extremely wide spread of members. Many ULTRAVIOLETs are essentially closet Romantics, even if they aren't formally part of the society; collecting Old Reckoning junk is a hobby for bored High Programmers. YELLOW Clearance Romantic briefing officers swoop in on Troubleshooter and Armed Forces patrols who've just been Outdoors and confiscate interesting salvage.

—Gareth Hanrahan



# YELLOW yumminess

Where does the time go? With too many things to do and not enough minutes in the day to do 'em all, you need to get control of your life! Whip your existence into shape! Actualize yourself to the full extent of your potentiality!

## Food, drink and consumables

### **RealBean coffee: 4cr per cup**

One of the wonders of the Old Reckoning available to promoted citizens, this all-natural stimulant beverage comes in such delightful flavors as Withmilk, Fourlumps and Justblack.

### **Spices: 5–15cr each for synthetic, 5–50cr each for all-natural**

Sure, the food is getting better, but you can liven it up further with exotic substances that tantalize the tongue, some actually grown in hydroponic gardens instead of mixed in an R&D lab!

## Drugs and recreation

### **Cultural performance seating: 25–40cr**

For the sophisticated citizen, fully-automated performance troupes enact historical scenes and popular vid content live on stage for an audience!

### **DailyDose stabilizer supplement: 30cr per month's supply**

64 vitamins and minerals plus a mood stabilizer that brings you up when you're down and down when you're up, with far fewer side-effects than competing low-clearance products.

## Hygiene and maintenance

### **Adjustable wrench: 30cr**

Helps open all sorts of things! (Purchaser may be required to show proof of employment at a qualifying Technical Services firm.)

### **FitnessDome membership: 100cr sign-up, 50cr per month**

Stay fit and healthy while networking with your peers.

### **Digicure: 200cr**

Little did you know, but others are constantly looking at your finger- and toenails. Make sure they look their best! A variety of cool (security-approved) designs can be painted on each nail, giving those digits a personalized look and feel.

## Clothing and accessories

### **Portable decision-maker: 12cr**

Don't let its INFRARED exterior fool you; this one's not for the masses! Just shake this black sphere a few times as you ask your question. Then look to the little display screen for guidance. (Manufacturer makes no guarantee of accuracy.) Popular among middle managers in all service groups!

## Survival and technology

### **Lockable fire safe: 500cr**

Keep your precious stuff safe from damage and theft in this durable footlocker. Your choice of almost 100 possible combinations! (Combination must be registered with Internal Security at time of purchase.)

## Services

### **Custom printing: 5–50cr per item**

Motivate your staff! Have banners, pamphlets, signs, rolls of labels and other such things printed with the message or image of your choice, subject to standard approved-content filters. You can also have simple award plaques and trophies made. For a little more, have your message printed on a variety of standard goods, such as mugs and shirts. (And for a few hundred more, someone might forget to worry about running it through the content filters.)

### **Increase surveillance: 50cr per +1 Tension (ILLEGAL! Probation if caught)**

With a few creds to the right people, you can have mic and camera surveillance of a single room increased for the duration of a standard work shift. You know they're up to no good; now you can have them caught in the act!

### **Unauthorized data retrieval: 2,000 – 5,000cr (ILLEGAL! Censure if caught)**

A good Computer Phreak can track down just about any single piece of information that you need, if you're willing to pay. The more you pay, the less likely he is to turn around and anonymously hand you over to Internal Security afterwards.

# YELLOW RETAIL SALES! AT LAST!

## Assistant retail sales managers

by Bill O'Dea

Life as a vidstar is soooo boring. Filming popular vidshows? Fan club appearances? Yawn! Now, retail sales is another story! Counting inventory! Marking down clearance items! Reaching sales quotas!

Are we the only ones with goosebumps here?

The goal of a Troubleshooter is deceptively straightforward: Meet the mission's objectives and don't let other Troubleshooters terminate you. ORANGE vidstars have to keep their show on the air while fighting with other vidstars to be the most popular. For YELLOW PLC assistant managers, the goal is fairly simple: Increase Profit to get promoted to Store Manager.

Fine, we lied. It's not fairly simple—because the other players will try every underhanded, sneaky and treasonous way to sink your profits. Then there's the GREEN store manager, who makes impossible demands for profits. There are also, unfortunately, customers who are trying to get the best value for their credit, which can mean the five-fingered discount. And we haven't even gotten to corrupt suppliers, shoddy merchandise and secret society shenanigans.

Maybe we should call this unfairly simple?

### Welcome to the Buyatorium

Each YELLOW assistant manager is in charge of one specific department in a huge store; conveniently, these departments are located next to each other in the same order the players are sitting next to each other. What luck! What convenience! It is from these departments PCs try to sell their wares and get promoted.

Here are some sample stores and their departments for the PCs. Use what you like, ignore what you don't and change anything you see fit.

- **Big Bob-Y's Buyatorium:** The Alpha Complex version of a department store, this has many departments specializing in one type of merchandise: apparel, shoes, personal electronics, food, software, hardware, hygiene, furniture, bedding and so on.
- **Triple M Used Bots:** A store in MMM Sector specializing in used bots of all sizes and clearances. Departments

are organized by bot type: warbots, scrubots, jackobots, etc.

- **R&D Outlet Mall:** Sometimes R&D doesn't notice an invention's flaws until after production has started. These are sent to this store and sold at a discount. Departments include weapons, armor, communications, medications, bots and lifestyle gifts (whatever those are).
- **VRS Sector Food Court:** Instead of store departments, the PCs each run a different fast food restaurant in a food court: Soylet Express, The Great Tasty Algae Company, Yeast Yummies, Protein!, Sugar-Coated Cardboard Squares, and Ann-G's Fried Dough Hut.

You can also do away with the whole department angle and just dump the PCs together in the same store with the same merchandise. Triple M Used Bots would be a great place to do this: Let the players fight over that INDIGO customer looking for ten new jackobots!

### Mo' Credits, Mo' Problems

When generating a PC for these rules, try to provide skill specialties that have at least some potential in the retail environment. For example, since the PCs are stuck in one department for the most part, Vehicle Programming might be a wasted specialty. (Unless the setting is Triple M Used Bots, where autocars might be found.)

Also, Energy Weapons is no longer a vital specialty for these games. Salesmen aren't supposed to shoot their customers, just rip them off. Instead, the vital specialty is Moxie, the ability to quickly and shrewdly size up a customer. Add 4 to the Management rating to get the Moxie specialty rating.

PCs in Alpha Complex retail have one additional statistic to worry about: **Profit**. This measures how successful a PC is at his retail job. A high Profit rating means more sales and more credits earned; a low Profit rating means fewer sales and fewer credits earned. Profit ranges from 1 (low) to 20 (high). At the beginning of a game, PCs start with Profit 1 and must increase this number during the game.

Like the vidshow star game in the ORANGE section of this book, play proceeds in turns. A turn is one day, split into two phases: the **Sales Day** and **Nighttime**. During each phase, each player passes you a note describing one action he wants to do; however, this is only a guideline. As you read the notes and resolve all the actions, players can roleplay their way along with, out of or over their stated actions. Let the players roleplay and react to each other's actions fluidly, rapidly and mercilessly. All effects take place simultaneously after all actions are resolved, unless you decide otherwise.

A game session should last one in-game week, but alter this to fit your whim.

If we forgot to explain something here, please use the vidshow star rules in the ORANGE section to paper over our incompetence. Thanks!

### Work harder, not smarter

The **Sales Day** (the first phase of the turn) starts with a meeting run by the GREEN store manager. During this meeting, the store manager reminds the PCs to earn the highest profits they can. Then the store manager sets the day's **Sales Goal**.

A Sales Goal can be financial (reach a profit of 1000cr), informational (conduct a survey of customers), promotional (sell 50 units of this new hair cream) or inventorial (sell at least 25% of our current inventory). A Sales Goals is in addition to profit, but secondary; the retail manager who sells 25% of the inventory but loses money on every sale will not be thanked.

The GREEN store manager has no clue what selling is really about, but he's sure the PCs can get more profits if they just try harder. To motivate PCs to try harder, the manager makes sure the Sales Goal is difficult; an easy goal doesn't take much effort and thus is not motivational.

Some players might think the GREEN store manager sets Sales Goals to make himself look good regardless of whether the goals are feasible or even sane. They're right, of course, but that doesn't mean they can avoid the goals.



## CLEARANCE ULTRAVIOLET



**Felix-G:** Okay, team! Today, each of you has to sell 150 tubes of Waxxx-brand chapstick. Go to it.

**Vera-Y:** But boss! Chapstick is GREEN Clearance! We're lucky if we get two GREEN citizens per day in this store!

**Felix-G:** Hmmm. Already giving up? Then you don't need 200cr for advertising, right?

**George-Y:** I'll do it! In fact, I'll sell 175 tubes!

**Felix-G:** That's the can-do spirit! Here's your 200cr, George-Y. Store's open!

It's not a good idea to miss the Sales Goal. In the real world, angry store managers can fire an employee. In *PARANOIA*, angry store managers can fire *on* an employee.

After a few days have passed and players have a good sense of the game, mix things up by having everyone's secret society start setting their own Sales Goals for the PCs. Commies may want a PC to disrupt everyone's sales. Free Enterprise may want a piece of the action.

Yes, the secret society Sales Goals might conflict with the store manager's Sales Goals. Yes, the PCs have to figure out what to do. And yes, it'll be fun to watch.

### Buy this or else!

Once the meeting is over, it's time to hit the floor and sell, sell, sell! Players can now submit one action to increase their Profit rating—but like we said, these are really a guideline for roleplaying during the turn.

Decide if a PC is successful by any means necessary. Sometimes a Chutzpah roll will work. Othertimes, good roleplaying makes an action successful. As usual, you decide what succeeds and what fails.

Here are sample actions PCs might take during the Sales Day. Some affect only the PC doing the action, whereas others affect other PCs:

- ④ **Offer sales and discounts:** The quickest way to get more sales is to lower your prices. But lower it too much and you won't make enough credits per sale.
- ④ **Refuse returns:** Someone wants his credits back? Oh! It is to laugh.
- ④ **Bait-n-switch:** Yes, our ad offered 5 cans of B3 for 1 credit. Unfortunately, we're out of B3 right now. How about trying Xtreme Shift Tonic instead? Only 5cr per can!
- ④ **Offer coupons and rebates:** Buy one PDC, get a coupon for a free PDC syntheleather cover! Offer valid only on Threedays at exactly 14:06 for clones who are GREEN Clearance or higher and named Opheila.
- ④ **Bribe or intimidate customers:** PCs shouldn't coerce customers into buying

or not buying, because that would be wrong. But then again, it's wrong for PCs to belong to secret societies or have unregistered mutant powers, too. It's just a world of wrongness.

- ④ **Steal other PCs' merchandise:** Think of this as 'expanding the product range of a given department'. It also screws up the other PCs inventory, which is fun.
- ④ **Use secret society contacts:** Get allies to buy lots of stuff, or send them to make a mess of the other departments.

### Number crunching

Here's the problem. Retail sales deal with lots and lots of numbers. Dealing with lots and lots of numbers is not fun. So what's a fun-loving *PARANOIA* GM to do? We humbly submit three options.

1. **Obsession-compulsion:** Plan ahead and create the prices and costs, down to the credit, for a bunch of products in each PC's department. **DON'T DO THIS!** Once you go down this road, you're not far from worrying about iron rations and encumbrance scores.
2. **Don't worry about numbers:** A GM favorite, this option says to skip all numbers in favor of good old-fashioned making it up as we go along. There's a lot of good in this, but some players might get confused, and not in the good way. If a player wants to start a subliminal ad campaign, he needs to know roughly how much he could spend.
3. **Number Combo Platter:** Don't go crazy with making up the facts and figures, but don't ignore them completely. Use some nice, round numbers for stuff and keep it simple: nothing under ten credits, nothing over 1000 credits. Another idea is to use only percentages. That subliminal ad campaign? It cost 10% of what you have on hand. You do it? Okay! Sales increase by 15%!



All this lasts as long as you want, but give your players some advance notice before ending the action. At the end of the Sales Day, figure out how Profit has changed and share this with the players. This way, a player has a better idea what he needs to do during Nighttime.

## ■ We're closed!

**Nighttime** represents what happens in between closing for the night and re-opening the next day. Sleep? Well, yes, we suppose that could happen. But there's a lot to prepare before the next day: ordering more merchandise from service firm suppliers to keep everything in stock, arranging and paying for advertising and straightening displays. Some assistant managers go so far as to live in their departments, keeping watch over their merchandise.

Here are sample actions for Nighttime. Some happen in a darkened store in the dead of night; others are more about dealing with other people. As with Sales Day actions, allow players to change things as you roleplay through the Nighttime:

- ☉ **Make deals with suppliers:** Slip the driver of a truckbot a few credits, and new inventory never seems to reach the other PCs.
- ☉ **Order shoddy merchandise:** Lower costs by buying cheap merchandise and push it off as the real, expensive thing. These watches are genuine boron nitride, endorsed by Friendly Frank-U, with real simulated gold plating!
- ☉ **Steal floor space:** Expand the reach of the department by placing a display rack where someone else's display rack used to be before it mysteriously disappeared in the night.
- ☉ **Start new advertising:** From simple posters to expensive vidshow commercials, advertising can drive customers to a department—especially if you pay a Computer Phreak to slip in subliminal messages.
- ☉ **Media tie-ins:** Make a deal with HPD&MC. You pay them some credits, and they put your products in the next Teela-O episode.
- ☉ **Use secret society contacts:** Again, use friends to slip in under dark of

night to ruin the merchandise in other departments. For some reason, customers don't like shopping in a department that smells like spoiled soylent.

All this lasts as long as you want, but give your players advance notice before ending the action. At the end of the phase, figure out how Profit scores changed and share this with the players.

## ■ The customer is always right

Although buying is mandatory, buying whatever the PCs are selling is not. Even if the customer is of lower clearance, the PCs are not supposed to force a customer into buying. YELLOW assistant managers are supposed to arrange things so the customer wants to buy their products.

This means a lot of guesswork. The PC has to guess how to sell to each customer, and each customer is different. There are sneaky, underhanded ways to make a sale as described above, but there's one threat hanging over every fast-talk and con: the return customer.

Assistant managers are stuck in one location, and the customer obviously knows where this is. Chicanery and snake-oil sales might work today, but then the customer could come back tomorrow with an IntSec goon to investigate questionable sales practices. That's bad for sales, never mind for one's health.

Which sleazy actions go unnoticed and which ones start an investigation? You could roll against the store's Tension level of 7, but we recommend something just as simple: if a player roleplays well and keeps the shenanigans entertaining, then let it pass. However, if a player doesn't even try to hide his action or says, 'I order the RED citizen to buy everything!' instead of roleplaying it, then IntSec drops by for a talk.

## ■ The Clone in The Hat

There is another way for players to mess with each other, and it's a doozy: **The Hat**. The Hat is a roleplaying aid. The Hat is a Bennie for you to reward player behavior. The Hat is a way to build backstabbing and revenge among players. The Hat is ... just plain fun.

Keep a real hat on hand—the more outlandish the better—and at the start of the Sales Day, give it to one player. Whenever a player wears The Hat, he is no longer a YELLOW assistant manager. Instead, he is a customer.

## ■ Dying to sell

On-the-job terminations are uncommon among YELLOW assistant managers... but this is **PARANOIA**. Players will want to terminate each other's PCs, and that's a fine thing to support. But you want to encourage less obvious forms of combat. Traps, both literal and figurative, should provide the principal violence in these games. The Computer takes a dim view of laser shots across store departments.

The merchandise could get damaged.

That's right. Players roleplay being customers in each other's departments. Whoever is currently wearing The Hat gets to be as annoying, combative, dumb and perfidious as he wants. Does that mean he can try to steal the other PC's merchandise? Yes! Knock over a big display and not even say 'Oops'? Yes, yes! Monopolize the manager's time so he can't do whatever he was plotting? Yes, yes, yes!

Sounds like whoever wears The Hat has a lot of power, but don't worry—it doesn't last. Whenever you feel this player has had too much fun, or just dug himself a big enough pit, take away The Hat and give it to another player. This new player takes on the role of another customer and can do the same, even back at the first player who wore The Hat. Revenge is a dish best served on the clearance rack.

A clever player uses the role of customer to buy from his own department and increase his profits. Let him. Let him buy boatloads of overpriced crap. Then move The Hat to another player and decree this is the same customer,



'...And I think these quotas are completely achievable, if you just work smarter...'



and watch as the new player returns everything. The so-called clever player then spends most of the day completing return forms, restocking the merchandise and losing Profit.

When a player gets The Hat, roll on the **Random Customer Generator** table on this page to determine what kind of customer has just shown up. (Or just pick the traits you want the customer to have.) The Generator is meant to give some roleplaying direction for the player-customer, but feel free to do whatever serves your purpose at the moment. Isn't that why you went into GMing in the first place?

What happens if the PC's store doesn't sell what the customer is looking for? Tough. The assistant manager must come up with some way to make a sale. Offer a deal so good, the customer can't refuse!

What are you to do while players are enjoying (or hating) The Hat? Why, roleplay another NPC customer! PCs not immediately involved with The Hat will be happy if you send an NPC customer into their department to argue, shoplift or even buy something. And really, this game is all about making the players happy. Really.

## The corporate ladder

When seven days have passed in the game (or when it's time to stop playing), the player with the highest Profit is promoted to GREEN and given a store of his own to manage. This could lead to another game, where that player is the store manager for everyone else. He has authority over the other players—but his BLUE supervisor expects profits to go even higher and will not accept any excuses. If the new GREEN citizen fails, he's busted back to YELLOW with the others he supervised.

Given that it's retail, 'payback' has a nice ring to it, don't you think?

**Playtesters:** Sam Gafkjen, Tobias Svalborg and Daniel Reed. Thanks for your contributions!

Random Customer Generator					
Roll	Clrnc	Credits	Looking for	Mood	Tic / secret
1	IR	1cr	Someone to speak with	Needs attention like a lonely puppy	Stalks customers until yelled at
2	IR	20cr	Uh, a cone rifle...	Overdosed on gelgernine	Trying to shoplift
3	R	100cr	Janey Jump exercise mat	Surly and looking for an argument	Under orders to spend all his credits
4	R	5cr	Jumpsuit with extra pockets	Off his hormone supplements	Always trying twitchtalk openly
5	O	2054cr	Something called a 'Fnord'	Disdains mere salesmen	Gets shot at from outside the store
6	O	pocket lint	Hazelnut-flavored CoffeeLike	Very confused	Calls The Computer to verify every price
7	O	35cr	A jackobot with racing stripes	Paranoid	Can't hear well; screams
8	Y	115cr	Lots of B3	Hungry; hasn't eaten all day	Smells everything to check if it's clean
9	Y	199cr	Anything that costs under 10cr	Really needs to use the bathroom	Laden with packages from other stores
10	Y	201cr	A gift for a supervisor	Busy; works with PDC while shopping	Won't realize he lost his ME card until checkout
11	Y	13,013cr	To mess with a PLC salesman	Proud of his recent promotion	Refers to all merchandise as 'overpriced crap'
12	G	19cr	Something above his clearance	Depressed over his recent demotion	Excited over any shiny object
13	G	69cr	No idea what he wants	Convinced he's a bot	Could really use a shower
14	G	400cr	A talking toaster	Very very bored	Registered mutant with Charm
15	B	2,310cr	Power converter for JT-17 autocar carburetor	Excited about new season of Teela-O!	Secretly BLUE District Manager checking on store
16	B	1,776cr	Hygiene products and lots of 'em	Suspicious of everyone	Buys only 'latest model'
17	I	411cr	Something that blows up nice	Exhausted from a 14-hour shift	Not planning on buying anything
18	I	42cr	A patsy for his secret society	Vacillates between splurging and saving credits	Emits strange ticking sound
19	V	6,500cr	To get rid of stolen credits	Upset over his funball team's loss	Troubleshooter with a requisition for ceiling mines
20	Bot	8,000cr	Chapstick	Could really use a friend	Saboteur sent from a rival store

# EXTREME GREEN

## GREEN contents

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**Salary:** 10,000 cr/month

**Food:** Real food each meal, supplemented with GREENGood and various soylents.

**Housing:** Private one-bedroom apartment.

**Transport:** Hack. Shared private autocar.

**Staff:** A housebot servant.

**Authority:** May assign on-the-spot insubordination fines. May demote RED citizens. You manage a large division of your service firm.

**Perks:** Noticeable jump in status. Lower levels may engage in spontaneous bootlicking. Pharmatherapy optional.

**Demographic:** About 1% of the population. All citizens of GREEN Clearance and above (sometimes generically called 'administrators' or 'managers') collectively comprise about 2% of the population.

## Typical GREEN jobs

Senior supervisors, managing directors, personal staff for INDIGOs, most executive secretaries; Armed Forces lieutenants; CPU cartographers; HPD architects, Registered Mutant Housing and Placement Officers, senior vidshow producers; IntSec GREEN goons (duh), treason scene cleanup; PLC elite artisans, Hydroponic Food Growth Technicians (gardeners), top chefs; in Power Services, the guy who monitors the local power plant core temperature; R&D junior lab technicians; Tech Services Clone Bank Rebooters, junior MemoMax algorithm checkers; escorts, consorts, gigolos and mistresses for high-clearance citizens off their hormone suppressants.



## So this is what power feels like

Well, your players have managed enough bootlicking, blame-shifting and paranoid tendencies to be promoted to GREEN Clearance. What this says about your choice of friends we won't talk about; we'll just congratulate them on this achievement and move on.

The GREEN has finally reached a level with some power. As the managing directors of Alpha Complex they no longer worry about how things are getting done, but rather what it is that gets done. They are given goals and are expected to delegate them to those who can make it all happen. Make your players feel that.

Encourage them to enjoy ordering outlandish things and watch YELLOW flunkies rush off to make it happen. Show them lower-clearance citizens quaking in their boots as they walk down the corridors. Hand them their drinks in the good china.

Then let them meet their peers.

GREEN Clearance citizens tend to be of two varieties: those who use cruelty and intimidation to carve out a niche for themselves and those who have their division carved into pieces. Displays of wealth and power are commonplace, even necessary, if a GREEN citizen doesn't want to be seen as an easy mark and leveraged out of control. For your GREEN PCs, life is about keeping their division safe from the competition. Threats they'll probably have to deal with include viral licensing propagation, submarine patents, legislative attacks, bureaucracy manipulation, supply hijacking, the standard fraud, forgery, bribery and intimidation that they've been dealing with all along, plus outright sabotage.

Of course the rest of the complex hates, resents or envies them. But they should be getting used to that by now.

Refresh

Print

Print Setup

Save

Close

C-mail a friend

CLEARANCE GREEN CLEARANCE GREEN CLEARANCE GREEN CLEARANCE GREEN

## Dossier: Rumiko-G-BBN-4



### GREEN Clearance

Reference #: 213-46-798-577

[Last Update: 214.04.15 2:22]

Name: Rumiko-G-BBN-4

Decantationdate: 168.12.15

Service group: PLC

Service Firm: HandCrafters PLC

Occupation: Carpenter (Class 1)

Last known location: SIG Sector,

Subsector 99Q, Room 803b

Height: 152 cm

Weight: 50.1 kg

### ACTIVITIES & AFFILIATIONS

**Activities:** Sculpture, visiting art galleries: GREEN, long walks: with petbot, gourmandism, recreational drug use: gelgernine, sandallathon, xanitrick

**Affiliations:** Organic Products Crafters Guild

### TREASONS & COMMENDATIONS

**Treasons:** Confessing to secret society membership (1), being present in a location of higher security clearance (1), possessing unauthorized food (2), possessing unauthorized equipment (1) (see records)

**Commendations:** None listed for current clone (see records)

### GENETIC PROFILE & CREDIT RATING

**Genetic Profile:** Class 9B/4G; anomaly at 0330g. [6% chance of "Mental Blast" mutation (type 2 or 4); 3% chance of other psionic mutation]

**Cybernetics:** Aural Static Taste Enhancer (model 212.01) [legal]

**Credit Rating:** 2-GREEN (1,945cr)

### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Obtained promotion to GREEN by blackmailing Dakota-B-YBI-6. Currently being blackmailed by Loretta-R-YNQ-2 and an unidentified Computer Phreak (code name 'y3ll0wb0t'). Abnormally low rating on Happiness Index; unable to maintain proper sleep cycle without drugs. Known member of Humanists secret society; has provided data regarding traitor cell in exchange for leniency. Known to have low-level contacts in Corpore Metal, FCCC-P and Frankenstein Destroyers secret societies. (see records)

### ANALYSIS

**Primary drive:** desire to create 'art'. **Secondary drives:** survival; loyalty to friends, fellow citizens. Psychological stability undermined by stress; aggravated by dichotomy of hating bots for 'taking human jobs' while maintaining emotional connection with petbot. PsychEst gives a 95% chance subject will recant and warn Humanist cell within one month.

### RECOMMENDATIONS & COMMENTS

**Threat level:** high. Outlived her usefulness. Send termination order.

**Comments:**

[[Maintain surveillance of next clone -Shreyas-I ]]

### Troubleshooters: Civic Pride Duty

At GREEN your players are probably feeling power and privilege are rightfully theirs. Give it to them, in spades.

Civic Pride Detail is The Computer's way to display loyal agents as examples of the rewards of service. The lucky Troubleshooter(s) are paraded around for public appearances, speaking engagements, talk show, commercial spots, actual parades and so on. GREEN Troubleshooters on Civic Pride Detail become celebrities on par with vidshow stars; some INFRARED citizens even start fan clubs.

### Bennies

- ☉ Celebrity; constant gifts, comps from vidshows and service firms, credit bonuses and awards. Troubleshooters can live large without even trying. Let them enjoy it; it will make it all the sweeter when you yank the rug out from under them. Although, really, if your players have made it this far, this much comfort should scare the bejeezus out of them.
- ☉ A clever Troubleshooter can use celebrity to further his personal, secret society or service firm goals. Just like celebrities today, a Troubleshooter on Civic Pride Detail can influence public opinion. A dangerous tool at best (and no power in Alpha Complex will save them if it backfires), but might wily Troubleshooters even ride it to... BLUE?

### Slaps

- ☉ Celebrity means constant scrutiny. GREENs on Civic Pride Detail are almost never alone or unobserved. They trail a constant cortege of handlers, consultants, PR flacks, bodyguards, cameramen, IntSec agents, adoring fans, stalkers and would-be assassins.
- ☉ This scrutiny also means GREEN Troubleshooters are constantly being monitored for political orthodoxy. The last thing The Computer wants is for its paragons of virtuous service to start spouting treason on an episode of *The Teela-O-MLY Mandatory Entertainment Hour*. Even the appearance of unorthodox thought or behavior is harshly punished. In game terms, reduce the Access rating of the Troubleshooter by 1–5 points (GM's discretion) for any offense that could be interpreted as political orthodoxy—as opposed to, say, callous disregard for the safety of ordinary citizens, which is pretty much expected.
- ☉ Celebrity also breeds resentment. Troubleshooters in this position invariably attract copious attention from secret societies, rival service firms, disgruntled subordinates, ambitious underlings, and traitorous INFRARED citizens envious of the wealth and privilege. Civic Pride Detail can devolve into a string of repeated assassinations attempts, frame-ups and blackmail threats. What a change from standard Troubleshooter missions!

—Joshua Moretto

### GREEN secret society life

The halfway point in the clearance ladder is notoriously a place for breaks and blockages. Below GREEN Clearance are the peons and workforce of Alpha Complex; above GREEN are the intelligentsia and the overseers. GREENs supposedly facilitate communications across the vast social gulf.

In practice, GREENs try to jam the system as much as possible. GREEN is rife with society involvement, as the various conspiracies try to conceal their activities and manipulate 'official' Alpha Complex activity. There are R&D labs who have had their official research orders blocked at GREEN levels and replaced with Pro Tech madness; Armed Forces detachments unknowingly acting under Sierra Club control for months at a time; entire IntSec precincts who shrug and accept that, once again, their orders are to 'kill all muties! Kill the genetic deviants! Ignore everything else!'; and so on.

Secret societies run afoul of each other more often than they run into IntSec, mainly because all the societies have to share the same Gray Subnets, IR Markets, abandoned sectors, secret passages and after-hours meeting rooms. The embarrassment of a Corpore Metal or Psion cell bumping into a Frankenstein Destroyer or Anti-Mutant cell when both societies decide to meet in the same dank-but-camera-free cellar is second only to the bloodshed. GREENs are the tool of choice for attacking other societies.

Internal Security's infamous GREEN goons are heavily infiltrated by the secret societies. Anything that lets a conspiracy cover up its own efforts and attack those of others (thanks to the GREEN goon mandate of 'keep the plebs in line') is useful, hence the widespread infiltration of the goons, IntSec, Internal Affairs, CPU's Treason Index Tallying Services and anyone else who can screw over those bastards in the other societies.

This fighting at GREEN is responsible for much bloody, bitter rivalry between societies. Some secret societies—Humanists and Romantics, for example, or Mystics and Sierra Club—should be natural allies. That they are not is testament to how effectively their GREEN agents have succeeded in sabotaging the efforts of all other societies, ally and foe alike.

### Societies with a notable GREEN presence

**Corpore Metal:** Corpore Metal's real strength is its vast army of bot sympathizers. Using their bot contacts, fleshy members of the society can quickly rise to GREEN status. This has nothing much to do with their avowed goal of transcending humanity, but it does pay better.

**Free Enterprise:** Though most societies use their GREENs to sabotage others, Free Enterprise just wants cash. Its goons are legbreakers and mob enforcers. In this respect FreEnt goons are indistinguishable from legitimate IntSec GREEN goons, a confusion the society exploits.

**Sierra Club:** It is perhaps inevitable the Sierras try to go GREEN; this clearance is ideal for poking around the corners of Alpha Complex, looking for exits. The jumpsuits even blend in with Outdoors terrain.

—Gareth Hanrahan



## GREEN goodies

It's time to start thinking about image! Every day now, you are being judged—by the upper ranks, by your peers, by the hungry hordes you have left behind. Don't show them your fear! Hide it behind a screen of impressive purchases!

### Food, drink and consumables

#### **Dining out: 20 – 75cr per person**

Impress your peers and reward your inferiors by taking them out to an evening at a private dining center. Includes free beverage refills!

### Drugs and recreation

#### **Office Putt-Putt set: 90cr**

Another wonder of the Old Reckoning, this was one of the most popular games among the Ancients. Use the narrow stick to tap the tiny ball down your hallway into a cup that lights up! (Caddybot costs extra.)

#### **Intersector holiday: 500cr or more**

Now that you can leave your home sector on your own recognizance, take some time off and see the sights. There are many glorious wonders to behold around Alpha Complex—the Grand Canyonmall, the Holoosseum, Mount Recyclemore to name a few. Or just kick back in a low-activity resort sector for a few days and try to relax. Remember to report your movements to Internal Security.

### Hygiene and maintenance

#### **Dissolvaway: 20cr per application**

This solvent can do anything from remove ink from paper to taking paint off a wall. Do not use on skin or eyes!

#### **Hallvac: 250cr**

This roll-around vacuum device allows you to get your work area clean in a snap! Comes with seven different nozzle attachments and a built-in trap for genetic material.

### Clothing and accessories

#### **Microrecorder: 75cr**

Never let the evidence get away from you again! This button-sized microphone can hold and play back up to 48 hours of audio. Also good for practicing those motivational talks and spontaneous-sounding confessions in advance.

#### **Bot repellent: 300cr**

Tired of having pesky bots coming up all the time, trying to sell you things you don't need or take you places you don't want to go? Don't go all Frankenstein on them; just turn on this handy device and they'll decide to bother someone else. (Manufacturer does not guarantee effectiveness against security or military bots.)

### Survival and technology

#### **Candles: 10cr each**

These miraculous, totally portable devices produce light without electricity! (Matches are sold separately. Do not use near fire-detection equipment.)

#### **Portable shredder/printer: 120cr**

You may actually find a legitimate need to destroy hardcopy from time to time. Do it with style! Shredded documents are stored in non-volatile memory, protected by your chosen keycode, and can be reprinted in the future. (Keycode must be registered with Internal Security.)

### Services

#### **Decrease surveillance: 100cr per –1 Tension (ILLEGAL! Censure if caught)**

With a little more seniority and a few more credits, you can make sure nobody's paying close attention to what happens in a specific room for an hour or so. Not that you're up to anything, of course.

#### **Dispatch Troubleshooter team: 5,000–25,000cr**

That's right, Citizen, you're now authorized to detach Troubleshooter teams from the general pool and send them on simple missions, provided you've filed the appropriate justification paperwork. Obviously, the more funds you apply to their mission, the more likely they are to succeed, right?

#### **Hire assassin: 10,000 – 40,000cr (ILLEGAL! Termination if caught)**

When lying and bootlicking and stirring speeches and bribery can't dispose of someone in your way, there is always a fallback solution. Bribes for faster service strictly optional.

# Emergency Disaster Response Teams

by Greg Ingber

Alpha Complex is the best of all possible complexes, yet from time to time things do go wrong. There are errors, inconveniences, traumas—perhaps the occasional catastrophe. Disturbances can often be handled quietly, if not by a service firm, then by a team of friendly, well-intentioned Troubleshooters. But some calamities are simply too dire, too daunting... too public to be left to Troubleshooters. When some environmental/mechanical/metaphysical mishap threatens life and property on a sufficiently massive scale, count on an Emergency Disaster Response Team to be first on the scene, and last to leave. In fact, EDRTs have been known to show up moments before any disaster actually occurs. They are that good.

As it does with its Troubleshooters, The Computer sends EDRTs to deal with troublesome situations. For this reason, some citizens—mostly jealous types—regard EDRT members (called ‘Specialists’) as nothing more than puffed up, over-hyped Troubleshooters. However, comparing Troubleshooters to EDRTs would be like comparing a vigorously shaken can of Bouncy Bubble Beverage to a tacnuke. Both are explosive, but the first ruins your jumpsuit whereas the second renders your sector uninhabitable for the next 20,000 years.

Consider the differences: Troubleshooters spend most days working dull service firm jobs; Specialists spend their days and nights at Rapid Deployment Stations, waiting for the call to action. Troubleshooters receive minimal training; Specialists train one month of every year at the EDR Academy in SLS Sector. Low-clearance Troubleshooters toil away in relative obscurity; Specialists perform their heroic acts for a complex-wide vidnews audience.

The Computer, being paranoid, demands discretion from its servants. So why would The Computer allow EDRT operations to be conducted in such a public manner?

It wasn't always that way. In the early days of Alpha Complex, even the biggest disasters would be subject to a total media blackout. Vidnets treated citizens to Teela-O rerun marathons, even as their living quarters were being flooded by molten lava. At the time, INDIGO Clearance vidshow executives justified this policy, arguing ‘there’s no reason to start a panic’.

However, it turned out that lava flooding had a way of creating panic all by itself. In the

absence of carefully crafted HPD&MC spin, citizens succumbed to their most treasonous impulses in emergency situations: rioting, looting, generally running amok. Clearly, a policy change was in order.

The modern policy, authored by vidnews pioneer Maxine-V-BLX-2 (known among Specialists as ‘Iron Maxi’), follows this guiding principle: ‘If an embarrassing story gets so big we can’t make citizens ignore it, our only choice is to embrace that story and control it entirely.’ Emergency Disaster Response Teams are that means of control.

In a disaster, regularly scheduled programming is preempted by live coverage of EDRT Specialists in action. Camera crews go out with the team; trusted broadcast directors even gain access to IntSec surveillance video feeds to ensure enthralled viewers across Alpha Complex don’t miss a second of the excitement.

Only GREEN Clearance (or higher) citizens are recruited for EDRTs because citizens like the idea of ‘Friend Computer sending its best and brightest into the fray’ for their protection. It makes citizens feel safe. Citizens who feel safe don’t riot or loot or run amok—at least not as much as they might have.

For this reason, Emergency Disaster Response Team Specialists are far more than highfalutin Troubleshooters. They are respected, admired symbols of The Computer’s benevolence toward all citizens. As such, they are held to a high standard. Unrealistically high.

## Joining the team

When The Computer selects a GREEN Clearance citizen to join an Emergency Disaster Response Team, trusted citizens have already recommended him as worthy, courageous and dynamic—a staunch defender of Complex-and-Computer. Either that, or he bribed his way into the job. Or used blackmail or extortion. Or perhaps a former supervisor found him less-than-useful, and got him reassigned to an EDRT because it involved less paperwork than demoting him. Really, anyone can end up on an EDRT.

One might think EDRT Specialists at least possess high ratings in some specialization. Wrong. EDRTs are hyped as a highly trained team, but that’s all it is: hype. Aside from their

elevated security clearance, EDRT recruits are average citizens with limited skills and training. And as for the highly touted EDR Academy, little actual training goes on there; it’s more a media relations seminar than a boot camp. Despite the title and the hype, becoming a ‘Specialist’ doesn’t necessarily involve being good at anything.

## Hooks

Here’s how it really works: When a citizen joins an EDRT, INDIGO Clearance Talent Coordinators work with him to make sure he provides a compelling and marketable onscreen presence. Specifically, the Talent Coordinators ask the Specialist to embody a unique character concept, or ‘Hook’ (as it’s known in the vid biz). A Hook should include these elements:

- ☉ **Team role:** Being a ‘jack-of-all-trades’ might be laudable among Troubleshooters, but in the EDRTs, every Specialist must contribute something unique, high-concept and photogenic: expertise, special abilities, registered mutant powers. By selecting a team role, a character commits to contributing to the team in exactly one specific and individual way. Supervisors (not to mention viewing audiences) will hold him to that commitment.

*Examples:* martial arts master, strategist, demolitions expert.

Smart players select a team role that complements their skill and attribute ratings. Bold players disregard ratings entirely and create a role woefully incompatible with their character’s abilities; reward this foolhardy boldness with Perversity points.

- ☉ **Signature equipment:** An EDRT Specialist can request high-clearance gear appropriate for his team role. In some cases, a member can even commission R&D to design custom equipment... within reason.

*Examples:* Flamethrower, plasma-nunchaku, smooovox hypnotic voice lozenges, big bag o’ bombs.

- ☉ **Nickname, uniform design, backstory:** Generally The Computer



## CLEARANCE ULTRAVIOLET

values conformity; smart citizens do nothing to stand out or draw attention. However, EDRT Specialists aren't merely servants of The Computer, they are also valuable entertainment properties. Clever nicknames and heavily customized uniforms increase profits on EDRT marketing tie-ins; they are now mandatory for every team member.

Like sports teams, the entire team must also take a punchy name that fits easily on a vidscreen, like 'Ron-R's Roughnecks' or 'Force Six' or 'The GREEN Machine'. Let the players choose their name, subject to vidshow executive approval.

Ensure each new EDRT Specialist defines a robust, full-bodied onscreen concept. If a player's imagination is lacking, feel free to have the aforementioned INDIGO Talent Coordinators step in with mandatory constructive criticism.

You need not strive for a 'well-balanced' team. Whereas balanced teams are conducive to teamwork and harmony, unbalanced teams force Specialists to step on each other's toes, muscle in on each other's territory. Such discord makes for better television—and more paranoia.

### When disaster strikes

In principle, when something goes wrong in Alpha Complex—not, as you can imagine, particularly rare—a VIOLET Clearance Sector

Administrator (or someone with equivalent rank and authority) officially declares an Emergency Disaster (ED). In practice, Sector Administrators are reluctant to admit they have lost control in their own territory. Many Sector Administrators would gladly watch their sector burn to the ground (well, further into the ground) before calling in the EDRTs. The rest declare an ED only after all other measures have failed.

But! Remember that 'equivalent rank and authority'? Anyone of VIOLET Clearance can also declare an Emergency Disaster, provided he can track down the proper forms. VIOLET Clearance Vidshow Studio Chiefs have a big stack of those forms sitting on their desks. Unlike Sector Administrators, Studio Chiefs have absolutely no qualms about fielding an EDRT—along with camera crews, broadcast coordinators and embedded cheerlead—er, journalists.

Furthermore, the Chiefs don't wait for an especially potent disaster. The great thing about Emergency Disaster Response Teams, from a Chief's viewpoint, is their endearing knack for turning small problems into big ones. After all, EDRTs are only trained to deal with large problems; when they encounter small ones, their instinct is to escalate it until their training applies.

### 'EDR Team Go!'

So the call goes out to the nearest Rapid Deployment Station, to the most important members of the EDRT: the cambots. These small, inobtrusive cameras levitate into action, each zooming to the current GPS-determined

locations of its assigned Specialist. On camera, the team's leader calls out the team's assigned battle cry or motto, usually a focus-group tested slogan like 'For The Computer!' or 'Disaster Waits!' (Let the players pick their team's cry.) Then all team members race to the EDRT Flybot, where they find all their personal equipment packed and ready.

As the Flybot speeds away toward the ED, an onboard (and on-camera) INDIGO briefing officer briefs the Specialists in a cinematically urgent manner. Players accustomed to Troubleshooter missions probably expect to get bogged down in forms, shakedowns, sudden painful deaths and other miscellaneous impediments before they even reach the briefing room. For EDRT missions, the network hustles the PCs through pre-mission elements at top speed to get them into the action ASAP. (Don't worry, GM. There will be plenty of time for sudden painful death after the Flybot drops off the team at the site.)

The only business to take care of before the dropoff involves service service assignments—or rather, their EDRT equivalents—and secret society missions.

### Public services and product placements

EDRTs face situations where delays and diversions inevitably mean bodycounts. When lives (and valuable Computer property) are on the line, this is not the time for testing experimental devices, conducting algae chip taste tests or screwing around with broken vending machines. Plus, these activities make for extremely dull TV. For these reasons, The





Computer determined it impractical to assign EDRTs traditional service services.

Instead, each Specialist's service group assigns him a characteristic and enlightening Public Service Theme. These are bureaucracy-approved messages the EMDTs must somehow 'work into the mission'. For instance: Team member Charlie-G has just been exposed to a lethal strain of flesh-eating bacteria. As he dies a horrible, ugly death, HPD&MC Specialist Angela-G turns to the nearest camera and

reminds citizens to 'Wash your hands! Because clean hands are flesh-eating-bacteria-free hands!'

Especially well-known Specialists may instead get a Product Placement Position. When PLC firms prepare to release certain types of new products, they like to drum up consumer interest by getting the products in the hands of high-profile tastemakers. The products that work best are inexpensive items marketed toward lower clearances: snack foods, cheap gadgets, personal hygiene products. Specialists assigned Product Placement Positions must find creative ways of using the assigned product during the mission.

### SquawkTronix 900 Comm System

Worn by every EDRT Specialist, the SquawkTronix 900 combines a multi-way communications headset with a visor that serves as both eye protection and as a Heads-Up Display. The headset includes a standard microphone/earphone configuration, as well as a side-mounted video camera, known as a headcam.

The SquawkTronix 900 serves many functions in an EDRT mission:

- ④ Specialists use the headset to stay in constant communication in noisy environments or when the team splits up. The headsets also let EDRT supervisors communicate with the whole Team, or privately with individual Specialists.
- ④ The SquawkTronix 900 transmits audiovisual data to a local relay that forwards to the EDRT Broadcast Center. The headset microphones ('mics') let audiences hear every word of witty team dialogue, while the headcams let directors cut to exciting 'POV shots'. When cambots experience technical difficulties (usually a violent demise), these POV shots become crucial.
- ④ Specialists can configure their visor display to monitor video feeds, including their own teammates' headcams. Most Specialists use the display to directly monitor the EDRT broadcast, so they can see exactly what their audience is seeing—and (usually more important) what they're *not* seeing.

### Secret society missions

Secret society obligations work in much the same way. With so many cameras focused on the Specialists, it's probably impossible for them to commit any overtly treasonous acts in support of their secret society. However, they often can (and are certainly expected to) find ways to slip a little pro-society propaganda into the broadcast.

For example: Specialist Lionel-G has just gotten both of his legs gnawed off by a swarm of mutant gophers. As he lies screaming on the floor, Bruce-G comforts his wounded comrade: 'Don't worry Lionel-G! Now that you've cast away those flabby meat-limbs, we can get you set up with a shiny new pair of bionic legs! Once you get those marvels installed, you'll wish you had been attacked by mutant rodents years ago.' Can you guess Bruce-G's secret society?

Needless to say, Specialists must keep their propaganda subtle. If a team member becomes too overt, have Internal Security create suitably nasty consequences.

Keep in mind, handing EDRT secret society obligations this way does not necessarily preclude other, more traditional secret society missions. If your players are clever enough to commit treason in full view of Alpha Complex and not get caught—more power (and Perversity) to them!

### P-Scores

The work of GREEN EDRT Specialists is evaluated almost exclusively by INFRARED citizens.

INFRAREDs! No Specialist likes to discuss this embarrassing little secret, and they don't look kindly upon those who do. Nonetheless, this is the reality of EDRT life.

Officially, INDIGO Clearance Talent Coordinators evaluate Specialists, in consultation with their show producers and sometimes Studio Chiefs. The Chiefs ultimately make personnel decisions regarding individual Specialists: hirings, firings... firing squads.

How do they decide who stays and who goes? Well, any Coordinator will say each member is carefully evaluated based on demonstrated competence in areas such as problem-solving, teamwork and personal hygiene. Inject the same Coordinator with telescopamine truth serum, and he'll say it all comes down to P-Scores.

P-Scores are a cutting-edge ratings system HPD&MC developed to track viewer response to individual Specialists during live EDRT missions. Because the EDRT program boosts citizen morale during difficult times, Talent Coordinators must keep team rosters filled with personalities who keep viewers glued to the vid. Through the P-Scores system, Talent Coordinators determine which team members are getting the job done, and which ones are ripe for—cancellation.

The P-Score system is actually quite simple: Periodically, during each EDRT broadcast, an automated surveying subroutine randomly selects 50,000 vidscreens from a master list of every active screen tuned into the Emergency Disaster coverage. Once it has selected a monitor, the subroutine briefly takes control of the screen image, superimposing these words over the image: 'TOUCH THE SCREEN—CHOOSE YOUR FAVORITE!'. When citizens see these words flash across the screen, they simply touch the vidmonitor where they see the Specialist they like the best. When touched, the vidmonitors sense the pressure and send signals back to the central P-Scores server, which tabulates the responses.

It is your job, GM, to simulate the P-Score respondents. Because the vast majority of citizens in Alpha Complex are humble INFRAREDs, consider the actions of each team member from an INFRARED perspective. Think to yourself:

'If I were a marginally literate, heavily medicated assembly-line grunt, what would I enjoy most on the vidscreen?

- ④ 'Would I like calm, rational Specialists who solve problems methodically and harmoniously?
- ④ 'Or would I prefer flashy, smack-talking, grandstanding badasses with an irrepressible, in-your-face attitude?



- ☉ 'Would I like to see team members conducting orderly evacuations?'
- ☉ 'Or would I perhaps instead prefer perilous, careening autocar chases and blowing stuff up?'

Predicting popular psychology is tricky, we know. After all, the network TV schedule in your town no doubt demonstrates the inherent elevated taste of a mass audience. For guidance, we offer modest suggestions in the table nearby.

Once you've tuned your psyche to the whims of the EDRT's largely INFRARED viewing audience, tally each Specialist's P-Score. P-Scores always range from 0 (least preferred) to 10 (most preferred). Each PC begins a mission with a baseline P-Score of 5.0. Every time someone does something the viewing audience likes, increase that character's P-Score. Every time a team member does something the viewing audience doesn't like, decrease his P-Score.

### P-Positive actions:

1. Conspicuous acts of daring and self sacrifice
2. Witty dialogue
3. Explosions, gunplay, mayhem
4. Talking smack to high clearance citizens
5. Touching emotional moments, stirring oratory
6. Bending the rules
7. Dying in a dramatic, spectacular fashion

### P-Negative actions

1. Conspicuous acts of cowardice
2. Arguing, whining
3. Drudgery, bumbling
4. Disrespecting lower clearance citizens
5. Talking in circles, inactivity, dead air
6. Rigid adherence to rules and regulations
7. Just dying

**Note:** the standard increment for P-Score adjustments is .25. However, adjustments of .50, .75 or even 1.0 may be appropriate in extreme circumstances.

Simple enough, right? Hold on—there's a twist.

As many of us already learned in high school, popularity is a zero-sum game. For you to win, others must lose. P-Scores are no different. Every time you increase one character's P-Score, decrease one (or more) of the other characters' P-Scores by an equal amount.

For example: Lucy-G just made an amusing remark about Phil-G's tacky custom uniform. You enjoyed Lucy-G's comment and decide the viewing audience did as well—so you increase Lucy-G's P-Score from 5.0 to 5.5. Having done so, you are now obligated to decrease someone else's P-Score by the same amount. Because Phil-G was on the receiving end of Lucy-G's witty remark, you decide to decrease Phil-G's P-Score from 5.0 to 4.5. Alternately, you could have decreased two other Specialists' P-Scores by .25. Remember, this rule also works in reverse: if you elect to decrease a character's P-Score, you should also increase another character's P-Score equally.

Just about everything an EDR team member does during a mission should be aimed at boosting his P-Score, thereby lowering the scores of his teammates. To keep players focused, INDIGO Talent Coordinators provide live P-Score updates as the mission progresses. Failure to maintain a high P-Score brings disastrous consequences, discussed below.

### Ending the mission

An Emergency Disaster Response Team mission can end in one of two ways.

1. It ends if everyone on the team runs out of clones. EDRT missions have high mortality rates, and TTL (Total Team Loss) isn't unheard of.
2. Short of TTL, the only other way a mission can end is if a VIOLET Clearance citizen (preferably the one who originally declared the Emergency Disaster) fills out a 'Cessation of Emergency Services' form and files it with CPU at any data terminal. This form officially reclassifies the Emergency Disaster as a mere Non-Emergency Disaster.

This may happen for many reasons. If and when a team successfully quells whatever calamity they were sent to quell, a VIOLET Sector Administrator happily fills out a CoES form to end the emergency. More frequently, if a team makes an emergency situation ten

times worse through reckless showboating, a Sector Administrator may (most unhappily) fill out a CoES form just to get the EDRTs the hell out of his sector.

If the original ED was declared by a VIOLET Studio Chief, he might elect to end the mission if the action is getting stale, there is a popular regular program he doesn't want to preempt, he has to take an important PDC call, etc.

Once the mission ends, the EDRT Flybot returns immediately, if necessary, to extract all surviving Specialists.

### Post-mission Conference

Time for a debriefing—but not a stuffy, non-visual 'let's all sit in a room and accuse each other of treason' debriefing. That's fine for Troubleshooters, but unworthy of the illustrious EDRTs. No, EDRTs debrief in a Post-mission Conference.

Like every other aspect of the EDRT experience, these conferences are broadcast live throughout Alpha Complex. Immediately following the mission, all Specialists report to a hastily assembled press area near the disaster site. Camera crews, IntSec agents, embedded HPD & Mind Control spinmeisters and a few hundred random passersby gather, serving as an impromptu 'studio audience'.

For these Post-mission Conferences, producers like to pull out all the stops. Depending on the outcome of the mission—not to mention the whims of the producers—a Post-mission Conference might include:

- ☉ A giant monitor showing mission highlights, as reporters ask the involved Specialist to 'talk them through' a crucial moment in the mission.
- ☉ A panel of celebrity commentators critiquing the performance of Specialists.
- ☉ Questions from the audience and/or 'call-in' questions from viewers.
- ☉ An 'out-takes' reel of embarrassing mistakes Specialists made.
- ☉ Emotional displays of gratitude from citizens the team rescued.
- ☉ Sanitized 'good-natured joshing' from citizens the team nearly incinerated.
- ☉ 'Final Thoughts' from The Computer to conclude the conference.

Some EDRT members don't take these Post-mission Conferences seriously. Thinking the conferences are somehow beneath them, these Specialists respond to questions with glib, sarcastic answers. They do so at their peril. Though many citizens watch the live coverage of the missions, there are even more citizens who only get to see clips from the PMC repeated on later news shows. These conferences represent each Specialist's last, best chance to make a good impression with viewers, thereby increasing his P-Score. Specialists who performed dismally during the mission can still save themselves if they perform well in post-mission interviews. Just as easily, a star EDRT performer could sink himself if his teammates manage to turn the crowd against him.

During the conference, make liberal adjustments to P-Scores based on how the PCs represent themselves. *Note:* Though EDRTs get live P-Score updates during their mission, they get no updates during the Post-mission Conference. Players should not know where they stand until the final scene.

### Aftermath

When the conference ends, Specialists return to the swank Rapid Deployment Stations they call home. They may take a shower, watch some vid, eat a light supper. Mostly they wait. Nervously. Because tomorrow, they may well be out of a job—or worse.

High-clearance HPD&MC executives evaluate Specialists after every mission. It never takes long—a day, maybe two—just long enough for 'interested parties' to interfere.

**The shift:** P-Scores have a funny way of shifting after the mission has ended. Obviously, this shouldn't be. Once the mission is over, the P-Scores surveying subroutine terminates, and the final score for each Specialist should be frozen. Nevertheless, P-Scores always seem to—*drift* a bit after evaluations.

As it turns out, when HPD&MC commissioned CPU to implement the P-Scores tabulation routine, they left a few security holes. These holes let powerful interests tweak and prod and manhandle P-Scores to suit their agendas.

If you recall, at the beginning of the mission, each team member was assigned a Public Service Theme (and possibly a Product Placement Position). During the mission, did each character adequately pitch these to the viewing audience? If so, the service groups that assigned the Specialist these duties may have appreciatively boosted his P-Score. But if a character neglected his duty, the service group may deflate his P-Score as a punitive measure. They may also frown on collateral damage to property and influential people.

Secret societies also manipulate P-Scores—Computer Phreaks and Pro Tech have particularly good access, and the Illuminati, of course, maintain total control—so consider how well players served their societies, and adjust P-Scores accordingly.

**Note:** For these post-mission adjustments you may increase one character's P-Score without decreasing that of another; the zero-sum rule does not apply.

Once you've arbitrarily adjusted the P-Scores, you can finally determine the fate of each character:

## GM tips/style notes

☉ In an EDRT mission, conjure fear and ignorance by promoting a hyper-competitive relationship among the players. Keep reminding each player that every time someone else succeeds, he fails. Frequent P-Score updates drive this point home, but also keep the players aware of who is the center of attention at any given moment. If one character starts doing something interesting, describe how the cambots stop covering the rest of the team and cluster around him. From time to time, you might narrate the action from the perspective of someone watching it on the vid.

☉ Each character should be desperately trying to upstage and outdo the others, stealing focus and making himself look good at others' expense. Make sure everyone plays fair, of course—but 'fair' is a relative term in **PARANOIA**. In this case, if a player intends to hog the spotlight, he must actually do things worthy of the spotlight. The Computer, and therefore the show producers, won't tolerate a Specialist who simply interrupts a lot, or interferes with others' actions in blatant, uncreative ways.

☉ Players should constantly face dilemmas between practical/effective actions versus actions that are entertaining/role-appropriate. Nothing torments show producers worse than mundane problems with an easy and obvious solution.

For instance: During a rescue mission, the team comes across a high-clearance citizen trapped beneath a pile of rubble. Luckily, there are some shovels lying nearby. No problem, right? The EDRTs can spend ten minutes digging the citizen out of the rubble and call it a mission.

Except—they can't. The viewing audience has absolutely no interest in watching a bunch of guys digging. Unless someone can come up with a festive digging song (or some other way of livening up the activity) then such a mundane course of action would devastate the team's P-Scores. Furthermore, Specialists are expected to engage in actions appropriate to their team role. Unless someone happens to be an 'excavations expert', audiences don't want to see shovels.

Every Specialist should try to solve every problem he encounters by using his own special skills, no matter what. If Chester-B has the team role of 'flamethrower guy', then by gosh he'll solve every problem with a torrent of searing flame. If he doesn't, decrease Chester-B's P-Score accordingly.

☉ No matter how bad things get—no matter how deviously a teammate just screwed him—each Specialist must keep up a brave face and maintain a positive attitude. A character is not permitted to complain, accuse or take matters into his own hands, due to the omnipresent cameras.

You can create dramatic moments by suddenly, unexpectedly cutting off the media. Perhaps the ED coverage is preempted by a teaser for an upcoming Teela-O miniseries. Maybe a building collapse momentarily isolates the Specialists from the cambots. These moments should arise at critical points in the mission, giving Specialists rare opportunities to get down with some hardcore, shameless treason. Needless to say, coverage resumes as unexpectedly as it ended; let the phrase 'worst possible moment' serve as your guide.



## CLEARANCE ULTRAVIOLET

- ☉ For Specialists who escaped the mission with a P-Score of **6.0 or higher**, there's nothing but good news! They stay on the team, plus they might receive lucrative endorsement deals, recording contracts and lecture tours. Also, The Computer will graciously order Tech Services to replace any clones that character lost during the mission, free of charge.
- ☉ For a character who couldn't quite capture the public's imagination (P-Score of **5.9 or lower**), the news isn't so good. If his P-Score was extremely low, an INDIGO Talent Coordinator kicks him off the team. This is known as 'cancellation'. Getting cancelled out of the EDRTs is not only embarrassing; it can be deadly. Specialists get away with a lot of questionable behavior and cause considerable collateral damage. So long as they remain in the EDRTs, they are protected from petty inquisitions. However, the moment they get kicked off the team, that protection disappears. Guess what happens next.

- ☉ If a character's P-Scores were not great, but not terrible either, then he may be an ideal candidate for 'retooling'—a fate some consider worse than cancellation. When HPD&MC determines the Specialist has a weak, unmarketable Hook, INDIGO Talent Coordinators 'retool' that character by developing a new Hook. Talent Coordinators love to retool Specialists. They love to get creative. Their creativity tends to make Specialists want to shoot themselves.

**Talent Coordinator Cheryl-I:** So! Paul-G, let's talk about your Hook.

**Specialist Paul-G:** Uh... what about it?

**Cheryl-I:** The whole 'Military Sniper' thing... it's just not working out.

**Paul-G:** Not working out? But I have the best shot/kill ratio in the complex! Last week, I took out all five mutie conspirators in less than 20 seconds.

**Cheryl-I:** Yeah, I saw that. Just as things were getting interesting, you have to go and start sniping all the bad

guys. 20 seconds later, the mission is over. Talk about a big letdown! Like I said, the sniper thing isn't working out. So what else have you got?

**Paul-G:** Look, I'm a sniper. I really don't do other—

**Cheryl-I:** You know what's hot right now? Bot wrangling.

**Paul-G:** Bot... wrangling?

**Cheryl-I:** Yeah, we supply you with three sassy yet lovable jackobots, and you try to get them to do stuff for the team. Sometimes they do what you ask, sometimes they totally misunderstand your commands—with hilarious consequences! Trust me, Paul-G, this hook is going to take you to the next level.

**Paul-G:** I'm not sure I'm comfortable with—

**Cheryl-I:** You can go ahead and turn in your rifle. We'll have those bots ready for you real soon.

### Internal Security GREEN goons

In your players' minds, who else besides the EDR teams might be associated with GREEN Clearance? Hmm, let's think—might it be the despised GREEN goons of IntSec?

Alpha Complex society defines an unspoken but vast gap between the lower clearances (INFRARED through YELLOW) and the higher clearances (GREEN and above). Below the line, you are at best middle-management; above the line, you have reached the upper classes, with a noticeable jump in status and perks. Only a small fraction of the population ever ascends to GREEN, let alone to the higher reaches of service to The Computer. GREEN citizens have diligently courted The Computer's trust, through a combination of bootlicking, backstabbing, blackmail, extortion, secret society connections and, in some cases, even ability.

This helps explain why, in a setting where expressing dissatisfaction over a broken vending machine can get you brainscrubbed, Alpha Complex citizens secretly, stealthily loathe the GREEN goons. They are Internal Security's muscle, its shock troops. IntSec scours the INFRARED barracks for the most thuggish thugs, the unusually brutish brutes—stoopbrows who obey authority mindlessly even by Alpha Complex standards, and that's saying a lot. IntSec finds these unwashed proletariat nobodies and persuades The Computer to promote them, willy-nilly, to Clearance GREEN.

The goons had no ambition, no schemes, and certainly no talent beyond brutality. Now, thanks to their unexpected jump, they can push around nearly everybody who, until days or weeks ago, pushed them around. They *loooove* it. They love it so much, they do it all the time, even without orders. That's fine with IntSec leadership: The goons provide a target for the lower clearances' hatred, anger and resentment that keeps the focus away from IntSec's upper clearances and its covert activities.

GREEN goons are not only stupid but corrupt. Still acclimating to these dizzying heights—still locked in the INFRARED mentality of a credit here, a credit there—the goons can be bought, even cheaply. But they never *stay* bought. Their IntSec superiors don't object to minor corruption, as long as the superiors get a cut of the take.

You're thinking, 'They sound like orcs.' Nope—these are orcs you're *not allowed to kill*. Complain to The Computer? You certainly can, and it will then summarily execute the individual goon you fingered. And then the 'green wall' of all other IntSec goons will close in around you, making what's left of your brief life very hard. So people don't complain. The goons rake in the cash. Some may die—they are muscle, after all—but there's always more in the IR barracks.

The goons originated in the observation that real-world totalitarian secret police are unfailingly corrupt. To longtime **PARANOIA** fans the idea of a corrupt Internal Security may seem wrong—it may lend an unwelcome human element, an air of seamy commerce, that detracts from the implacable Orwellian facelessness of The Computer's enforcers. But the point of the game is fear and ignorance. All the faceless senior officers can keep on doing their Orwellian thing, but in addition, the players must worry about these totally unqualified gorillas who can order them around and will sell them out for a nickel. They, too, are scary—maybe even scarier in their way than the senior officers.

—Allen Varney

## EDRT All-Stars!

For most Specialists, it takes all the cunning they can muster just to keep their P-Scores high enough to stay on the team. And, what was the other thing—think, think—ah! survive. However, some team members aren't content with this—they want to be the most popular, the most beloved Specialists in the complex. They want to be **EDRT All-Stars**.

Once a year, HPD&MC reviews P-Scores data from every active Specialist in the EDRTs. Specifically, they seek individuals who have not only achieved, but sustained high P-Scores over numerous missions. These lucky Specialists are transferred to a special, ultra-high profile *Emergency Disaster All-Star Team*.

HPD&MC considers its All-Stars too valuable an entertainment commodity to expose to real missions (and their real dangers). Instead, All-Stars resolve Simulated Emergency Disasters: fake disasters, fabricated on a sound stage; totally harmless, yet broadcast complexwide as if real. All-Stars get all the perks of being team members, with none of the risk. This is perhaps the sweetest gig in Alpha Complex, and for those team members who possess that rare combination of ambition, ruthlessness, charisma and more ruthlessness, it could be theirs.

But to join the ranks of the All-Stars, an ambitious Specialist must surpass the achievements of the existing All-Star Team:



**Johnny Flame, Fire Suppression Specialist**  
Career P-Score average: 7.3

Fires are common Emergency Disasters in Alpha Complex, especially in sectors with industrial or chemical production facilities. Johnny extinguishes danger with his signature tank of KoolFoam—a chemical compound three times colder than liquid nitrogen and a hell of a lot stickier. Flames never stand a chance against Johnny—nor does exposed Commie Mutant Traitor flesh!

**Jon E. Flame, Flame Sanitation Specialist**  
Career P-Score average: 7.6

If an area has been contaminated by anything of a biological nature, the best way to neutralize it is by exposing it to searing heat. Jon E. is trained to burn first, burn second, have a light lunch, burn a bit more—*then* ask questions later. Jon E. carries a heavily customized XTREEM-BURN Heavy Flamethrower to perform his incendiary duties. Interesting fact: Jon E. Flame and Johnny Flame both served on the same EDRT for three years. The confusion was highly entertaining, elevating both Johnny and Jon E.'s P-Scores to All-Star levels.



**Dr. Weldo, Welding Specialist / Team Doctor**  
Career P-Score average: 6.8

He's a doctor... *and* a welder! He carries a laser scalpel *and* a plasma-torch! Some EDR teams are wastefully assigned one medical officer and one welding/cutting technician. How inefficient! Dr. Weldo proves one citizen can perform both functions admirably—so long as he keeps his equipment straight.

**Miss Calm, Stress Reduction Specialist**  
Career P-Score average: 7.2

Emergency Disasters can be awfully stressful. This All-Star has assisted thousands by providing on the spot anger management counseling to disaster victims, singing soothing songs and passing out helpful pamphlets such as 'So You've Been Covered In Acid' and 'Uh... Why am I Glowing?' On those rare occasions when such activities fail to placate a crowd, Miss Calm (calmly) releases a few QuieTime Sedative Gas Canisters—a proven stress reliever!



**Captain Carl, Team Commander**  
Career P-Score average: 8.1

The Commanding Officer of an EDR team is trained to remain cool and collected, even under the most chaotic of circumstances. Observers have found Captain Carl to be so calm—so eerily serene—some have wondered if he is heavily medicated for every mission. In fact, he is! After years of experimentation, Carl has discovered an optimal combination of mood enhancers, stimulants and a few other drugs that haven't even been classified yet. These carefully regulated medications keep Carl sharp on long missions, and let him make split-second decisions decisively, without a second (or even first) thought.

# EXTREME BLUE

## BLUE contents

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**Salary:** 40,000 cr/month

**Food:** Nothing but real food all the time! At last!

**Housing:** Opulent suite in safe and prestigious subsector.

**Transport:** Private autocar.

**Staff:** Full bot staff and bot programmer. Seldom if ever do you encounter Infrareads.

**Authority:** May promote to Clearance ORANGE or lower. May demote from GREEN or lower. May assign Merit awards and penalties. You manage an entire service firm.

**Perks:** You go to the front of any line; invitations to vidshow award ceremonies; exclusive club memberships; underlings grovel routinely.

**Demographic:** Perhaps half a percent of the population; maybe a few hundred in a standard sector.

## Typical BLUE jobs

Junior execs on the rise, top executive secretaries, valets to VIOLET citizens; Armed Forces captains and majors; CPU managing directors; HPD managers of exclusive nightclubs; IntSec officers (see this section), interrogators; PLC greenhouse supervisors; in Power Services, the guy whose fault it is when the local power plant melts down; R&D project researchers; Tech Services Aquatic Recreation Area Hydro-Specialists (they clean high-clearance swimming pools), bot brain programmers, clone eugenics specialists, medical doctors, MemoMax psychosurgeons. If your Alpha Complex has astronauts, they're probably BLUE.



## It's all in the timing

By the time they've reached BLUE Security Clearance, your players are starting to get some insight into how Alpha Complex actually works. The more savvy of them may have realized that, as they now head their own service firm, there's actually a limited number of them. What's more, with an entire service firm listening to their orders, they might even start to feel they have some sort of control over their destiny.

Well, we can't have that, can we?

Fortunately, INDIGO citizens are no slouches either. They know perfectly well the only way a BLUE citizen is going to get promoted is if an INDIGO citizen falls. Unfortunately, the INDIGOs can't just wipe out the lot of them, so they do the next best thing—keep them all too busy to breathe, never mind think. The rate of burnout among BLUE citizens is quick enough that they don't worry about pressure from the GREENS. There's always a spot available. No, for BLUE citizens, the main concern is not treachery so much as time management.

You want to know what a BLUE citizen looks like? In the movie *Brazil* there's a character called Mr. Warren. He walks fast, he talks fast, he thinks fast. He's got a mob of people around him and he's making decisions as quickly as he can spit out the 'yes' or the 'no'. Mr. Warren would survive nicely as a BLUE citizen—for a while.

As for your players, keep them off balance and busy. Appoint them to so many committees they can't possibly make it to all the meetings, let alone understand the agendas. Fire questions and forms at them. Have them see a fellow BLUE citizen gibbering in the corner as he snaps under the pressure. Show another one hauled away by an IntSec patrol for a decision that cost his firm millions. Above all, let them know *they* could be next.

Fear and ignorance, see? If we decrease the ignorance, we must increase the fear.

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## Dossier: Carter-B-DTC-1



### BLUE Clearance

Reference #: 312-57-823-467  
 [Last Update: 214.04.15 11:50]  
 Name: Carter-B-DTC-1 (changed from Johan-B-BEK-1 under Internal Security mandate 204.08.13.303/F 'Protective Cover Identities for Internal Security Field Agents'.)  
 Decantationdate: 170.09.01  
 Service group: Internal Security / CPU  
 Service firm: Complex Oversight CPU  
 Occupation: Internal Security Agent / Chief Financial Officer  
 Last known location: PTS Sector, Sub-sector 03R, Room 45-a  
 Height: 185.4 cm  
 Weight: 92 kg

### ACTIVITIES & AFFILIATIONS

**Activities:** Overtime work: service firm, Internal Security; chess; C-Bay; daycycle trading; research into Old Reckoning archival data; smoking (Cancer-Lite cigarettes)  
**Affiliations:** DTC Sector High-Clearance Chess Club, unnamed BLUE Clearance information trading network

### TREASONS & COMMENDATIONS

**Treasons:** Falsely accusing an equal-clearance citizen of treason (1), possession of unauthorized equipment (1), possession of unauthorized information (2), possession of unauthorized Old Reckoning material (3), disobeying an order given by a superior (1) (see records)  
**Commendations:** Improved service firm efficiency (4), effective management (2), revealing treason to Internal Security (4), terminating a traitor of lower security clearance (2), superior hygiene (5) (see records) (see also: Commendations->Johan-B-BEK-1 [archived])

### GENETIC PROFILE & CREDIT RATING

**Genetic Profile:** Class 7T/88N/3C; anomalies at 0078a, 0454t, 3071c. [32% chance of one or more psionic mutations]  
**Credit Rating:** 16-BLUE (88,302cr)

### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Hoarder of Old Reckoning artifacts. Abnormally low incidence of reported insubordination. Abnormally low variance from zero point on Happiness Curve. Believed to be siphoning credits from service firm into gray accounts. Known member of Romantics. Known to have mid-level contacts with Computer Phreaks, Free Enterprise and Pro Tech. Protected by superiors in Internal Security and CPU. (see records)

### ANALYSIS

**Primary drive:** desire for increased authority and personal power. **Secondary drives:** support Alpha Complex; fetish for Old Reckoning material; superiority complex. Intelligent and disciplined. Obtains Old Reckoning material through contacts in Romantics and Free Enterprise. TreasEst indicates a 65% chance of blackmail or extortion of one or more higher-clearance citizens. PsychEst places his Loyalty Index within the uppermost decile.

### RECOMMENDATIONS & COMMENTS

**Threat level:** low. Remain in place; recommend promotion to IntSecCom.

**Comments:**

[[ This one's too good. Must be planning something—rein him in. —Anni-B ]]  
 [[ PsychEst says if he has psionic mutations, 70% chance he's in Psion. Investigate? —Chang-B ]]  
 [[ VIOLET connections. Drop it. —Deirdre-I ]]



### Troubleshooters: Outdoors Duty

Outdoors Duty is Civic Pride Detail's dark twin. The Computer banishes BLUE Troubleshooters with tarnished reputations to this not-quite-a-death sentence position.

As much as The Computer wants Alpha Complex safely contained, it recognizes the need to patrol its borders. BLUE Troubleshooters have proven themselves sufficiently loyal that they might not become irreversibly contaminated while outside. Still, this duty is considered punishment. The survival rate is low, even for Troubleshooters.

Outdoors Duty is doled out in two-month hitches. Barring special orders, Troubleshooters check in every two weeks to file reports, pick up fresh food supplies, and receive their next segment's store of medication. The rest of their time is spent patrolling the wilds around Alpha Complex, looking for evidence of Commie mutant incursion and gathering scientific samples for R&D.

### Bennies

- ④ Outdoors Duty is probably the only place Troubleshooters can be reasonably certain that they are not being observed. Except by each other, of course. And the natives.
- ④ Obviously, Outdoors Duty presents an unparalleled opportunity for Romantics or Sierra Clubbers to garner status with their secret societies.
- ④ Old Reckoning artifacts found on Outdoors Duty could be worth major credits on the IR Market, assuming they can be smuggled successfully back into Alpha Complex.

### Slaps

- ④ Outdoors Duty is just shy of a kiss of death. The Outdoors is a dangerous place for Troubleshooters with only the vaguest conception of 'Nature'. Weather, wild animals, natural disasters, poisonous plants, and a complete lack of survival skills are bad enough, but there may also be strange tribes, radioactive wasteland, monsters, giant radioactive mutant cockroaches or... gasp!... runaways from Alpha Complex!
- ④ Troubleshooters used to being provided all their needs are in for rough times if they lose or use up their food supplies. Many a squad on Outdoors Duty has returned shy a few members but looking curiously well-fed...
- ④ The two-week segment schedule is intended to ensure Troubleshooters on Outdoors Duty don't have time to experience the effects of withdrawal from their hormone suppressants. Lost pills or a failure to make a check-in can throw this off. The effect of sudden spikes in hormone levels on a bunch of stranded Troubleshooters is left to your imagination.

—Joshua Moretto

### BLUE secret society life

At BLUE Clearance, citizens are trusted to manipulate the hearts and minds of the lower-clearance populace. BLUEs decide the approved truth and beliefs of Alpha Complex; they draft the rah-rah news videos and subliminal messages; they organize the Civic Pride Details and Happiness Patrols and Loyalty Sing-Ins and Sectorwide Joy Days.

But much as the secret societies would love to leverage their BLUE members to introduce their own propaganda and subliminal messages, there is a problem:

Everything at BLUE Clearance is done by committee.

Because it's incredibly rare for a citizen to make it this high in Alpha Complex without being involved in at least one secret society or conspiracy, everyone on any committee has his own agenda. This makes exploitation of BLUE Clearance... difficult. Certainly, say, a Romantics member will try to indoctrinate the citizens with a love for wonders of the vanished past, but he'll need to get his message past the Communist trying to slip in references to the oppression of the masses and the FCCC-P bishop trying to ensure the propaganda is doctrinally correct.

It was said in Old Reckoning times, 'A camel is a horse designed by committee.' BLUE Clearance conspirators end up producing deranged, schizophrenic camels that espouse a dozen conflicting forms of treason.

The other problem with BLUE treason is, most BLUEs in a sector know each other, by reputation if not by sight. BLUEs attract media attention, too. There's no comfortably anonymous mass of citizens to conceal you, and the people you meet remember your name. (The relative lack of drugs in the food at this clearance means citizens are more alert, not to mention crankier and meaner from withdrawal pangs.) Even a minor slip can mean betrayal and exposure. Therefore the plots of BLUEs are byzantine, which makes the committee meetings even more confusing.

### Societies with a presence at BLUE

**Humanists:** The Humanists, unfortunately, take to the endless politics and committee meetings of BLUE Clearance like scrubots to vatlime. They positively delight in endless meetings over bits of bureaucratic trivia whose importance can't be discerned with an electron microscope. This is because they run their society the same way: 'After the revolution, there will be three days of celebration! And the banners will be this shade of gold!'—'I prefer *this* shade.'—'Okay, let's form a task force to come up with an action plan for a working group to establish a committee to pick the banner color.'—'Truly the revolution is at hand!'

**Pro Tech:** Pro Tech's members quite like the perks of higher clearance: better access to technology and laboratories, better access to R&D records—and there's some atavistic impulse in the mad-scientist brain that says, 'You need to get a castle, preferably on a storm-wracked mountain, in which you defy the laws of God and nature.'

**Psion:** Psion has a huge advantage over the other societies, in that its mutant members are (a) more capable and dangerous than the average citizen, and (b) completely disposable. The society tries to position its members at ORANGE and BLUE, the two clearances where mutant issues arise most often.

—Gareth Hanrahan



## BLUE bonuses

The perpetual scramble is really starting to pay off, now. But you know what? You need to start taking some time for yourself. Spend a moment to enjoy the finer things. After all, if you don't look out for your needs, who will?

### Food, drink and consumables

#### ■ **Brewskie: 5cr per glass, 20 – 50cr per liter bottle**

One taste and you'll wonder why they don't sell this fermented beverage to the masses—it would make a fortune! Two or three bottles later, you'll realize why they don't dare sell it to the masses. Also comes in 'Vino' flavor.

#### ■ **Pizzaroni: 10cr + 1cr per topping**

Delivered straight to your door in half an hour or less, or you can shoot the driver! More than 20 toppings to choose from; mix and match all you want!

### Drugs and recreation

#### ■ **Sporting event box seats: 50 – 250cr**

The lower clearances only ever see edited highlights, but you'll be there to witness every thrilling moment! Bot-fights, laser-rally, crawler racing: you name it!

#### ■ **Magnetic word set: 10cr (ILLEGAL! Probation if caught)**

A collection of random words on magnetic backing that can be placed any way you choose. Make up wacky sentences, beautiful poetry or even deep philosophical statements about the purpose of existence.

### Hygiene and maintenance

#### ■ **Drug tester: 80cr**

How many times have you found yourself over- (or worse, under-) medicated? Check your levels before operating heavy machinery. Find out if your personal chemistry needs re-adjustment. For 50cr more, add on the Dispensator, a handy digital drug-cocktail advisor and quick-reference tool. Never wonder what you're taking again!

### Clothing and accessories

#### ■ **Digitally generated abstract art: 20 – 500cr per print**

These pleasing collages of shape and (approved) color are guaranteed to liven up the walls of your apartment. Each one is personally generated

and numbered by one of The Computer's own fully-licensed art-production subsystems!

#### ■ **Massageboots: 300cr**

These stylish boots don't just protect your feet in comfort—they actively massage and relax every part of your feet, whether you're walking, driving or just sitting behind your desk!

#### ■ **Autocar customization: 250 – 5,000cr per modification**

Express your unique identity (within approved limits) by tricking your ride out with extra fins, turbine overdrive, plush interior, hydraulic lifts and other one-of-a-kind mods just like the ones everyone has on those vidshows!

### Survival and technology

#### ■ **Portable weather monitor: 750cr**

'Weather' is a baffling and random-seeming event when you're new to the Outdoors, but this handy baby is able to track and predict what the weather will be a whole day in advance, with 75% accuracy! (Device not functioning inside Alpha Complex is normal.)

### Services

#### ■ **Advertising: 1000cr for off time – 10,000cr for prime time**

Got a new product or service coming out? Is your service firm's survival dependent on finding a new market? Get your brand out there in the best way there is: advertising during communal vid time! (Cost is for HPD&MC air time only and does not include budget for creation of content.)

#### ■ **One item deletion: 6,000 – 30,000cr (ILLEGAL! Brainscrub if caught)**

Computer Phreaks aren't just good at finding data; the really sharp ones can remove all trace of some single thing from all existing records. Clear up that past indiscretion... or bury the only evidence that would have exonerated your enemy!



## Internal Security BLUE Troopers

by Ken Rolston (updated by Beth Fische; from *HIL Sector Blues*, West End Games, 1987)

**This is the sector...**

**HIL Sector.** It's a sweaty, smelly, lived-in sector, surrounded by vast kilometers of interlocking, multi-level, criss-crossing metallic cylinders that constitute the **transit tube travel network**. The central dome of the sector forms a huge open metropolis that includes the high-rise **ULTRAVIOLET** luxury apartments, the many office buildings of **PLC**, **INFRARED City** (cubicles with a view) and **One IntSec Plaza**, a complex of tall, jutting buildings that houses Internal Security HQ and all its support departments. It is also rumored the sector's **Computer CompNode** is located here. But rumors are treason. Immediate termination is recommended for anyone spreading or listening to rumors.

**HIL Sector.** It is a complex within the complex—*Alpha Complex*. Citizens of all clearances and service groups walk its corridors, tunnels and passageways. It is a hub of activity; all the major transbot express monotubes pass through its massive terminal enroute to other sectors.

Anything can happen in the corridors of **HIL Sector**. And it is up to the elite **IntSec BLUE Troopers** to handle any situation, to lay down their lives in defense of the **Alpha Complex** way.

**To serve and protect.** Such is the exciting life of the **HIL Sector BLUEs**.



*Jim Holloway's cover for the original 1987 supplement. (Thanks to Christopher Kintz for the scan, which was in no way derived from a bootleg .PDF circulating on some illicit Commie filesharing network.)*

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*[Note: Like all 1980s PARANOIA products, the original HIL Sector Blues was laden with obnoxious pun names. We have replaced these with sensible names, for the benefit of GMs running non-Zap styles. But to satisfy purists, we present the deleted puns in a table on page 104.]*

## The awesome power of BLUE Troopers

The BLUE Troopers of HIL Sector are among the finest IntSec Troopers in Alpha Complex. They are an élite squad; all Troopers are of BLUE or higher security clearance. The Computer, confident of their loyalty, liberally showers information and resources upon its chosen angels of peace.

Each BLUE Trooper is issued special **X-317B full combat armor** when he receives his first field assignment. The armor itself is a mixture of Kevlar, reflex, shock-absorbent padding and Gamemaster fiat. The nylon armor sheathing is smartly tailored in midnight blue (hence the name), with handsome trim colors indicating higher security clearances. The helmet has a reflective, laminated-flexiglass faceplate. Between the bulky armor, the ponderous and deliberate pace it demands

## Series materials

- Extensive treatments of 12 IntSec service departments, where the PCs can go any time for help and useful information, details on the swift, safe and reliable transit tube transportation system. (In HIL Sector, getting there is half the fun—and most of the suspense.)
- Running gags to be dropped into a mission whenever you need to juice up a session.
- A system for organizing and designing your own BLUE Troopers series.
- Lots of plot hooks you can turn into mini-missions or a full-length series.
- R&D devices selected for their utility in police work and guaranteed to amuse, edify and explode.

## Two mini-missions

- 'First Blood, and Then Some'—A one-man army at large in HIL Sector.
- 'IntSec Agents at the Earth's Core'—BLUE Troopers are dispatched to subdue an R&D genius who has taken over HIL Sector Power Central and is threatening to test a device supposedly capable of producing a hole straight through to the center of the planet. Sounds like a good time to us.

## How to use these goodies

What should you do with all this crunchy goodness? Read it, of course. Read everything.

In particular, study the 'Running gags' section carefully. This describes the heart of a **PARANOIA** session and how to start thinking in terms of series, not just missions.

Next, design a mission of your own, or choose one of the included mini-missions. Study the mission beforehand and understand the intricacies of the plot. Then prepare a list of your favorite running gags to complicate the mission. Then you're ready to run!

and the mirrored surface of the faceplate, an IntSec BLUE Trooper may easily be mistaken for some sinister anthropomorphic robot.

IntSec troop teams are required to work in a spirit of cooperation alien to Troubleshooter teams. IntSec has provided a number of devices, quick tech fixes, that enforce cooperation.

For instance, the troop team leader is supplied with a nifty **Firepower Control** device that attaches snugly to his belt. This rectangular object is flat on three sides and has a series of toggle switches on its face. These toggles are the on/off switches for the unit's weapons. The appointed group leader can selectively control who can fire at any given time just by flicking a switch. When the other players find out about this, boy are they gonna be awed and amazed.

IntSec has also been rumored to install explosive devices in unit personnel equipment that a leader can remotely trigger when a

subordinate's response to an order is less than satisfactory. A shrewd leader would rig such remote controls as 'deadman switches' to discourage ambitious Troopers from blowing away their immediate superiors.

And The Computer cheerfully incinerates any Trooper (and his MemoMax backups) if he attempts a field termination without substantial evidence of treason and a Computer-authorized termination voucher. These little refinements deter PCs from indiscriminately blasting witnesses, evidence, innocent bystanders, perpetrators, petbots and each other.

Now, we know you may be thinking: 'C'mon. This is **PARANOIA!** Where's the player character infighting, backstabbing and treachery? Where's all the fun stuff?'

Don't worry. You can't keep a good traitor down. There's still plenty of infighting, backstabbing and treachery among the IntSec élite. It's just more subtle.



## The BLUE Trooper style

Bet you always wondered how Internal Security—the BLUE Troopers—complete missions efficiently and cooperatively while most Troubleshooters routinely expend most of their ammo allowance on other mission personnel. Gamers experienced with other roleplaying systems often observe that **PARANOIA** enthusiasts have so much fun betraying each other and firing experimental weapons into crowds, they don't get far into a mission.

Well, this is true. In other games the players are always moving purposefully toward some common goal of unquestioned significance. In deep dungeons there is usually some Big Quest everyone is real solemn about, and in deep space there is usually some Matter of Galactic Import.

In **PARANOIA** there is always The Mission, but nobody ever seems to take it terribly seriously. And for good reason. Often the missions are suicide festivals, programming errors or conspiracies so Byzantine as to defy analysis without abstract mathematical formulas. In short, completely unreasonable. Of course the PCs aren't supposed to achieve the mission objective. (They aren't even supposed to understand the mission, much less achieve the objective.)

And why don't PCs cooperate more to achieve mission objectives? Because shooting Commies is worth commendations, and all PCs are obviously Commies after they have been sufficiently killed to prevent them from refuting such an accusation. Generally, plugging a comrade is easier and more fun than cooperating to complete a mission.

What might induce PCs to concentrate on mission goals rather than on blowing each other up?

*Er...running out of ammunition?*

Well, yes, but we had something more general in mind—something along the lines of leadership, discipline, training and truly awesome personal armor. Also the leader's belt switch. And the hidden head-bombs.

Just as important, in IntSec, instead of blowing a rival or pigeon away, you have to develop a solid case against him. You have to have *evidence*. You have to produce *witnesses*. You have to suggest *plausible motives*.

Of course, it's easy to fabricate evidence. And easy to suborn witnesses. And easy to dream up plausible motives. Observe...

**Computer:** And what charges do you have to bring against Citizen Suck-R?

**Earnest Accuser:** First, Suck-R failed to support his fellow Troopers with laser fire when the vile Commie filth ambushed us.

*(Note: The Earnest Accuser had washed Suck-R's laser with Gum-All during a routine weapons check.)*

**Earnest Accuser:** Second, Suck-R was seen exchanging secret hand signs with one of the Commie prisoners.

**Earnest Witness:** Yes, indeed, I saw him do that. You bet. Several times. With both hands. Sure. Honest.

*(Note: Earnest Witness is now the proud owner of a lovely modified gas mask which protects against all IntSec SleepGas mixtures. [Or so Earnest Accuser asserted when he made a present of it to Earnest]*

*Witness as a token of gratitude for services rendered.])*

**Earnest Accuser:** And, finally, I produce the incontestible proof of Suck-R's perfidy. Look! *(Produces a piece of red cloth from a pocket with a flourish.)* A Commie banner! And all along this recreant citizen has had this tucked into his utility pouch where I found it on a routine hygiene check! Oh, detestable traitor, hang your head in shame!

*(The red banner was hastily fabricated from an old jumpsuit.)*

**Computer:** Certainly looks conclusive to me. How would you like that termination voucher made out?

## NPC BLUE Troopers as GM coercive resources

When used as NPCs, BLUE Troopers are a superb GM crowd-control device.

You know how the players are always threatening to go off in some direction you don't want them to go. And how they sometimes get too cocky and blow up so many things, they have to be taught a lesson about damaging Computer property.

Think of the BLUE Troopers and the Vulture Squadrons as The Computer's mighty mailed fists—crack units, superbly trained, superbly outfitted and superbly led, with high morale and unquestioning loyalty to The Computer. Troopers generally handle internal affairs, whereas the Vultures primarily deal with (or at least prepare constantly to deal with) enemies Outdoors.

Whenever your typical RED, ORANGE or YELLOW PCs are getting too frisky in a standard **PARANOIA** mission (like **YELLOW Clearance Black Box Blues**, in **PARANOIA Flashbacks**), dispatch an IntSec BLUE Trooper squad to strike the fear of The Computer into them. (The BLUE IntSec Troopers in *Send in the Clones*, also reprinted in *Flashbacks*, are a good example of this use.)

The low-clearance bozos are wriggling about, trying to stab each other and blow up the universe. The BLUE Troopers appear, preferably mysteriously, as though they stepped out of a secret passage or a hidden wall panel. They loom over the PCs in their sleek, massive armor, training their weapons silently on the squabbling rabble, an ominous wall of concerted power, the will of The Computer made manifest. A disembodied voice echoes from a helmet speaker:

## BLUE Trooper tech

### X-317B full combat armor (Kevlar/reflec/shock padding)

The helmet offers the latest in communications equipment, permitting Troopers to call for information, for help and for lunch from wherever they may be. The helmet com units patch directly into HIL Sector Communications Central, the heart of IntSec. The helmet chin-guard contains an identification grid which, when pressed, scans a Trooper's tongue tattoo; any tongue not matching the helmet's ID file gets baked. (This system is completely reliable. Honest.)

### Firepower Control switch

All BLUE Troopers are issued specially modified weapons with safety mechanisms. These prevent the weapons from firing 'accidentally'—that is, unless the unit leader uses his remote Firepower Control device to deactivate the safety mechanisms. These mechanisms can be disabled by any competent weapons expert, but possession of a weapon with disabled safety mechanisms is treason punishable by termination.

'Excuse me. If you traitors are finished with your little dispute, I believe someone in Internal Security would like to have a few words with you. Step lively now, and behave yourselves. We wouldn't want an unfortunate accident to delay your prompt delivery, now would we?'

## Players' introduction

To begin your HIL Sector Blues series of missions, read the following to your players:

**So you're tired of getting aced by trigger-happy paranoids in the briefing room?**

*[Pause for player choral response. Encourage them to be frank. Gesture innocently with open hands and sympathetic smiles.]*

**...tired of having your experimental weapon disassemble itself dramatically in your hands, taking your clone and half a residence block with it?**

*[Choral response.]*

**...tired of being killed by public transit vehicles with autopilot software designed by Stephen King?**

*[Choral response.]*

**...tired of being sent to terminate Bruce Lee, Conan, Godzilla, Vulture Squadrons and the Mongol hordes without proper documentation?**

*[Choral response.]*

**Well. Gosh. What a whining, ungrateful bunch of citizens you are! The peripherals of The Computer tremble with disappointment. The fingers of the Vulture Squadron Execution Drill Team quiver in**

**anticipation, stroking the triggers of their hand drills.**

*[Pause. Grin winningly at the players you have inveigled into betraying themselves. Pantomime a Vulture Drill Team member revving his hand tool, making suitable 'VVVVVZZZZZZ, VVVVVZZZZZZ' noises.]*

**Yes, The Computer is disappointed you have chosen to voice your dissatisfaction so publicly. But The Computer is your friend, and what are friends for?**

**You are being accorded a signal honor. You are all being promoted to Security Clearance BLUE, effective immediately. You are all being reassigned to the elite Internal Security force of HIL Sector. There you will go among the citizens and ensure their safety and security. You will root out treason and destroy it. You will make Alpha Complex Safe for Technocracy.**

**You will also be standing close to a lot of things when they explode.**

**Just remember—'To Serve and To Protect'—that's the motto of the HIL Sector Blues...**

Now it's time to choose a group leader. Choose the group leader yourself, if you like, under the pretext of being the group's commanding officer, having reviewed the Troopers' files and having selected the Trooper with the most leadership potential. In a practical sense, this is a smart move if you want a cooperative group; you can pick the leader most likely to successfully emphasize the importance of cooperative play, mutual support and mission achievement.

Alternatively, you can invoke the revered principles of Democracy and Darwinism by

allowing the players to elect their own leader for each mission, then learn through natural selection which player is the most effective leader. This method may be time-consuming, but more instructive in the long run.

Okay. Your players have been welcomed to HIL Sector, they've boned up on their duties at HIL Sector Internal Security and they created nice new characters. Are they ever ready for a mission. Once you've studied the 'Running gags' and 'Mission itself' chapters, you'll be prepared to present a couple of little routine police jobs for them—just to introduce them to IntSec work—or you can launch them right into one of the stupendous mini-missions.

This is going to be so much fun...!

## No lower-clearance PCs!

By the way, observing our oft-repeated dictum that higher-clearance characters have no better chance than lower-clearance characters to survive or complete a mission, you may figure, what the heck, let's just use our current series characters, or roll up some new RED Clearance guys.

Well, it's their funeral. We playtested one mini-mission with typical backstabbing, R&D-encumbered, secret society-romanticized, RED Clearance characters. They all did manage to get into the autocar alive, and some did survive the ride, and if the dice had been more favorable, one or two might have made it to the beginning of the mission. But we doubt it.

It *could* have been a coincidence. But without the heavy armor, the severe injunction against summary executions, the leader control over weapons and the emphasis on cooperative play (all detailed here), don't expect to get far with the specially crafted missions. That's the whole point of playing an elite BLUE Trooper.

- 1. Ye have locked yerselves up in cages of fear—and, behold, do ye now complain that ye lack FREEDOM!**
- 2. Ye have cast out yer brothers for devils and now complain ye, lamenting that ye've been left to fight alone.**
- 3. All Chaos was once yer kingdom; verily, held ye dominion over the entire Pentaverse, but today ye was sore afraid in dark corners, nooks and sink holes.**
- 4. O how the darknesses do crowd up, one against the other, in ye hearts! What fear ye more that what ye have wroughten?**
- 5. Verily, verily I say unto you, not all the Sinister Ministers of the Bavarian Illuminati, working together in multitudes, could so entwine the land with tribulation as have yer baseless warnings.**

—Lord Omar, *Principia Discordia* Chapter 1, 'The Epistle to the Paranoids'



## 1: IntSecServe

During the course of a HIL Sector series, your Troopers will often make requests for information, equipment and technical assistance. Most often such requests can be handled by the IntSec service bureaus listed in this chapter, located in the giant HIL Sector IntSec Headquarters facility. (If not, make plenty of Access checks, and either give the PCs a runaround or improvise a new service bureau on the spot.)

The entire IntSec operation is under the jurisdiction of **Captain Frank-I-OLL-5**. He is a dashing, ambitious citizen who started as a lowly Troubleshooter and quickly rose to the top of the largest Internal Security force in all Alpha Complex. Frank-I is fair, just and understands the problems his subordinates face. That doesn't mean Troopers can get away with anything, however. Frank-I has his sights set on higher office, and pity the poor Trooper who threatens his ambitions.

The following listings include characterization hints and an idea of how friendly the NPCs are when dealing with obnoxious PC Troopers. Remember in most cases, PCs normally deal with subordinates in each department. Unless otherwise noted, supervisors only deal with Troopers in rare circumstances.

### ■ Armory

If a Trooper needs a more powerful weapon or some special piece of defensive armor, this is the place. The armory is located in a large, five-level complex in the back of IntSec HQ. The heavily armored walls and patrolling warbots are a Trooper's most vivid memories of his visit to this wonderful place.

### ■ IntSecServe departments

- Armory
- Communications Central
- Forensic Sciences
- Informant Registry
- Ministry of Information
- Ministry of Political Orthodoxy and Interrogation
- Motor Pool
- Mutant Registry
- PLC Outfitting
- Political Therapy
- Research and Design (R&D)
- Surveillance and Covert Operations

This department handles all Trooper weapon and armor outfitting and maintenance. The staff has a reputation for unusually efficient maintenance and service. It also has a reputation for installing remote control devices in all weapons, permitting the mission leader to deactivate any subordinate's weapon with the flick of a switch and for detecting unauthorized tampering with weapons. Occasional spot checks are ordered from time to time to catch careless traitors.

### ■ Personnel

**Supervisor: 'Rip Yer Lungs Out' Rocky-B-MBO-1**

**Secret Society:** Frankenstein Destroyers  
**Mutant Power:** Regeneration

**Weapons Technician: Wes-B-DBA-4**

**Secret society:** Death Leopard  
**Mutant power:** Electroshock

Wes-B and Rocky-B love their work. They also love their merchandise and are averse to signing equipment out to Troopers. But once convinced of the need by patriotic BLUEs, they try to assign the biggest, most dangerous, most special-effect-producing weapons they have. They just love to hear a tacnuke explode at duskcycle. And there's nothing better than the smell of napalm in the morning.

**PC:** We need a weapon to subdue a poodlebot so we can return it to its owner.

**Wes-B:** No problem! We've got just the thing to do the trick. How many thermo-radiation grenades will you need?

Rocky-B is a retired Vulture Squadron goon and a veteran of the Commie Sweep of 202. He tells whoever will listen all about his heroics on behalf of The Computer. 'We leveled that whole sector to end a terrible, terrible menace. You know, hot radiation looks so pretty glowing over smouldering ruins...'

### ■ Communications Central

This IntSecServe department connects all of Internal Security via PDC and com units. The friendly operators of ComCent inform Troopers of assignments, handle requests for backups and reroute Troopers to HIL Sector Central or some other civilian communication band when they need to place a call outside of IntSec HQ.

### ■ Personnel

**Dispatch Supervisor: Brett-I-HIL-6**

**Secret society:** Humanist  
**Mutant power:** Empathy

**Duty Officer: Sergeant Noam-I-TNO-6**

**Secret society:** Romantics  
**Mutant power:** Mental Blast

**Dispatch Operator: Mabel-B-EEE-6**

**Secret society:** Free Enterprise  
**Mutant power:** Pyrokinesis

Brett-I-HIL-6 is an INDIGO Clearance Trooper assigned to desk duty in ComCent because he's been wounded and injured so many times in the line of duty that even a Docbot Mark 12 can't restore him to full function.

Brett-I is universally regarded as wise and loyal and has a reputation for looking out for rookies, passing along helpful tips or taking an inexperienced Trooper aside for a friendly talk when he is about to get into serious trouble. Brett-I has no political axe to grind, and he is too shrewd to be an easy target, so he's one of those rare characters in Alpha Complex—a guy a Trooper can trust.

It is extremely unlikely players conditioned to normal **PARANOIA** play would go around looking for a friendly NPC, so you'll probably have to push Brett-I out in front of them before they get much use out of him. You can introduce Brett-I as the dispatcher for all HIL Sector missions. Have him offer some cautionary advice which turns out to be useful. Have other NPCs send the PCs to him from time to time for practical advice, or consult him by com unit in the presence of the PCs. Take every opportunity to present him as a source of hints and advice.

Noam-I is also the PCs' unit supervisor, so he'll be dealing with them on a very intimate basis. He can be their best friend in IntSec if they play it straight with him, or he can be their worst nightmare. If such is the case, they get assigned to the most boring and the most dangerous missions available, and the horrors of Communication Central are even more horrible than usual.

Mabel-B is a fun-loving citizen who sometimes works as a ComCent dispatcher and also enjoys playing practical jokes. Her favorite is switching the tongue tattoo identification sensors in the PCs' helmets. She's also fond of rerouting Troopers' calls to High Programmers,

Vulture unit leaders and The Computer. Do you know the penalty for prank com calls in Alpha Complex?

■ **Forensic Sciences**

Known as 'The Lab', this department analyzes evidence or puzzling phenomena encountered during an IntSec mission. The staff is available for remote or field consultation when expert analysis is necessary.

The staff is fascinated by high-tech toys and elegantly abstruse scientific theory. This is likely to breed short tempers in practical, time-pressed BLUE Troopers. Requests for field experts often result in the appearance of bespectacled boy and girl geniuses freighted down with fancy gadgets and polysyllabic blather. They wander absentmindedly into fields of fire, which is unfortunate because The Computer frowns on accidents befalling such valuable citizens.

'The Lab' occasionally assigns experimental crime-fighting devices (bloodhoundbots, miniaturized lie detectors, Communist-hormone detectors, etc.) to BLUE Trooper squads. Sometimes it assigns a lab observer to accompany the squad to supervise testing. Refusing these testing requests is a bad idea, always resulting in treason points.

**Personnel**

**Supervisor: Larissa-Y-DAN-2**

**Secret society:** Sierra Club

**Mutant power:** Hypersenses

**Forensic Technician: Candy-Y-DAN-2**

**Secret society:** Romantics

**Mutant power:** Hypersenses

Candy-Y and Larissa-Y were BLUE Troopers before their demotion to forensics a short time ago. Using the same methods that made them the darlings of the Trooper squad room—namely pushy and obnoxious behavior—these citizens have turned forensics into an important part of IntSec standard procedure. They base their whole scientific method on a highly questionable Department report about the most effective scientific methods. Needless to say, their methods are highly unorthodox, questionable in nature and wholeheartedly supported by The Computer.

When dealing with Candy-Y and Larissa-Y, the PCs get the impression one is friendly, cheerful and open, and the other is mean, nasty and uncooperative. Which is which changes each time they call forensics. And if the case is particularly interesting, Larissa-Y and Candy-Y forget all about their current jobs and become the BLUE Troopers of legend they once were.

■ **Informant Registry**

This department provides BLUE Troopers with information not readily available through more conventional means (e.g., via Access rolls). In addition to undercover infiltration throughout Alpha Complex's secret societies, IntSec maintains a lively traffic in the information market. The Informant's Registry can provide Troopers with names and locations of various citizens who can tell them when the next meeting of the Sierra Club secret society is, where the IR Market drop stations are and which bot is a Corpore Metal organizer.

There are two general classes of informants. The larger group is composed of eager, patriotic volunteers who keep an eye open for anything treasonous or illegal. These folks are generally recognized

as public squealers and, because no one trusts them, seldom have information of value.

The other, smaller but more valuable group consists of well-placed secret society members who sell information at high prices. Their lives are at risk if discovered selling information to IntSec, and great care is taken to provide anonymity and secure communication channels to these informers. The bureau is generally unwilling to risk exposing them except in cases of Alpha Complex security.

The head of the department is Beth-V-DEE-3. Actually, she *is* the department. Beth-V is getting on in years and has learned how to cover herself quite well. This is why she's been able to keep this job for 20-odd years. Another reason is that her opponents (and those she feels are opponents) get reported as traitors or exposed as Commies. That's why her new assistant, Pip-G-NEO-4 is nervous. He doesn't want to wind up as another in a long line of Commie traitors assigned to the Informant's Registry.

**Personnel**

**Supervisor: Beth-V-DEE-3**

**Secret society:** Spy for another Alpha Complex

**Mutant power:** Deep Thought

**Registry Coordinator: Pip-G-NEO-4**

**Secret society:** Romantics

**Mutant power:** Regeneration

Sweet, innocent Beth-V works closely with PLC Outfitting, sewing audio bugs and radar tracers into suspicious-acting citizen's clothing and uniforms. As long as PCs grovel properly, Beth-V is pleasant, helpful and eager to provide assistance. If the PCs don't grovel, they may learn why she is dangerous to make mad.

Beth-V's job is to file reports of treasonous activity and suspected treasonous activity. She does this quickly, accurately and selectively.



*A trooper demonstrates the new and improved Model X-4 Armor.*



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She has been known to—occasionally—file a treasonous report under the wrong name (oops!) or even misfile an entire stack of treasonous evidence under the same name (giggle!). She is also a spy for another Alpha Complex, planted long ago, who passes information to her superiors whenever she is able.

### Ministry of Information

Troopers can always petition The Computer for information, but it is almost always more effective to route a request through the MinInfo. IntSec often has access to original documents, testimony and blood samples, while The Computer invariably disseminates carefully digested and edited versions of events.

Troopers contacting IntSec in person have no trouble, and Troopers using their PDCs are automatically plugged into the MinInfo research banks. However, tying into the research banks via Communications Central by computer terminal, PDC or other method requires a password. The latest password is available from Communications Central, and they're very choosy about who they give it to.

When using a remote console or PDC to request information, Troopers are directly connected to an Information Officer, generally of GREEN Clearance or lower, who personally handles their request. Most officers are quite obsequious and cooperative; some are annoyingly overzealous in political orthodoxy to the point that their cooperation is expensive in time and energy. Pulling rank on these super-patriots can be risky, but may be necessary if Troopers don't have all day to wait for the information they want.

#### Personnel

**Supervisor: Ian-O-YKA-4**

**Secret society:** Sierra Club

**Mutant power:** Mental Blast

**Information Officer: Sam-R-TDS-2**

**Secret society:** Communists

**Mutant power:** Levitation

Sam-R is always on duty at the Ministry Information Counter. He is a sniveling, whining, overweight citizen unhappy with his job, and he's sure everyone and The Computer are in a complicated conspiracy to make him miserable.

Troopers approaching the counter see a nameplate that reads Sam-R-TDS-2. The number is written on a flip card that can be changed each time the Troopers return. They spot a RED clerk sitting some distance away with a vidscreen in his lap.

**PC:** Excuse me. Can you tell me how to order a part for an autocar?

**Sam-R:** (Not taking his eyes off his portable vidscreen.) What's your security clearance?

**PC:** BLUE.

**Sam-R:** Tough. No dice. Pop a happy pill. Leave me alone.

**PC:** Umrn...I was told you could help me.

**Sam-R:** Nope. I'm watchin' Teela. I'm not gonna get it now. Come back tomorrow. Leave. Besides, you're part of the conspiracy. Well, it won't work. I'm already miserable. Go away.

**PC:** Okay. Just excuse me a second... there! (Rests a cone rifle on the bridge of Sam-R's nose.) Now. Let's start over....

The only thing that works with Sam-R is threatening him with summary execution for not following orders. He's already on his fourth clone and grudgingly concedes to higher-clearance orders. It just takes a little motivation to get him away from his vidscreen. When threatened, Sam-R loses control of his mutant power, and nearby objects begin to float about.

Incidentally, all Access checks lead back to Sam-R, or more precisely, Sam-R's queue at MinInfo.

Each time the PCs encounter Sam-R he's on his next clone. After his sixth life, either replace him with another NPC or have some high-clearance official intercede to buy him another six-pack. (Why? Who knows? Maybe Sam-R is the only one who knows the filing system.)

Sam-R knows where all types of information can be found, or whom to talk to if he doesn't have that information.

His superior, Ian-O-YKA-4, is never available.

### Ministry of Political Orthodoxy and Interrogation

Do the Troopers have an uncooperative witness? How about a suspect that won't talk? Or a known Commie who won't confess? Bring them in to MiniPOI for fast results, satisfaction guaranteed! This department specializes in questioning citizens and getting them to confess—to absolutely anything you want them to.

All the latest in persuasive electronics are at MiniPOI's disposal. Mind sifters, mind scramblers, mind rearrangers and mind crushers are just some of the fun devices suspected Commies and traitors look forward to. This department also keeps an eye on Troopers to ensure they are proceeding by the book—the Big BLUE Book.

This is the most overtly political of the IntSec service bureaus. Its agents are generally fanatics, and many of the office staff are secretly CPU service group members.

When things are going well in HIL Sector—when everything is quiet and secure for The Computer and the citizenry—the Ministry keeps a low profile and gets involved only when called upon by BLUE Troopers. When things start going wrong—when important cases are slow to be



solved, when important people get unhappy with IntSec performance—agents from the Ministry begin showing up in mission groups, in corridors and in public lavatories. If Troopers aren't bringing them any brains to sift, they look for reasons to sift Troopers' brains.

Officially, Ministry agents should be indistinguishable from the populace to make their undercover activities most effective; however, there is a subtle sleek and prosperous look about them the citizenry can sense—well-tailored clothes, perfectly groomed hair, an air of repose, confidence and security. In game terms, a PC with Moxie skill may recognize an undercover MiniPOI agent.

Encourage Troopers seeking information from an uncooperative witness to use this department. Then comes the fun part. Give the PCs all the misleading information you want. MiniPOI can serve as a wild-goose-chase kit. The staffers solemnly deliver the information pried from their victims. Encourage the PCs to regard it as gospel. Make sure it is baloney.

**Personnel**

**Supervisor: Mitch-V-CEI-2**

**Secret society:** Illuminati, infiltrating Psion

**Mutant power:** Mental Blast

**Truth Technician: Hank-G-NMA-1**

**Secret society:** Psion

**Mutant power:** Teleportation

■ **Motor pool**

Need an autocar for the day? This is the place to get one. And PCs can come in person or call via their com units. Isn't that convenient? The motor pool also handles repairs and maintenance of autocars and bots. The pool itself is located on the ground level of IntSec HQ Building 3. It also occupies three additional sub-basements and has its own private transit tube destination station. Row upon row of autocar bays take up much of the space, along with repair pits, elevated storage docks and diagnostic computer stations.

Good relations with the Vehicle Services staff of the motor pool is essential to successful mission completion. If the Grease Gang likes them, PCs' autocars will probably be reliable. If the Grease Gang doesn't know them, PCs get whatever is handy—sometimes a risky proposition. If the Grease Gang dislikes them, they will go out of their way to assign PCs their least-reliable equipment—autocars which deliver them to the wrong sector, which break down in the middle of a pursuit and occasionally malfunction in dramatic ways when operated at speeds in excess of 12 kph.

The Grease Gang is sensitive about its lowly status (they are INFRAREDs, REDs and ORANGEs), and Troopers quickly get on their bad side by pulling rank. On the other hand, heroic tough guys strike their fancy, and those knowledgeable in the Vehicle Ops and Maintenance skill generally make a good impression. Bribes are very effective. Squealer-rats and super-patriots are universally loathed; Grease Gangers make an exaggerated show of obsequious cooperation, but give them deathtraps and junkers, regretfully explaining that all the good vehicles are reserved for high-clearance folks or are out of service.

The motor pool also handles maintenance of IntSec guardbots, docbots and jackbots. They are not particularly well-qualified for this work, but budget cuts forced this economy. IntSec bots are known for their unreliable maintenance and programming and, within the service, Troopers know not to put much faith in them. Unfortunately, other service groups generally put a lot of faith in bots, and external requests that Troopers be supported by bots are common and generally acknowledged.

**Personnel**

**Supervisor: Sunny-O-OXD-3**

**Secret society:** Free Enterprise

**Mutant powers:** Mechanical Intuition

**Mechanic: Sammie-O-OXD-4**

**Secret society:** Free Enterprise

**Mutant power:** Machine Empathy

Sunny-O-OXD-3 was near death after being run over by a BLUE Trooper autocar. He was quickly rushed to a nearby recovery cubicle and placed in the care of a docbot. His coworkers, convinced the damage was too great for even modern medicine to overcome, reported his sad demise and requested a replacement.

But Sunny-O did not die! The gifted docbot saved his life and he returned to his post the following day. His co-workers rejoiced—and then realized their mistake. Before they could warn him, he wandered into his office and discovered his former creche-mate, Sammie-O, already in his place. After an interesting but unsuccessful few months at Worker Assignment Services, the former creche-mates decided to work as a team. And everybody rejoiced.

Today, it is next to impossible to tell these two apart. They act, look, talk and walk exactly alike. (Think Tweedle Dee and Tweedle Dum, or the two Walt Disney chipmunks, Chip and Dale.) They also have a deep-seated hatred for BLUE Troopers due to the driving habits of one reckless clone.

**Sunny-O:** May I help you?

**PC:** Yes. I need my autocar repaired.

**Sunny-O:** Wait here and I'll go out and look at it. *(Exits.)*

**PC:** *(Surprised at his eagerness to help.)* Thank you!

**Sammie-O:** *(Entering from another door.)* May I help you?

**PC:** Already being helped, thanks...

**Sunny-O:** *(Reentering and standing next to Sammie-O.)* There appears to be a problem with—

**Sammie-O:** The transmission?

**Sunny-O:** No. Try again?

**PC:** Excuse me...

**Sammie-O:** *(Ignoring PC.)* The brakes. Definitely the brakes.

**Sunny-O:** Wrong again. You aren't doing well today. Maybe you should have taken an extra wakey pill this morning?

**Sammie-O:** Wait, wait. *(Pause.)* I know! The magnetic pulse power strip! Yes?

**Sunny-O:** Gosh, you're right!

**PC:** Excuse me, can I get my autocar fixed?

**Sammie-O:** *(To PC)* Excuse me! *(To Sunny-O)* Is there anything else wrong with the car?

**Sunny-O:** Yes! Oh, you're catching on faster. Guess again...

These two are the mechanics most often found down at the motor pool. They take care of routine maintenance, refueling and repair of IntSec autocars and are in charge of the entire facility. They are also in charge of the weekly Free Enterprise Bowling Tournaments. Not-so-loyal citizens call in or visit to lay bets, choose partners and pay debts. In the main garage itself is a strange color-coded graph. It is used to mark bowling results. Each team is in a different color. This not only mocks The Computer's security clearances, but is hazardous for any PC to ask questions about. Sunny-O and Sammie-O have plenty of blunt instruments lying about to answer such questions.

Both mechanics are happy and carefree. They are glad to repair any vehicle. Harrass or threaten them and they will still fix your car. Eventually. Some day. Real Soon Now.

■ **Mutant Registry**

Just stepping into the busy Mutant Registry waiting room alerts Troopers to the unique



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atmosphere of this service department. Citizens wearing jumpsuits of various colors—each bearing the distinctive yellow Registered Mutant stripe—lounging lazily on benches. One idly munches on a bar of aluminum. Another casually directs lightning bolts into a scorched table leg. Messengers float to and fro like Mary Poppins. A clerk is taking notes as the citizen across the desk rigidly grips the arms of his chair, his ears smoking and his eyes spinning like pinwheels.

Troopers can borrow Computer-sanctioned mutants for crimefighting tasks. These mutants are happyallowed to freely use their powers whenever they want. The Computer says so. As loyal citizens, they always listen to The Computer. They love working alongside the famous HIL Sector BLUEs. Oh, and they're all psychotic.

### Personnel

**Supervisor: Martie-I-OLG-2**

**Secret society:** Anti-Mutant

**Mutant power:** Empathy

**Registry Clerk: Preston-O-XEX-2**

**Secret society:** Psion

**Mutant power:** Mental Blast

Martie-I, the citizen in charge of the registry, belongs to Anti-Mutant. He hates mutants. He sends them out on the most dangerous IntSec missions, hoping they will terminate themselves and save his society the trouble.

Preston-O's sacred mission is to start a free society of mutantkind somewhere Outdoors. He tries to protect all mutants—registered or not—while compiling statistics on them. If a Trooper displays a mutant power, Preston-O is sure to contact him in the near future.

### PLC outfitting

This department has offices and a small warehouse at IntSec HQ. The supplies are well stocked, and the staff is uncooperative. Due to the small staff (composed of Spencer-G-RLE-6 and Simon-R-IDO-2) and warehouse, exotic items like Outdoor gear, engineering equipment or personal grooming supplies have to be shipped in from another sector: 'It'll take six to eight weeks.'

PLC Outfitting is near the HIL Sector IntSec target range. The explosions and flying debris that distinguish this area have an unnerving effect on the employees of PLC. A considerable portion of PLC's restocking is in the area of earplugs, earmuffs and umbrellas. Lots of PLC technicians wear their work home with them. Especially the ones that have to walk by the target range. They can be seen holding umbrellas over their ear-muffled heads as they pass the target range.

IntSec Troopers can get any type of clothing they can imagine here—in blue, of course.

Anything Spencer-G-RLE-6 even remotely conceives as dangerous weapons is available only through the armory. Spencer-G considers suspenders dangerous weapons.

### Personnel

**Supervisor: Spencer-G-RLE-6**

**Secret society:** Pro Tech

**Mutant power:** Deep Thought

**Service Representative: Simon-R-IDO-2**

**Secret society:** Pro Tech

**Mutant power:** Hypersenses

When playing Spencer-G, think of a mad scientist with a mohawk haircut. Spencer-G isn't much for conversation, and he isn't much for courtesy. He suspects everyone of treason and keeps his thoughts to himself. He may be in charge, but he doesn't trust his subordinate worth a plugged credit, so he's always around to handle requests.

Said subordinate, Simon-R, is always around too, and somehow manages to get into an argument with Spencer-G whenever a Trooper needs a piece of equipment *right now*.

### Political Therapy

'Brain-cleaning While You Wait.' Actually, most of the heavy-duty mindroasting goes on in the Frank-O-RRK Memorial Recreation Center—a charming spa which makes a gulag look like Club Med. DeePolTee concentrates on rehabilitating citizens intimidated and interrogated into confessing criminal thoughts and deeds by MiniPol. Clients are encouraged to absorb vast quantities of information (via mind reconstructors) and to spout polite and effusive praise for The Computer, Alpha Complex and its citizens.

The staff of DeePolTee is not very interested in rehabilitating The Computer's stray citizens. They just want results, and to play with their subjects in high-tech chambers of horror that would have made Torquemada green with envy. Imagine an army of fiendishly cackling Vincent Prices with unlimited access to high voltage current, and you've got the idea.

No experienced Troopers at HIL Sector IntSec take the functions of DeePolTee very seriously, but as a boogie man to threaten uncooperative witnesses and detainees, DeePolTee serves admirably.

Rookies, however, have to learn from experience about the worthlessness of DeePolTee's corrective services. (Vets know that it's always imprudent to badmouth the capabilities of professionals who are licensed to apply orbital sanders to human flesh in search of the eternal verities.) Therefore encourage the PCs to drag potential information sources down to these fun-loving gnomes. Let the PCs watch the proceedings from the observation booth. But please, no getting sick on the carpet.

### Personnel

**Supervisor: Flynn-I-MMA-2**

**Secret society:** Mystics

**Mutant power:** Mental Blast

**Loyalty Officer: Biff-G-OFB-3**

**Secret society:** Communists

**Mutant power:** Charm

### Research & Design

This office foists dangerous (and occasionally lethal) experimental devices on unsuspecting IntSec Troopers. The Computer seeks to maintain the high success its BLUE Troopers have achieved, and the only way to do this is by keeping up with the latest in crimefighting technology.

R&D is located in the heavily armored building right next to the armory. Personnel of both departments let each other know when something is going to go boom. They all love to 'ooh' and 'ahh' while watching a really great explosion.

There are no *mad* scientists or designers here. All of IntSec's R&D citizens are perfectly sane. Perfectly. Devices are often crated and shipped without proper (or intelligible) documentation or manuals. The staff is unusually polite, but extraordinarily ignorant and misinformed. Usually they have absolutely no idea—or the wrong idea—about what a device is supposed to do, but they are under orders to invent such devices and have them tested. Loyal R&D citizens enthusiastically and loyally follow orders.

Though the players should discover it only by experience, it is *not* treasonous to refuse experimental equipment when assigned to urgent IntSec business. In any case, R&D staffers will not make a stink, and corrections are assigned only if the mission was low-risk and the refusal to accept the device seemed unreasonable or overtly treasonous.

#### Personnel

##### Supervisor: Julius-V-NRE-5

**Secret society:** Computer Phreaks

**Mutant power:** Uncanny Luck

##### Research Technician: Herm-G-ELW-5

**Secret society:** FCCC-P (former Mystic)

**Mutant power:** Matter Eater

Julius-V believes his subordinates envy his quick rise to VIOLET Clearance. (They do.) Julius-V also believes he got to VIOLET Clearance by sheer accident. (He did.) He also believes he'd be demoted if anyone found out. (Wrong. He'd be executed.) This thinking helps keep Julius-V paranoid and extremely eager to help anyone in any way. The less suspicion

he garners, the longer he'll get to watch things go boom.

This isn't easy as head of R&D, unfortunately. Random explosions, routine destruction of valuable Computer property and constant clone replacements keep Julius-V in the news and continuously monitored by agents of The Computer.

Julius-V is in charge of six rather inept would-be inventors. They strive to outdo each other in developing new devices. This isn't to please Julius-V—they are vying for his job as the new R&D head because they are sure his fall is imminent.

Julius-V knows very little about the projects his team has either completed or is still testing. He permits his subordinates to actually hand out experimental devices to Troopers, allowing blame to fall on their heads whenever possible—which is how he has survived so long.

Herm-G, his assistant and right-hand man, is not focused in the here-and-now. He would fit right into the 1960s Hippie movement. Wow, man. Cool. He especially likes to stare at nice, swirling colors for hours on end. Most of the devices he signs out form nice, swirling colors when they explode.

#### Surveillance and Covert Operations

This department provides skilled undercover operatives and surveillance technicians to other IntSec service bureaus. The staffers regard themselves as professionals, craftsmen and artists.

Indifferent to politics or idealism, they're rather casual in their observance of loyalty

to The Computer and their superiors; such temperament is tolerated only in citizens of real ability.

In a mission, NPCs assigned from this department are unusually capable and unusually unimpressed by security clearances and accusations of treason. PCs who accuse them of security breaches and treason are unusually ventilated by unusually accurate—and powerful—weapons fire. Think Dirty Harry and Raymond Chandler shamus types.

#### Personnel

##### Supervisor: Charles-B-NSD-4

**Secret society:** Death Leopard

**Mutant power:** Pyrokinesis

##### Field Agent: Dirk-Y-RYH-5

**Secret society:** Humanists

**Mutant power:** Uncanny Luck

##### Field Agent: Cody-V-TRE-2

**Secret society:** PURGE

**Mutant power:** Empathy

##### Field Agent: Oprah-I-NSO-3

**Secret society:** Death Leopard

**Mutant power:** Corrosion

Charles-B is supervisor because he much prefers working behind a desk than being in the line of fire. The others love making Commie mutant traitors suffer in assorted fashions and allow Charles-B to do the paperwork, leaving them free to practice their art.





## 2: Running gags

In this and the next chapter we Famous Game Designers share our pellucid insights on the art of designing **PARANOIA** missions, particularly missions for a series set in HIL Sector. First, in 'Running gags', we discuss those invaluable conventional elements, the almost-incidental-but-often-incredibly-difficult-or-dangerous problems that must be overcome before the Troopers even get started on their mission.

In the next chapter, 'The mission itself', we describe the kinds of mission ideas that work best in the HIL Sector setting, suggest how to develop them, then give storyline hooks to stimulate your already overexcited imagination.

The typical *HIL Sector Blues* mission contains most or all of the following elements:

- ☉ Where are those guys?
- ☉ The mission bulletin
- ☉ The horror of Communications Central
- ☉ The transit tubes: Adventure in transportation

### Where are those guys?

In previous **PARANOIA** missions it has been customary to assume the characters are off-duty somewhere, snoozing, queueing up for drug therapy or watching Teela O'Malley. Now that the PCs are BLUE Clearance types, they are usually summoned only while on-duty. Oh, sometimes they'll be interrupted by an emergency bulletin while lounging in their private saunas, or called away from their specially prepared gourmet-food-and-Happy-Fizz soirees, or gently prodded to wakefulness by deferential RED batmen. But generally their assignments reach them while they are at their duty offices at IntSecServe Central or on patrol in their autocars.

Each BLUE Trooper has his own private duty office with a desk, monitor, research console and comfortable furniture. A small adjoining room is provided for napping when emergency conditions require his extended presence at IntSecServe.

When a Trooper is not at his desk, he is usually in the Duty Ready Room, where Troopers gather to chat and informally exchange ideas and rumors, or in the Trooper's Lounge, where a giant vidscreen constantly

replays classic Computer propaganda films, and tasty snacks and beverages are served.

Troopers may also be on patrol or on an assignment when they receive a mission bulletin. They may either be in an autocar of some kind, or they may be on foot in a HIL Sector locality when the bulletin is broadcast through both their helmet and autocar com units. Depending on the priority of the mission bulletin, they may have to respond immediately or can respond at their convenience. For example, if the Troopers are polishing a High Programmer's Delta 666 Cruisomatic autocar when they receive a bulletin requesting aid for a team of beleaguered RED Clearance Troubleshooters, they may be forgiven if they are less than prompt in their response.

Encourage the players to roleplay their responses to bulletins according to the activity the bulletin interrupts. Take a few seconds and set the stage before reading:

**You are all sitting around a table in the Duty Ready Room playing *Bake the Traitor*. You [point at Player A] just won his [point at Player B] identification papers in the last round, but this round you [point at Player B] have drawn a winning hand—two Independent Sources, a Mutant and a Material Witness. The rest of you are sitting in your skivvies, hoping for a change of luck.**

**And then, suddenly... a bulletin!**

The behavior of NPC fellow officers is an effective model and inspiration as you are establishing the tone of the campaign. For example:

**Bulletin:** Go there and do this immediately!

**Veteran Trooper:** (*Yawn. Peers up regretfully from the massage table, then beckons to rookie partner.*) Here. Hold my Bouncy Bubble Beverage while I go see if I can find my gun.

Or...

**Bulletin:** Go there and do this immediately!

**Gung-Ho Trooper:** (*Snaps to attention from the edge of his seat in the Duty Ready Room.*) Yessir! Right away! Shake a leg! Double-time down to

the autocar while I radio ahead for combat strike force support...and look smart with that laser cannon, Trooper, unless you're eager to get back to swabbing vats...

### The mission bulletin

The primary function of a mission bulletin is to send the PCs off to some interesting setting where they may be killed. Thanks to the unparalleled coercive force of **PARANOIA**'s voice of The Computer, Gamemasters may choose to rely on inelegant, straightforward messages:

#### MISSION ALERT!

**GO OUT IN THE HALL. NOW. CERTAIN DEATH IS WAITING FOR YOU THERE. THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION.**

However, a well-composed HIL Sector Blues Mission Bulletin contains the following additional elements:

- ☉ **The coordinates of the location where the PCs are being sent.** These must be fed into the autocar autopilot. HIL Sector coordinates are alphanumeric of indeterminate length and complexity, stated in the following form: something-dash-other-dash-whatever, where something is the east-west coordinate, other is the north-south coordinate and whatever is the firmament-earth's core coordinate. The more remote and inaccessible the location, the more outrageous the length of the alphanumeric. For example:

☉ a nearby location: 3B-10F-F8X.

☉ a distant location: MRG1540-LOPD9003-MMDR57238F.

However, a disconcertingly simple alphanumeric may imply a **secret or high-clearance area**. For example:

☉ 4-F-1.

- ☉ **A code designation.** This describes the general type of disturbance the PCs can expect (see the IntSec response code

table at the end of this chapter). The judicious use of unknown or implausible codes (i.e., Code Beaver-Rose-Duck) can signal a particularly unwelcome assignment.

④ **Appropriate IntSecServe or other service firm informants or resources to contact in person or by com unit.**

These references can steer the PCs to search for information, clues or hints from various NPCs, or may suggest sources of equipment (typically R&D or Outfitting) or NPC support personnel (Mutant's Registry, Surveillance and Covert Operations, BotBusters, etc).

These references are an excellent way to set up the minor roleplaying encounters that are so effective in **PARANOIA**—little quickies that are not essential to the central narrative, and that have plenty of latitude for free-spirited improvisation and PC torture.

④ **A misleading or ironic understatement of the mission's dangers.**

This is a charming feature of The Computer's cheerful, positive style—everything in Alpha Complex is safe, easy and fun. As a result, citizens automatically assume everything is much worse than they are told, and they spend endless energy imagining how awful it could be.

This energy seldom turns out to have been wasted.

## The horror of Communications Central

Remember how, when the PCs are just RED Clearance, the most common response to any question is, 'I'm sorry, that information is not available at your security clearance'? It may come as a shock to you that inadequate security clearance is not the primary reason for denial of information requests. Oh, sure, The Computer is careful about who receives what information. But the important, and rather sobering, insight is The Computer often can't answer a question even if it wanted to.

The Computer knows a lot. What it doesn't know, it can usually ask its loyal Alpha Complex citizens about. But what The Computer and its loyal citizens know is not centrally organized. Much of The Computer's database is scattered through hundreds of CompNodes throughout Alpha Complex and its access to those fragments is limited by the ability

to communicate with them. Ditto for The Computer's knowledgeable informants.

Therefore the real bottleneck is in the communications system. And the Alpha Complex system is unimaginably fouled up. The comlinks themselves are poorly designed, ancient, inadequately maintained, popular targets for sabotage, supervised by security-ridden and defective Computer and bot systems and infiltrated and tampered with by every secret society in Alpha Complex.

Even worse, in this utopia each citizen has unlimited, free access to a PDC or comlinks. Once a citizen does reach a party in question, he tends to stay on the line as long as he can, fully aware it may not come his way again in the near future,

And the youth of Alpha Complex have much in common with the teens of another era—they love to talk on the phone.

Now, a Trooper depends on swift and reliable communication for efficient and effective pursuit of his duties. Are you really surprised he is denied this necessity? And can you imagine not exploiting this opportunity to annoy your players?

Here are just a few of the ways a Trooper relies on his PDC:

- ④ To receive bulletins while on patrol
- ④ To call the motor pool for an autocar to respond to bulletins received while on patrol
- ④ To communicate with locations where disturbances occur to get advance information on the situation
- ④ To communicate with the various IntSecServe departments that provide information and support
- ④ To communicate with superiors when clarification of means and objectives are necessary
- ④ To receive updates on mission status from IntSec Central

Think how happy your players will be when you start systematically frustrating their attempt to use their PDCs. Here are the sorts of annoyances they have to deal with every time they want to call up and order a pizza.

- ④ **The operator:** When a Trooper uses his PDA, he first speaks to the IntSec Central operator. If he wants an IntSecServe connection, the operator

handles it; otherwise he is switched to HIL Sector Central, or Alpha Central if the call is out-of-sector.

These operators are your first line annoyances. They speak either in slow, nasal monotones or mumble unintelligibly. Before they can even think about handling a call, they need to check your ID and authorization to use IntSecServe com lines.

**'Hehhh-lloh. IntSec Central. Please press your tongue tattoo to the identification grid. Thank you. Now, with what comcode do you wish to connect? Excuse me, could you speak a little louder? No, I'm sorry, I can't connect you without a comcode. Just a minute, I'll connect you with IntSec Comcode Information. One ringy-dingy...'**

Assuming there is no foul-up with the identification grid ('Aha! You are NOT who you claim to be. Please wait where you are—IntSec Troopers have been dispatched to escort you to...') and the PCs haven't memorized the comcode, or it hasn't been changed in the past 30 minutes, go to...

- ④ **Information, please:** There are Comcode Information operators for IntSecServe (and other service groups), HIL Sector (and other sectors) and Alpha Central. Here Troopers can be delayed and annoyed for a variety of reasons:

**'Could you spell that, please? I'm sorry, we have no listing for anyone by that name. No, there is no listing for Research & Design. Are you sure you don't need HIL Sector Central? Oh, wait, here's the reference. Please hold while I check... [time passes]. Hello? Can I help you? I'm sorry. What party do you want?'**

After getting a courteous runaround, Troopers are reconnected with the operator so they can place their call. Of course, the first two or three times they are given a wrong or obsolete number, so they may have to come back to information several times before getting to the Operator with the correct number.



**Interviewer: Do you think that the government is winning the battle against terrorists?**

**Deputy Minister Helpmann: Oh yes. Our morale is much higher than theirs, we're fielding all their strokes, running a lot of them out, and pretty consistently knocking them for six. I'd say they're nearly out of the game.**

**Interviewer: But the bombing campaign is now in its thirteenth year....**

**Helpmann: Beginner's luck.**

—*Brazil* (dir. Terry Gilliam) [1985]

Ⓢ **Interrupted service:** At any point in the process, a comlink may be interrupted. One common interruption is 'Can I put you on hold?'—with the result that Troopers are either disconnected (\*Click\*) or placed on interminable hold while an endless tape loop plays 'Rainbots Keep Falling on my Head'.

Another common problem is technical failure (\*Click\*)—which may actually be a line problem, or may be an operator who is tired of talking. Or there may be the crossed-wires interruption—another party is accidentally connected with the Trooper, or he is switched to a conversation already in progress. This can be quite nice when the two conversants are bandying rumors or plotting Commie subversion—though, of course, it is always impossible to trace the call or identify the speakers.

Ⓢ **The busy signal:** This is our hands-down favorite—a loud EHHNT-EHHNT-EHHNT-EHHNT-EHHNT-EHHNT noise repeated over and over until your players begin mumbling about justifiable homicide.

Ⓢ **The insufferably stupid/surlly/uncooperative receptionist:** Whenever Troopers contact another service bureau or official agency, there is always a receptionist who takes the call and holds onto it until they scream, or who switches them to the wrong department, or who accidentally hangs up on them, or who promises to have someone call them right back, but who forgets to take a name and number, or who knows no one from their pathetic service firm could have any reason to talk to anyone in this department. And, indeed, many times the receptionist has been instructed to sabotage as many calls as possible in order to avoid annoying requests for resources and information.

Ⓢ **Lame equipment:** Most of Alpha Complex's communications net is either hundreds of years old or brand new, designed by R&D, manufactured by cheerful INFRAREDS or misprogrammed workbots, and installed by under-trained drones from Tech Services. All of it is poorly maintained and regularly sabotaged by a wide array of fanatics and hobbyists.

Therefore it is no surprise when connections are suddenly cut off or crosswired in mid-sentence, or when the voice quality is unintelligible or inaudible, or when background noise, muzak or propaganda is 'accidentally' switched onto the line.

To stage this sort of thing, have your players speak with large objects in their mouths, or turn your TV up to full volume and make your players shout over it to be heard, or fill your dialog with long, onomatopoeic buzzes, whistles and clicks, which routinely displace critical information or urgent orders from their superiors.

Ⓢ **Big Brother is watching you:** And, of course, the ever-vigilant guardians of Alpha Complex's security spend a lot of time monitoring PDC traffic. Generally they are none too careful about concealing their presence—often PCs can hear the Monitors of Computer Loyalty in the background of their calls, scribbling notes, chattering to other monitors and wolfing down working lunches.

Sometimes, overcome by an attack of righteous zeal, they interrupt right in the middle of a call, demanding an explanation for that treasonous statement, or dispatching a squad of combots to bring the caller in for immediate interrogation. They, of course, have absolutely no trouble tracing a call.

You can endlessly combine and vary all these wonderful communications resources to provide regular misery for your players. And because you are a **PARANOIA** Gamemaster, we give you permission to run this joke right into the ground.

Then, lay off your PCs for a while. Tell them about the big purge in Tech Services. R&D steps in with a revolutionary new PDC system. Everything is suddenly wonderful. Give them efficient, reliable and courteous service for an episode or two, just long enough for them to become dependent on it.

Then, inevitably, the R&D stuff melts. Lots of Troopers are glazed with their helmets on. Run a couple of missions with *no* communications, nothing but RED foot messengers with powerful lungs.

Then bring back the old system. The players will love you. For a while.

## Transit tubes: Adventure in transportation

Getting around in HIL Sector used to be easy. It had the usual crawlways, pedestrian corridors, moving sidewalks, autocar tunnels and turbo elevators common to most of Alpha Complex. Everything worked swell and everyone was happy. The Computer said so.

Then a group of ULTRAVIOLET High Programmers got together and designed a new form of transportation—transit tubes. They decided that HIL Sector was the perfect place to build and test this highly innovative travel system. The tubes would make travel faster and save on precious fuel by using a modified electromagnetic impulse grid to shoot modified autocars from one entry station to another. Plans called for the grid to stretch in all directions, up the walls and across the ceiling, creating a super ten-lane, enclosed highway. There would even be protected walkways for citizens to casually stroll upon, allowing all to appreciate the newest wonder in The Computer's fair realm. It was a good idea, and everyone would be happier. The Computer said so.

Down came the crawlways. Moving sidewalks slowed to a halt and were ripped up. Noisy, unsightly autocar tunnels were dismantled. The turbo elevator shafts were sealed. Then work began on the amazing transit tube network. The intention behind the tubes was to provide a safe, efficient and speedy way to get around HIL Sector, while capitalizing on fuel economy and ease of maintenance.

The tubes to HIL Sector are paved with good intentions.

HIL Sector was sealed off from the rest of Alpha Complex, completely surrounded and criss-crossed by kilometers of transit tubes. No outside autocar access was available. Within HIL Sector, quick movement is possible only via transit tube. Into and out of the sector, citizens were serviced by the ultra-modern transbot express system, such as the famed ORI Sector Express.

Today the results of the High Programmers' labors are quite evident. Tubes end abruptly, sections are missing and much of the structure is falling apart. The entire project is a mess, due in part to the fact that High Programmers know next to nothing about engineering and architectural design. However, that mess is now the primary mode of transportation in all of HIL Sector. To save themselves from the embarrassing task of explaining why their grand design doesn't work (which could result

in lots of needless executions), the UVs wiped the data on the project from The Computer's memory banks. The Computer knows there are no transit tubes. Never were. Never ever.

The existence of modified autocars and transbots in a sector that has no transit tubes is a troublesome contradiction. The Computer ignores troublesome contradictions. Citizens bringing troublesome contradictions to The Computer's attention are promptly rewarded with a commendation and summary execution.

## The destination station

The transit tubes are lined with hundreds of recessed, accordion-style cubicles called **destination stations** (or entry stations, if you're about to enter the system). These stations are folded in the tube walls and out of the way when not in use, thus providing free and unrestricted passage for HIL Sector traffic.

When an autocar approaches its destination coordinates, it slows to a halt and pulls alongside the emerging cubicle. Isn't that neat?

There is a slight problem when citizens access an entry station, however. Theoretically, when the entry station is activated, flashing lights and loud sirens fill the tube section, and power is reduced to slow any autocars in the vicinity. It almost works, too. An encounter with an emerging entry station goes something like this:

**You are speeding through a lonely stretch of transit tube when suddenly a large, rectangular cubicle juts out of the tube wall. You smash into it at full speed, firmly implanting your vehicle in the entry station. Then lights begin to flash, sirens whoop and a calm, mechanical voice echoes, 'Warning, entry station activated. Please slow all vehicles and proceed with caution. Thank you for your cooperation!'**

## Autocars

To make full use of this non-existent transportation system, citizens must have access to specially designed transbots or modified autocars. A transbot is basically a large, semi-intelligent mechanical box that carries lots of citizens from one entry station to another. They are for the masses, designed to comfortably stand 20 citizens at a time. Common practice is for the transbots (malicious sapient that they are) to wait for

## Typical BLUE Trooper autocar

**Vehicle:** Turbo Z-334 VariTube-Terrain Patrol Vehicle  
**Sensors:** Multicorder 2, Haz-sens System 1  
**Control:** Manual and/or autopilot  
**Communication:** None standard  
**Seats:** 7  
**Security clearance:** BLUE (Trunk compartment for suspects: INFRARED)  
**Speed (low/maximum):** 20/100 kph  
**Weapons system:** Laser cannon 1, plus front-mounted anti-missile laser and/or smoke generator  
**Armor:** Vulture 020 Series

The laser cannon retracts into the hood of the autocar when not in use. When active the cannon completely blocks the windshield, obstructing the driver's vision.

PCs use Vehicle Ops and Maintenance skill to pilot the autocars, or make continuous Violence checks to avoid entertaining accidents.

an additional 40 or so citizens to pile in before closing up and pulling out. Troopers can use these transportation bots, but they are slow, unreliable, crowded and unwilling to divert from their preprogrammed route.

The autocar better serves the BLUE Troopers' purpose. Autocars are smaller, sleeker, more attractive and able to move independently through the extensive tube network. They have been modified to work in transit tubes, outfitted with lots of magnetic relays, pulse bypasses and energy-storage coils. To protect the costly equipment, all autocars are equipped with an electronic hazard-sensor system that is sensitive to extreme heat, cold and humidity. The Haz-sens System 1 is mounted to the underside of the vehicles and shuts down power to that section of the tubes in the event of an emergency that could damage an autocar.

## Obtaining an autocar

Citizens of Security Clearance INDIGO and higher are permitted to own personal autocars. GREEN and lower citizens are assigned autocars depending on their duties and the whim of PLC, or must depend on mass



transportation such as HIL Sector's transbots. BLUE Troopers are stuck somewhere in the middle. While they do not own personal autocars, Troopers have unlimited access to the vehicles. They just have to clear it with the guys in the motor pool.

If there is time, Troopers are encouraged to go down to the motor pool and sign out a vehicle. The particular autocar assigned is dependent upon their status with the motor pool guys. If they like you, you get a sleek BLUE Clearance runabout hatchback. If they despise you, you might receive an INFRARED turbocar with bumpers tied to the frame and gum on the seat—if you get anything at all. 'I'm sorry. There are no autocars available at this time.'

Abuse is plentiful and bootlicking is strongly suggested when dealing with the motor pool.

But if there is an emergency and time is of the essence, Troopers can call for an autocar via com unit. With any luck, it'll arrive within scant seconds.

**After a short discussion with an irate operator, you place an order for an autocar, Code 5 (vehicle requested: emergency). You quickly make your way to the nearest transit tube station and switch on your vehicle tracking signal, attached to your belt. Within seconds you hear the wailing siren, see the flashing light and watch in amazement as the autocar locks onto your belt signal, navigates the magnetic-grid highway of the transit tube and pulls up to the station platform. It's great to be a Trooper.**

Of course, that's an ideal example of the system at work. Reality has a sneaky way of messing with ideal examples.

**After a long discussion with an irate operator, two disconnections, many threats and a busy signal, you finally get through to the motor pool. You remember that the motor pool guys aren't happy about the ticket you put on their illegally parked towbot, but Sunny-O doesn't sound the least bit angry about your request for an autocar. You switch on your tracking signal and wait patiently for the vehicle to arrive. And wait. And. Wait. Then you hear the siren, see the flashing light and watch quietly as a towbot navigates across the magnetic grid of the transit tube, pulling a battered and dented wreck behind it. Sunny-O sticks**

**his head out the side window, smiles and says, 'Your autocar has arrived.'**

The belt-attached homing device is a great little gimmick. It calls the autocar right to whatever entry station the Troopers are waiting at. It also attracts bots. All kinds of bots. They like to home in on the signal, too. What this means is that a lot depends on which arrives first, the bot or the autocar.

### Operation

To use an autocar, Troopers punch in the destination coordinates on the dashboard keypad. The Computer always supplies correct coordinates for any mission it sends Troopers on. Always.

Even though they'll *never* need to check the coordinates, Communication Central keeps coordinate information on file. PCs can patch into ComCent via any BLUE Trooper Armor's built-in com unit.

Once the Troopers have punched in the correct destination coordinates the autocar begins moving along the magnetic-grid highway of the transit tube. The characters are always free to manually alter the speed or direction of the vehicle. There is a steering wheel and acceleration pedal. Whenever a citizen touches either one, the car temporarily goes off automatic guidance to allow the citizen to pilot it. To resume autopilot operation, press the 'autopilot' button on the dashboard. Reports of autopilot system failures are grossly exaggerated. Rumors are treason.

By the way, did your PCs check to see if their autocar was equipped with a forward motion deceleration pedal? You know, a brake. A simple 1d20 roll will determine an autocar's braking ability: 1–8, the brakes work fine; 9–12, brakes fail 50% of the time; 13–20, no brakes whatsoever.

### Autocar disasters

Given that the transit tubes were designed by High Programmers, installed by R&D techbots, have never been maintained and do not exist, they are holding up pretty well.

But let's face it, the transit tubes are in sad shape. Some tubes end in blank walls or in mid-span across residential domes. Other sections are submerged. Still others are in total darkness. Several tubes are so weak they barely support their own weight.

The High Programmers built the tubes wide enough for ten vehicles to navigate alongside each other freely—mostly. More often than not. But in many places the tubes are barely wide

enough for one vehicle, let alone ten. Autocars can certainly pass each other. Usually. As long as they go slow enough. As long as they aren't in a turn. And as long as the driver's ascending planet is real close to the cusp.

### Damaged autocars

If PCs show up at the motor pool with a damaged autocar, they are assessed for the repairs. Roll 1d20 and divide by two. The result is the amount the repairs cost. In thousands of credits. Trying to get out of debt is a common career goal in HIL Sector IntSec. About the only way to avoid this is becoming buddy-buddy with one of the mechanics—you might persuade him to repair your vehicle on the sly. The debts you accumulate this way are sometimes worse than paying for the repairs themselves. Most PCs only find this out through trial and error.

### Transit tube encounters

With all their modern features, it's a wonder the transit tubes are used at all. But because there is virtually no other way to get around HIL Sector speedily, everyone is stuck using them.

So the Troopers get a call, run to their autocar, jump in, punch in the destination code and lean back. They're ready for a quick, effortless trip to wherever they're going. Do you think we're gonna give it to 'em? Of course not.

You have to remember that these tubes were constructed some time ago. They've seen a *lot* of traffic, and they never really worked right anyway. And let's not forget the players have no idea what they're doing.

To help you use the transit tubes in your game, we could give you an intricate map detailing the vast tubular network. Or we could even implore you to be creative with a pencil, ruler and graph paper. But we won't. Face it, we're nice guys. We wouldn't make you do all that work. And we're much too lazy to even *consider* doing it. No, we Famous Game Designers have, naturally, come up with a much better solution.

Random encounters.

C'mon. You know what a random encounter is. You've all played that *Other Game*™. You know, the one with the wandering monsters who attack the characters for no apparent reason? Yeah. Those random encounters.

The basic element in most transit tube encounters is the use of an attribute or skill roll the driver makes in an attempt to perform an action or to *avoid* performing an action.



Each encounter mentions when a skill roll is appropriate. The Vehicle Ops and Maintenance skill is the safest way to go. PCs without this skill can use multiple Violence or Hardware checks to avoid little irritating occurrences.

Most encounter descriptions also provide confrontational scenes for the PCs to roleplay.

The last encounter is fondly referred to as 'Sudden Death'. It was inspired by the actions of one of our wonderful playtest groups. Pull it out when your players really need a lesson in player cooperation.

■ **1. The quick-stop pop-top bot**

**The tube ahead is under repair. You see red temporary warning lights blinking around the area, several warning signs placed too close to the construction site to be of any use and a team of RED overall-clad citizens. They are grouped around an access hole in the middle of the tube. There is a bot in the hole, and the citizens are frantically pulling at it. The bot seems to be stuck.**

The driver must make an attribute check or skill roll (see 'Transit tube encounters') to stop in time.

If he fails, the autocar impales itself on the bot—and stops dead. The eight RED technicians aren't really happy about the situation, and they all carry these wicked-looking laser welders (S3K energy). Of course, these weapons don't do much against Trooper armor.

If the driver stops in time perhaps the Troopers will help get the bot out of the hole. Then again...

■ **2. INDIGO, out dey come**

**You spot a stalled autocar, fully blocking the tube ahead. As you rapidly approach, you see it is indigo-colored. With an INDIGO driver. He turns around and sees you. You can see the whites of his eyes. You can also see his open mouth as he screams.**

The driver must make an attribute check or skill roll to prevent ramming into a loyal INDIGO citizen.

This is a potentially dangerous situation. If they miss the INDIGO, they'll be on report for

**It is lamentable, that to be a good patriot one must become the enemy of the rest of mankind.**

**It is forbidden to kill; therefore all murderers are punished unless they kill in large numbers and to the sound of trumpets.**

**An ideal form of government is democracy tempered with assassination.**

**—Voltaire**

frightening a loyal citizen—a high-clearance loyal citizen. They'll also find themselves pushing his vehicle to a recharge pump.

If they do hit the INDIGO, his autocar bursts into a ball of flame. If you want, you can give 'em about ten seconds to scramble out of their vehicle before it explodes.

Do they report it or not?

■ **3. Please don't feed the bots**

**As you zip along the tube, the engine begins sputtering. You're slowing down. You've come to a halt.**

**You look down and spot a little glowing message hidden in the jumble of buttons, switches and lights on the dashboard: 'Fuel level zero. Proceed to nearest recharge depot!'**

Players can try to call for a towbot, flag down other vehicles to siphon energy or abandon the autocar altogether. It is, of course, treasonous to abandon valuable Computer property. If they choose to walk through the tube, casually mention **PARANOIA** does, indeed, have rules governing starvation and dehydration. (Not true, but players aren't cleared to know that.) And those citizen strolling paths that criss-cross the tubes weren't designed with pedestrian safety in mind. Some paths cross

right in front of oncoming traffic. And let's not forget the ever-present power grid. Can anyone say 'roasted'?

If you're feeling particularly wimpy, or perhaps your players seem especially pitiful today, have an INDIGO limobot drive up. The RED Clearance chauffeur recharges the Troopers' vehicle at the command of the INDIGO, who simply wants to get to his destination station.

■ **4. Have white cane, will travel**

**As your car glides smoothly along the well-fit tube, you get a funny feeling. Your sight dims. Sure enough, you're blind. All of you.**

Dramatic pause.

**You suddenly notice the dashboard instruments are still glowing. You aren't blind after all! The lights in the tube went out. What a relief! No big deal.**

**Sure hope nobody's coming from the opposite direction.**



The headlights work on a verbal command, 'Turn on Headlights.' Difficult, eh? You might want them to travel with the tube lights off for a few hours, or have the lights spring back on after a few minutes. Which is just enough time for their eyes to adjust to the darkness. Glaring white lights make it awfully hard to see what's just ahead in the tube.

### 5. *There was an old woman who lived in a shoe...*

You careen around a curve in the tube and see, not more than ten meters in front of you, a team of repairbots clustered around a VIOLET autocar. As you speedily approach, you realize that the bots have somehow wedged the car sideways in a particularly narrow section of tubing. It's going nowhere fast. There isn't nearly enough time to stop. However, as you watch the bots scatter, you notice a detour just in front of the whole mess. What would you like to do?

A Violence check or specialty roll is needed to turn the autocar. If the driver fails, he plows into the VIOLET vehicle. Go ahead. Dramatize the scene. Let them sweat it out. The VIOLET driver (currently sitting in the car) is the Commissioner for HIL Sector Housing. Bet the PCs are wondering what it's like to sleep in the corridors for the next few centuries.

If they manage to make the turn, Nothing Happens as they sideswipe the VIOLET autocar. (See the 'Nothing Happens Table'.)

### 6. *The long and winding road*

As you purr along this stretch of tube, you look down at the dashboard. The destination code monitor is blinking the message: 'Please use manual controls. Automatic destination sensors are not operating.'

You've never seen this area. You don't see any destination stations. Your PDCs aren't offering any helpful information.

You do notice that you are traveling through a narrow section of the tubes. Openings branch off in all directions. Wait a minute. Didn't you pass by that turn-off just a few moments ago? Of course, there is nothing to worry about. Nothing at all. The Computer certainly would not allow its loyal citizens to be lost in the middle of nowhere, traveling in circles, with no possibility of ever seeing home again.

Now make 1d20 Access rolls for each character, without telling them why. You might want to mumble something about 'where's that Starvation Table?'. Then casually mention that a successful one of these Access rolls might mean a character is inspired as to how to find out which direction to travel in.

If all the characters fail, you could wimp out and allow them to intercept another autocar whose driver can give them directions. Only do this after a considerable amount of time has passed. Perhaps after The Computer contacts them, asking why they haven't reported to their destination. Requests for directions are met with: 'State your current location.' Pity the PCs have no idea where they are. And let's not forget the PC who brings up a troublesome contradiction. Troublesome contradictions and being late are two wonderful examples of treason.

### 7. *Snorkeling for fun and profit*

Just ahead the tube dips down. It's filled with a foul black liquid. You also see a left branch ahead. Would you like to try for a left turn at your current speed?

If they do not make the left turn:

There's a tremendous splash as your autocar dives into murky blackness. Traveling along, you never realized how many leaks your vehicle had until now. Everyone will probably have to hold their breath for a couple of minutes if the liquid in the autocar continues to rise. What is everybody doing?

**There's one hole in every revolution, large or small. And it's one word long—people. No matter how big the idea is they all stand under, people are small and weak and cheap and frightened. It's people that kill every revolution.**

—Warren Ellis, *Transmetropolitan*

**Every revolution evaporates and leaves behind only the slime of a new bureaucracy.**

—Franz Kafka

**If you think of yourselves as helpless and ineffectual, it is certain that you will create a despotic government to be your master. The wise despot, therefore, maintains among his subjects a popular sense that they are helpless and ineffectual.**

**—Frank Herbert, *The Dosadi Experiment***

When you're bored with panicky screams from your players as their characters drown one by one, read:

**The blackness ends. The tube slopes upward again and you come splashing out from the depths. Thank goodness for waterproof autocars. It's only leaking a little bit now. And don't worry about the sloshing sound coming from the engine compartment. Or how you seem to be slowing down. No problem.**

If you don't like that ending, how about this one:

**The car slows and stops. You are still submerged. To your left you can barely make out a dim light glowing in the blackness. You can also see a destination station emerging from the tunnel wall. Your dashboard monitor blinks: 'You have arrived.'**

### 8. Joyriding

**As you turn a bend you see scrubots ahead, cleaning the tunnel. Fortunately they are far enough away to give you time to slow down and maneuver around them. Probably. You think.**

The driver must make a Violence or Vehicle Ops and Maintenance roll to avoid the bots. If not, the autocar takes one with it. Explain how the bot is flailing around on the hood of the autocar. How scrubot screams echo through

the tube as it madly waves at them to stop. How it totally blocks their view...

### 9. Road service

**You zip through the transit tube, the siren on your autocar blaring. Suddenly a bright spark explodes from somewhere under the hood. The whine of the engine quickly trails off as the vehicle comes to an abrupt—and possibly final—stop.**

This little diversion can be a lot of fun. The only way to look under the hood is to open the autocar door, step out onto the grid and walk to the front of the vehicle. Stepping on an electromagnetic impulse grid can hurt an awful lot. Troopers can walk between the grid if they're real careful (a Violence/Agility check). Then a skill roll is needed to figure out what's wrong and get the vehicle moving again. Of course, they'll need another attribute check to get back across the grid and into the autocar. And if they repair it and it starts moving without anyone at the controls, a few rolls to dodge, weave and jump into the vehicle may be in order.

### 10. Sudden death

**You zoom along the tube and careen around a corner. The dull roar your autocar makes disappears. So does the tube. You find yourselves floating in midair—you, your gear and your autocar. You begin falling. Down,**

**down, down. Between screams you see the pretty buildings around you, and you marvel at the maze of transit tubes above you.**

**Wham! Your lives pass before your eyes.**

**You have stopped falling. You and your gear are sitting in what was once an autocar. Destruction of Computer property is treason.**

The results of this little escapade are left for you to play with.

### Reaching their destination

If you've properly used all these clever suggestions, the Troopers reach their destination a little older and grayer, but in almost one piece. Or maybe they do reach it in one piece. One tiny, *compressed* piece. Hee, hee, hee.

**The wheels lock. The autocar fishtails. It bucks and swerves up the side of the round tube. You come to a complete stop, sitting at a 45 degree angle to the floor. The autocar creaks. It turns over, dropping down onto the tube floor. You are sitting upside down. Your grid connectors are smoking. The aroma of burnt metal nearly suffocates you. About 30 meters back down the tube, a destination station slowly emerges from the wall. A little monitor on the dashboard faintly blinks: 'You have arrived.' You made it! Congratulations!**

**“Would you like to sit down or would you prefer internal injuries?”**

**—Detective Mick Belker, *Hill Street Blues***



## The Something Happens table

Use the following table to randomly determine what occurs when two cars pass each other.

1d20	Result
1-10	Nothing happens.* (See below: 'When Nothing Happens in <b>PARANOIA!</b> ')
11-12	Door handles shear off. Must open the door from the inside or break (non-opening) window to gain access.
13-14	Several layers of paint are scraped off the side of the car, exposing huge rusty areas and sheet metal patches. The motor pool guys get real excited, and fines are assessed.
15-16	The door peels off the car like the skin off a hangnail. Since autocars do not have seat restraints, characters may need to make Violence/Agility checks to avoid falling out every time the autocar turns a corner.
17-18	Major body damage. Chunks of other vehicles may embed themselves, dragging along behind your autocar or further impeding maneuvering.
19-20	The autocar's frame is pushed out of whack. Any attempt to turn the car requires a Violence check. Success means there's no problem, the wheel turns freely. A failure means the wheel gets caught in a stray piece of fender. The car turns. And turns. And turns. *Crunch* Rattle rattle. Roll roll roll. Clunk. *BOOM*

## When Nothing Happens in PARANOIA

Of course, when Nothing Happens in **PARANOIA**, it doesn't mean that *nothing* happens. Use the following table to determine what kind of Nothing happens when Nothing Happens.

Feel free to expand on these ideas. just keep repeating to your players that, 'Nothing is wrong. Everything is working perfectly. Honest.'

## Staging 'Nothing Happens'

Whenever you pick up dice to roll on these tables, and your players eye you suspiciously (and the sniveling wimpy ones beg and plead), be kind. Reassure them.

**Player:** Whatcha' doing?

**GM:** Me? Oh, nothing. No problem. Don't worry about it. Really. *[This works surprisingly well when you roll on the first table, get 'Nothing Happens\*' and show the table to the players.]*

**GM:** See? Look. The table says Nothing Happens\*.

**Player:** Oh. Yeah, I guess—Hey! What's that little asterisk thingie?

**GM:** That? Oh, nothing...

## The Nothing Happens table

1d20	Result
1-4	There is a terrific rush of wind as an autocar/transbot passes you. You sigh with relief. You think you hear something fall off. It might have been near the back of the vehicle. Nah. Probably nothing.
5-6	Your autocar trembles like a cowering INFRARED as a transbot/autocar wooshes by. The vibration subsides. Gee, that wasn't too bad! You hear a slow, high-pitched scrape of glass on glass. Your windshield falls in. It shatters in your lap. Possibly a minor inconvenience.
7-10	An autocar/transbot buffets your vehicle as it careens by. It's gone. You hear a slow drip-drip from somewhere near your engine. Nothing to worry about. You see dark billowy clouds of smoke pour from the hood of your autocar, filling the tube with noxious vapors that slowly begin seeping into the vehicle. Don't worry about it. Probably nothing.
11-12	What's that funny noise? You know, that weird kind of—you know, that funny noise. Aww, all autocars sound that way. It's <i>probably</i> nothing. (Have one character make a Vehicle Ops and Maintenance roll. Whatever the result, say, 'Oh. Never mind.')
13 -16	Thump-thump. You think you just ran over something. You look back and see something lying in the tube, illuminated by your red tail lights. You're not sure, but you think it moved. Nah.
17-18	As another autocar slides by, your car begins weaving. It gets worse. You think you might hear the hiss of escaping air somewhere below you. It probably isn't anything important.
19-20	Your vehicle locks its brakes and screeches to a halt. The tires smoulder as you remove your face from the windshield. There doesn't seem to be anything wrong. There aren't any deafening alarms suggesting you neglected a minor detail on vehicle operation. And there're no flashing lights indicating impending inconveniences. In fact, there's nothing wrong. Nothing at all.

### 3: The mission itself

This is where the main storyline comes in. It can be one of the mini-missions we've provided in this book, one of our other great supplements or ideally one of your own devising.

The recipe for HIL Sector Blues missions detailed in this chapter: a **Premise** taken from the lists of typical police roles and duties; a liberal sprinkling of **Complications** from the 'Running gags' section of the previous chapter, and a **Satisfying Resolution** that entertains the players with the promise of **Terrific Success** or **Farcically Tragic Disaster**.

The Premise and Complications provide game challenges the players can pit their roleplaying and problem-solving talents against in the unique **PARANOIA** setting; the Satisfying Resolution presents them with a chance to achieve an entertaining sense of dramatic climax so they can quit having so much fun and once again emerge from the fantasy world into their own drab, wretched lives.

#### The mission storyline

The life of an Alpha Complex policeman is just like the life of real policemen, only moreso. That is, no matter how unappealing the types of people real policemen deal with, and no matter how discouraging and futile their enterprises, it can only be worse in Alpha Complex.

Here are just a few things real policemen have to deal with, and how they might figure in a BLUE Trooper's nightmares:

#### Routine crimes

1. **Drugs:** No matter how generous The Computer is with drugs, there's always a market for more. From co-cola addicts (see *Send in the Clones* in **PARANOIA Flashbacks**) to Vulture Squadroniers with Combat Quick habits, the drug market is lucrative, violent and populated by chemically induced psychotics. (See the rulebook and **PARANOIA STUFF** for a full treatment of **PARANOIA** drugs.)
2. **IR Market, Gray Subnet, other illicit auctions:** You can buy anything, regardless of security clearance, on the auction circuit. Free Enterprise controls most of the traffic on the IR Market, but many citizens freelance on the side. Most popular are weapons for the more lunatic of the secret societies.
3. **Theft:** Where do illicit auction goods come from? Harried PLC clerks

commonly report (or perpetrate) pilferage and burglary.

4. **Assault and murder:** When it can be distinguished from punishing and executing traitors, assault and murder are vigorously investigated by The Computer.
5. **Blackmail:** High-clearance citizens troubled by blackmail typically arrange through proper channels to obtain the services of discrete IntSec investigators.
6. **Vandalism and sabotage:** Whether political (PURGE) or light-heartedly anarchical (Death Leopard), vandalism and sabotage of Computer property is a pervasive problem.
7. **Contraband:** Everybody has something they shouldn't have, and IntSec is always looking for it.
8. **Vice:** This crime is usually perpetrated by the Humanists, Romantics and Sierra

Club secret societies. Vice includes any activities that lead to the unnatural bodily functions that produce children without the aid of the genetic clone banks. Or such functions when used in the clandestine and highly treasonous activity called 'pillow talk'.

9. **Traffic violations:** Speeding, high-impact parking and vehicular manslaughter are just a few of the most common traffic violations in Alpha Complex.

#### Special crimes

Certain crimes are peculiar to the distinctive Alpha Complex culture:

1. **Unregistered mutation:** Investigation, detection and apprehension of unregistered mutants requires careful sifting through informal reports and formal charges, and the pursuit of these





**The case against Clevinger was open and shut. The only thing missing was something to charge him with.**

—Joseph Heller, *Catch-22* (1961)

all-too-numerous criminals is often extremely dangerous.

2. **Secret societies:** Clandestine and undercover monitoring of secret activities generally precedes raids of secret society meetings. Secret societies often have remarkable resources at their disposal and fanatic memberships who offer a spirited defense, even when poorly armed. The more militant and organized secret societies (PURGE, Corpore Metal, Free Enterprise, Communists and so on) may challenge even elite IntSec Special Forces units.
3. **Treason:** Though technically almost all human behavior falls into this category, BLUE Troopers generally only handle the more egregious traitors (Commie rioters, corrupt executives, rebellious High Programmers, etc.; citizens and Troubleshooters do an admirable job in handling this problem at the community level.
4. **Damaging Computer property:** A close cousin to vandalism and sabotage, and as vigorously prosecuted, damaging Computer property includes all accidental loss or destruction of valuable Computer resources, either through carelessness (allowing the brakes on your autocar to fail) or through negligence (failing to repair the malfunction of your plasma generator before its catastrophic detonation wipes out a couple of residence blocks).
5. **Insubordination:** All citizens are obligated to defer to other citizens of higher security clearance. BLUE

Troopers must often investigate reports of uncooperative flunkies.

6. **Security clearance violations:** INFRAREDS sauntering around in BLUE Clearance corridors with cone rifles are sure to attract immediate attention from IntSec troopers.

### Typical roles and mission assignments

Here are a few common situations BLUE Troopers may find themselves in:

1. **Walking the beat:** Though generally the duty of lower-status IntSec Troopers, idle (or on-report) BLUE Troopers may be fitted with rocket skates and sent out to wander the corridors, keeping the peace and affirming the ever-present will of The Computer—directing autocar and transbot traffic, issuing parking tickets, running spot security checks, handling citizen complaints and responding to the occasional crime-in-progress or emergency calls.
2. **On patrol:** Six BLUE Troopers jammed into an autocar with their full array of weapons and gear is a common sight in HIL Sector—always ready to give chase to criminals and joyriders, or respond to any disturbances at high speed.
3. **Stakeouts:** Stakeout generally means sitting around in some unpleasant place (closet, sewer or atomic reactor core) with nothing fun (i.e., no shooting) to do for a long time. Not infrequently, the place is not cleared for BLUE citizens.

For secret society stakeouts, Troopers are often required to wear hideously ineffective disguises. Generally an unpopular assignment.

4. **Task forces:** Troopers are often temporarily assigned to task forces for special duty requiring unusual skills or concerted, long-term efforts. A few examples: The High Programmer's Special Commission on Unregistered Mutations; The Weird Science Police; The Secret Study Group for Outdoors Spy and Animal Control and the 'Who's Your Friend?' Task Force.
5. **Detective forces:** BLUE Troopers are often assigned to investigate mysteries. Given the nightmarish incompetence, inefficiency and paranoia rampant in Alpha Complex, most mysteries are pursued with a Clouseau-Pink-Pantherish farcical ineffectiveness. (Warning! **PARANOIA** is not an ideal game setting to stage real clues-and-ratiocination mysteries. Steer clear of this genre or be prepared for investigators to blast most witnesses and evidence rather than study them for their significance.)
6. **Riot squad/special forces:** These are the elite combat troops for handling internal Alpha Complex affairs. In theory, IntSec handles all internal affairs; the Armed Forces handles dealings with the Outdoors. In practice, High Programmers may call on Armed Forces Vulture or BLUE Trooper Tac Squads depending on where their political clout is centered.

7. **Escort and citizen protection:** Whether guarding The Computer's favorites or the lowest of Commie mutant scum, BLUE Troopers often have as much to fear from the potential victim as from determined assailants.
8. **Trusted public servants:** As symbols of The Computer's ever-present justice and mercy, BLUE Troopers help old citizens across transit tubes, lecture on public morality and rescue catbots from synthetrees. Ironically, even these innocuous events are often fraught with peril.

### Plotting a mission

To create a BLUE Trooper mission, survey the preceding lists of BLUE Trooper duties. Pick one and imagine how life in Alpha Complex could hopelessly complicate the situation. This is our **Premise**.

For example, directing traffic—let's presume The Computer orders a squad of BLUE Troopers to direct traffic at a transit tube junction. The Computer fails to notify the Troopers that power is out in that sector and the tubes are unilluminated; therefore traffic (which incidently is approaching at a sizable fraction of the speed of sound) cannot see the Troopers.

Now what?

Okay, we have a simple Premise: BLUE Troopers directing traffic under impossible circumstances. Now we need **Complications**. See the chapter on 'Running gags' for appropriate complications to make the Troopers' lives even more miserable.

We already know the Mission Bulletin omits important information—good, good. Now, the Troopers have to get to the transit tube junction. Let's see—how about a malfunctioning autocar? Yes, yes—how about a lobotomized autopilot? And let's roll on the Nothing Happens Table. Of course.

Okay, the Troopers get to the junction and discover the lights are out. Time to report. Oops—those pesky operators keep disconnecting them, and when they finally get through to Power Services—*EHHNT-EHHNT-EHHNT*—busy signal. Then a DeePolTee officer comes on the line and wants to know why you are spreading rumors about power malfunctions.

So finally the Troopers get through to Power Services (yes, yes, yes, all this time they are scrambling around in the dark dodging 18-wheelers moving along like Imperial Battle Cruisers) and report. Then along comes

somebody straight off the Random Passersby Table, yes? You remember that, right? It was towards the back of the **PARANOIA** rulebook. Oh, yeah. Now you do. Sure you do.

Okay, we have a Premise and Complications. Now we need a **Satisfying Resolution**. Note, not just a resolution. Killing all the Troopers is plenty plausible and sure enough a resolution, but it isn't much fun for the players. And this is a series, remember? Let the poor citizens live. For a while.

A Satisfying Resolution must offer the players a chance for a **Terrific Success** or a **Farcically Tragic Disaster**. (Because this is **PARANOIA**, either a disaster or a success may be sufficiently entertaining to give the players their money's worth. Consider that at lower clearances they are entitled to a round of applause if they can just get vaporized. As a BLUE Trooper they should work a little harder for that applause by doing something spectacular—like trying to survive. Solving the problem is worth a standing ovation.)

So let's say the Troopers stumble upon an open bothole in the dark, and out of it they can hear the stirring strains of the 'Internationale'—the anthem of Commie saboteurs responsible for the blackout. A Terrific Success has them capture the Commies and deliver them to The Computer. A Farcically Tragic Disaster has them capture the Commies and deliver them to The Computer—only to be out-bootlicked by the Commies, proving conclusively that the Troopers were the traitorous saboteurs and resulting in their suspension from the force pending Reconstructive Surgery and Recombinant DNA Therapy at the Frank-O-RRK Recreation Center.

### Aftermath

When you wind up the mission after your Satisfying Resolution, assess the energy of the play group and, if they're still up for it, go on to the Report and Evaluation stage. Remind them their Troopers are Internal Security workers, and hence subject to the greatest responsibility of any Alpha Complex citizen: paperwork.

### Filing the official report

BLUE Troopers seldom go through the rigorous debriefings lower-clearance Troubleshooters face at the end of a mission. Though longer missions, special assignments or dramatic disasters may require full debriefings, most missions require no more than filing the official report.



You may discover that the prospect of filling out a report on each mission causes your players to tremble with anticipation. Perhaps deep in each man's heart lies the soul of a clerk yearning to express itself in reams of neatly inscribed minutiae. In this event, here's a chance to use that swell mission report form (included in your **PARANOIA** GM Screen booklet) that nobody ever uses anyway. We also recommend you request a detailed



narrative report, accounting for each minute the Troopers spent on a mission.

(Frankly, we think this might be fun. Once. Maybe. We are not about to playtest it. If it works out for you, write us and tell us about it.)

Here's a more practical way of abstracting the report process. Take the helmet multicorder accounts of the action as a given, unless a player specifically attempts to tamper with that evidence. This in effect files the GM's memory of the session as the mission report.<sup>†</sup>

Then ask if any player wishes to amend the report verbally or in writing to account for any details which the multicorder might have missed or misrepresented. These amendments need be no more than hastily scribbled notes, and, since they may include details that denounce and slander other player characters, should be given to the GM privately.

Finally, ask if any player wishes to place any significant interpretation on the facts as demonstrated in the multicorder report. This is an opportunity to place on record any accusation or innuendo that might inveigh against the good reputation of another character. This interpretation of facts may be made publicly or privately, as the player prefers.

This shouldn't take more than a few minutes for most groups, but with master Machiavellians, there might be a lot of maneuvering and subtle constructions on the facts (in other words, high-class fibbing). You may need to take notes for later review on the more telling accusations and evidence against player characters.

And that ends the session. No public denunciations. No wild-and-woolly shootouts. No summary executions. No public commendations. Instead, the event that BLUE Troopers anticipate with extreme dread is getting...

## Called into the office

When solid evidence of treason begins to mount, a Trooper may be Called Into the Office. The other players may not even know about it; rumors may circulate, according to the whim of the GM.

<sup>†</sup> Remind players from time to time that, because of technical problems, carelessness on the reviewing personnel's part and cheerful malevolence on the part of traitors, saboteurs and agents of *The Computer*, even multicorder tapes are not completely reliable. But that conveniently parallels the sometimes-faulty and notoriously incomplete memory of the GM. We are constantly amazed at the facility with which we rationalize that sort of GM fallibility in **PARANOIA**.

This private conference between the GM and player may take place before or after a session, or better yet, over the phone or at some non-gaming meeting. In this conference the GM confronts the player with the accusations and evidence against his character (keeping the identity of the accuser secret) and permits the player to speak in his character's defense.

The first office visit is generally a warning. The second or subsequent visits may imply demotion, fines, suspension or assignment to reactor cleaning duty unless a sufficient defense is offered.

Of course, being Called Into the Office doesn't necessarily imply bad news. Sometimes your superior just wants to talk, or offer advice in private, or even wants to award a commendation for meritorious service.

Commendations, however, are normally public affairs, complete with fanfare and officially enthusiastic media coverage. Such may be awarded impulsively at the end of a session, or after due deliberation at the opening of the next session. At this clearance, however, both commendations and treason points are assessed less frequently; superior service is expected of BLUE Troopers, and their past loyalty has earned them a degree of trust that confers the benefit of the doubt in matters of questionable activities.

## Storyline hooks

Here are some sample Premises:

### Citizen with a gun

The setting—Outfitting, R&D or a crowded commissary. The citizen—a secret society fanatic, mad scientist or normal citizen who accidentally received a megadose of Combat Quick (asperquaint) instead of Wakey-Wakey pills. The gun—the most awesome weapon imaginable, preferably an R&D special, an Old Reckoning artifact or a field weapon (missile racks or tube cannon).

### Treason in progress

This covers a wide range of sins and peccadillos: a RED tech servicing an autocar in a YELLOW corridor; a YELLOW Troubleshooter has refused a GREEN's orders, claiming his Computer mission takes priority; two techs whispering conspiratorily in the Power Services Control Room—the list is endless.

### IR Market

This could be a series of linked episodes. First, the PCs investigate a robbery, where the goods (weapons, drugs, R&D devices)

are being stolen for resale on the IR Market. Second, the PCs are staked-out to observe IR Market sales and to trace the customers for the goods. Third, by investigating and interrogating the customers, the thieves/IR Market goons are revealed, charred and delivered for posthumous justice.

### Warrant for traitor's arrest

What appears to be a simple pickup of a minor misdemeanor offender (traffic violation, possession of an Outdoors artifact or mopery with intent to gawk) at his cubicle turns out to be a full-scale tactical assault against a traitor with a complete arsenal and a phalanx of combat-trained scrubots. (See 'The Trouble with Cockroaches', a **PARANOIA Flashbacks** mission, for a similar situation.)

### Raid a secret society meeting

A stool-pigeon is obtained from the Informant's Registry who promises to deliver a Trooper squad to a Communist secret society meeting in progress. Surprise! The informant is a double-agent, and the Troopers are being set up for an ambush. Zap, bang, kaboom: the PCs are hopelessly outgunned and cut off from reinforcements. But miraculously, a group of men in dark glasses and suits (The Men in INFRARED?) show up and rescue the Troopers, then disappear with a strange flash of light.

### An internal affair

Troopers are dispatched to arrest a group of traitors causing a disturbance and destroying Computer property. Guess what? The traitors are just a typical Troubleshooter mission group, screwing up in perfectly normal fashion. Take any published **PARANOIA** mission, any group of pregenerated PCs—and imagine the kinds of trouble Troubleshooters usually get into. Now, send the BLUE Troopers to arrest them. Of course, Troubleshooters being what they are, they do not submit peacefully to arrest, but try to bushwhack the Troopers. (And given the kinds of R&D equipment we've handed out in some of our published missions, it could be a pretty evenly matched encounter.)

### Escort duty

A parcel of way-too-treacherous documents is bound for FAR Sector. An ever-so-guilty VIOLET requests a security escort. Along the way enemies of the VIOLET attempt to waylay the caravan. Also a swell opportunity for running gags of the autocar variety.



### Sabotage in R&D

BLUE Troopers investigate an explosion/implosion/gravitational singularity in R&D. The ultimate cause is Stupid Science, but the Troopers can get a commendation if they can find some Obvious Treason. An interesting exercise in framing NPCs.

#### Internal infiltration

A CPU High Programmer uses R&D high-tech bugs to listen in to the IntSec Ministry of Information, where he discovers a conspiracy to cover-up routine corruption and bribery in PLC. The PCs are assigned pathetically clumsy covers and profoundly transparent disguises and told to infiltrate the IntSec Information Bureau.

Through typical 'transmission errors', the mission bulletin sends the Troopers to the office of the aforementioned VIOLET to do their infiltrating. Add as many other convoluted flourishes as you like, because this part doesn't matter anyway. The part that matters is the boys from Covert Operations who have been assigned to tail and snuff the Troopers if they find out anything. Play it as a running gun battle where PCs can't identify their opponent. Sheesh, what a mess.

#### Entrapment

Undercover Troopers are issued the standard inappropriate disguises and sent out to recruit citizens into a non-existent secret society. Surprise! The secret society really does exist, the Troopers try to induct one of its members and pretty soon they are in deep petbot poop.

#### And some other possible situations:

**I Spy:** Tracking down spies from the Outdoors.

**Docbot on the loose:** Docbot with drill press programming is loose among the citizenry.

**Sabotage at the weapons plant:** Can you find the bomb before the suicidally fanatic agents get you?

**Snatch the canary:** Find a cooperative Computer Phreak informant before the victims of his volubility unleash legions of hijacked Computer servants to silence him.

**Speed trap:** Troopers set up a radar trap along a remote section of the transit tube network, and guess what they catch? A Warbot 425 Mark 4 piloted by a couple of joy-riding Death Leopards. Now this sounds like fun!

**It's all so clear to me now. We must invade ourselves.**

**An invasion of America by Americans will be no easy task. On the one hand, we have an elite and professionally trained military with experience in assaulting a dangerous enemy. On the other hand, our country is defended by that same military, who will no doubt prove tenacious in the defense of their homeland against an equal opposing force. Who knows what will happen when the armed forces of the United States of America clash with themselves?**

**The key to victory for both sides will lie in remaining mobile. A fast-moving assault can lay claim to broad stretches of America quickly, potentially breaking through their own lines to roll unopposed over the heartland. On the other hand, the defenders can move around constantly, such that by the time they gain intelligence regarding their own position, they have vanished into thin air like ghosts.**

**The X-factor in this matter will be the American people, who will support their troops on both offense and defense. American militia groups will undoubtedly rise to add firepower to the attack, while partisan underground cells will shelter and provision their brave defenders.**

**I am convinced this invasion would succeed. All casualties would necessarily be friendly fire and collateral damage, and the invading army would be highly culturally acceptable to the conquered nation. I think it would only be a matter of time before America successfully integrated itself into itself, allowing the long rebuilding process to begin.**

**When this happens, we can restructure the system however we like. America is a strong supporter of democracy, so perhaps democracy can be imposed upon America. Fair elections could be held—unevenly at first, to be sure, but one cannot expect to impose an entirely new way of doing things overnight upon a nation unused to a fair and open political process. There could be violence by those Americans disenfranchised by the process, but Americans must stand resolute in the face of threats by those who would oppose the march of democracy, especially ourselves.**

—Andy Solberg



## 4: First blood, and then some

### A mini-mission by Ken Rolston

[*Note: Curious about the title? The original 1987 version of this mission parodied the Sylvester Stallone movies First Blood (1982) and Rambo: First Blood Part II (1985). Rafe-B-AEU in this mission was originally, yes, Ram-B-EAU. Ah, the good old days....*]

#### MISSION ALERT!

**WE HAVE A CODE 50 AT THE CORNER OF B-23 AND F-539 CORRIDORS, COORDINATES EFF-NINER-DASH-DEE-SIX-ONE-FIVE-DASH-EM-DOUBLE-FOUR. GREEN CITIZEN ENTERED THIS BLUE CLEARANCE AREA, DISABLED THREE COMBOTS AND WAS SEEN ENGAGED IN MANY TREASONOUS ACTIVITIES.**

**CITIZEN ARMED AND DANGEROUS. AS IF YOU COULDN'T WORK THAT OUT FROM THE FACT THAT HE DISABLED THREE COMBOTS.**

**PROCEED TO APPREHEND THE CITIZEN AND DELIVER HIM TO POW SECTOR POLITICAL THERAPY AT ONCE.**

### Summary

Rafe-B-AEU-3, an operative from Omega Complex, has been activated from undercover status to search for a missing group of INDIGO agents (MIAs) from his complex. These agents strayed too close to Alpha Complex and were captured by a Vulture Squadron out on tactical maneuvers. Rafe-B has received the information that these INDIGO agents are being incarcerated at POW Sector's political therapy facility. POW is a small sector that is actually considered a part of the HIL. Indeed, the wonderful transit tube network was built around it, making it a part of this closed-off area of Alpha Complex.

A citizen has glimpsed Rafe-B strolling down a BLUE corridor. Rafe-B, dressed only in olive oil and khaki fatigue pants looks all the world like a GREEN citizen out of his security clearance. (He just likes to wear his old battle duds when on a mission.) The smoking remains of three combots and the bewildering array of weapons dangling about his glistening torso are further evidence of the threat Rafe-B presents to Alpha Complex security.

The PCs are summoned to deal with this miscreant. He wanders around, shoots a lot of Troopers and wades through them on his way to Political Therapy, where he just happened to be going anyway. What a fortunate coincidence.

When Rafe-B-AEU-3 gets to Political Therapy, he looks around for his little friends from Omega Complex. Without so much as a by-your-leave. Folks get irritated. He kills a lot of them and ruins some office furniture. BLUE Troopers are sent in to suppress this one-man insurrection.

Fat chance.

### Rafe-B-AEU-3

Rafe-B-AEU-3 is Violence-skill-heavy. He carries an automatic slugthrower with a wide selection of ammunition types. He has lots of grenades, slug pistols, knives and other more personal implements of destruction dangling from belts and bandoliers. He has tremendous strength, endurance and agility. He is greasy and inarticulate—but, then again, nobody's perfect.

The PCs may be lulled into a false sense of security by the fact that Rafe-B-AEU-3 is wearing no armor. Guess who has a real swell, unique mutant power? Aimed weapons have no effect on Rafe-B-AEU-3. Perhaps it is the distracting effect his ferocity has on his opponents. Area weapons always seem to miss him by a hair, shattering and melting delicate and expensive Computer property right behind him. Just coincidence, we guess.

Fortunately for the PCs, Rafe-B-AEU-3 is less buff in the melee department, with a mere Armor 2 provided courtesy of all that oil on his glistening torso. All the PCs have to do is close with him and batter him into submission.

### GM staging hints

The secret to presenting encounters with Rafe-B-AEU is choreographing combat scenes. You are sitting pretty—you have only one NPC to manipulate, he is virtually invulnerable to aimed weapons and his combat skills are so gross that elegant tactics are pretty much superfluous. Just improvise the details of the setting, let the PCs open fire then have Rafe-B-AEU-3 casually begin strolling toward the PCs. If he has weapons, he fires or tosses them nonchalantly at the PCs. Everything the PCs fire at him misses. They Begin to Worry.

Maybe they run. Rafe-B-AEU-3 ambles after them.

Maybe they stand and melee. Rafe-B tosses them around like twigs.

Whatever the setting you improvise—a corridor, an office at DeePolTee, the detention cells—Rafe-B just wanders around in it, tears stuff up and looks invulnerable.

The PCs just have to stick to it and figure out what his vulnerability is. Mutant powers will work. Chemical weapons will work. Tricks will work. (Rafe-B has NOT got high Moxie skill.) Bots in sufficient number will work. Melee combat will work, if the PCs attack *en masse*, survive a few rounds, use tough melee weapons and get nice dice.

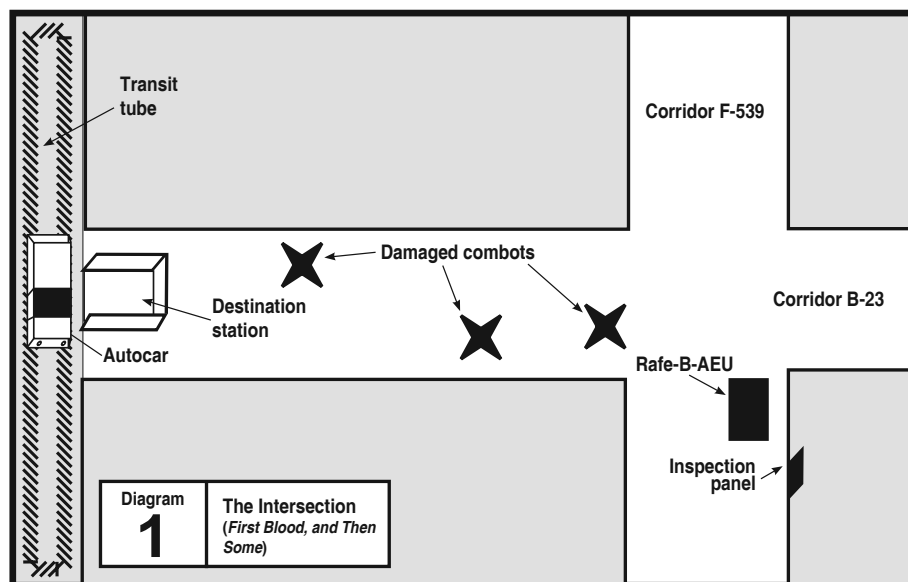
And if the Troopers push up their sleeves, coat their biceps with bot oil, flex their muscles, look impassive and stroll forward into Rafe-B-AEU-3's withering hail of fire, well, that'll work, too.

### Scene 1: Everything's under control here...

Each of the three combots (see Diagram 1, nearby) has been disabled by a single HE round right between the visual sensors. The bots' brains are spread all over the corridor, and acrid billows of black smoke trail from the chassis toward the transit tube. One combot has plowed into a wall, exposing power and communications conduits; showers of sparks are shooting into the corridor, threatening to ignite the volatile fuels leaking from the bots. The regular lighting is out; emergency lights dimly illuminate the corridor.

As the PCs proceed up Corridor B-23 from the transit tube destination station, over the buzz and crackle of the short-circuiting power lines they can hear the sounds of Rafe-B-EAU methodically working inside an inspection panel, trying to tap into a com line. Rafe-B's back is to the PCs, and he is so intent at his task that he doesn't hear them approach (unless they charge howling up the corridor, of course). Rafe-B is new to this sector and doesn't know the way to POW Sector, the location of the Department of Political Therapy where those he is supposed to rescue are supposed to be held. By tapping into the com lines he hopes to get directions (pretty naïve, given the trouble Troopers have getting that sort of information).

The PCs may initiate their contact with him by clearing their throats to get his attention, then



politely suggesting that he come along quietly to the Department of Political Therapy. He is only too happy to oblige—even surrendering his weapons, if requested, so confident is he of his hand-to-hand prowess. ‘Sure. Where’re we goin’? DeePolTee? Sure. Here, can you hold my grenade launcher a sec while I tidy up?’

Of course, such deferential behavior on the part of Troopers unnerved by the sight of three burning combots is somewhat unlikely. The temptation to use tanglers or needle guns or more disruptive devices while the subject’s back is turned is likely to be too tempting to even the most pacifistic paranoid. We’re betting their opening gambit involves gunplay, and that means a madcap bloodbath, sure ‘nuff.

It is possible that the PCs survive the initial shock of discovering aimed weapons to be ineffective. It is possible that they are able to close with him without being cut down by his weapons fire. It is possible that, with melee combat, mutant powers or neat experimental stuff, they subdue Rafe-B-AEU-3 and take him to DeePolTee as directed. But don’t hold your breath.

The PCs’ first volley misses Rafe-B. Rafe-B half-turns, peering curiously at the intruders, then casually sprays a burst at the PCs (see the *PARANOIA* rulebook, chapter 24, ‘Combat’), one-handing the massive slug rifle like a target pistol, while he continues working on the com lines.

Though the following volleys also miss Rafe-B, they do succeed in tearing up the com lines he’s working on. He realizes that he won’t be able to get anything done with all this distracting noise, shakes his head in annoyance and turns to deal with the PCs. He saunters toward them, casually spraying

them with the slugthrower. Make a big point of figuring out Rafe-B’s chance to hit with a spray weapon so the PCs learn about his overwhelming chance to hit. ‘Hmm. Three targets, margin of [*speak loudly*] 25, divide by the number of targets—hmm, looks bad for our heroes.’

As he approaches the PCs, he notices the autocar in the transit tube destination station (or decides to head for the transit tube anyway, if the autocar isn’t conveniently in sight). He heads for the autocar. He sprays any PCs that bar the way. Or if he comes within melee distance, he disdainfully disarms the PCs and sends them sailing around the place like mooks in a kung fu movie.

If he reaches the autocar before the PCs, he gets in and zooms off looking for his buddies. Go to the next scene.

If the PCs get to the autocar first, he blasts it with the grenade launcher, shattering the engine and leaving the PCs as infantry. He then ambles down the transit tube pedestrian walkway in search of DeePolTee. If the PCs pursue, he keeps them at a respectful distance with the slugthrower, then disappears into a ventilation duct.

## Scene 2: The Department of Political Therapy

Scene 2 takes place at the POW Sector Department of Political Therapy (see Diagram 2 for the layout). As the PCs are informed about the rooms, either by visit or report, scatter a few Random Passersby in the offices, reception area and detention blocks. (You remember

where to find the Random Passersby Table this time, right? Right?) The ORANGE guards begin in the guardroom, but end up running around a lot. The captives from Omega Complex are also in the detention block, but they should appear to be random passersby at first glance. Rafe-B-AEU-3 may arrive here by scrambling around in ventilation ducts, or he may arrive in the custody of the PCs.

### The reception room

If the PCs have him in custody, when he sees the sign ‘Department of Political Therapy’ in the reception area, Rafe-B explodes into action, tossing PCs through walls and upending desks.

If he arrives there under his own power, he politely inquires of the reception clerk after his colleagues from Omega Complex, expressing an interest in a brief visit with them. The contrast between his courteous manner and his fearsome appearance gives the clerks pause.

They stall while pressing a secret alarm which alerts IntSec Central; the PCs are summoned, and uncharacteristically they are delivered without delay by a miraculously and temporarily efficient transit tube system. The moment the PCs enter from the destination station platform, Rafe-B realizes that the Emily Post approach has failed, and cheerfully swings into the mainstay of his idiom—unrestrained violence, irrepressible energy and indiscriminate automatic weapons fire.

When Rafe-B assumes his more direct confrontational style, he strides purposefully about, opening doors and shouting, ‘Hey, the guy from Omega Complex is here to rescue you. Yoo-hoo. Anybody need rescuing?’ After peering disappointedly in the flanking offices and firing a few bursts of automatic weapons fire at the squealing clerks and bureaucrats, he discovers the guardroom.

### The guardroom

Here two ORANGE IntSec guards, in one-size-fits-all Kevlar, point unsteady laser rifles at Rafe-B-AEU. The din in the adjoining room unnerves them, and in finest comedy tradition they flee the grim visage of the imposing one-man guerrilla assault. Henceforth these cravens continue to squeal hysterical, self-evident reports into the PCs’ helmet com units: ‘Help! Help! We’re under assault by an armed traitor!’ ‘Help! Help! There’s an armed traitor chasing us around in here! Help! Help!’

The PCs can query these terrified ORANGES about the layout of the place, the residents of



the detention blocks or other related matters, but in general these guys are simply GM resources for annoying the players.

## The interrogation lab

Rafe-B-AEU peeks into the interrogation lab, looses off a few rounds then moves on.

For those of you who are curious about this room, in the center is a dentist's chair surrounded by a bewildering array of things that look like electronic testing equipment, arc welders and carpentry tools. From the ceiling hangs a tangle of cables, each ending in some sinister-looking appliance that might be used to probe into body cavities, drill through steel or strip paint from antique furniture. The chair is mounted on a concrete apron, dotted with shower drains. Along the walls are banks of instruments, X-ray, fluoroscope and vidscreens, pharmaceutical dispensary and gardening implements.

There. Now your players know more than they want to know about the interrogation lab. Shoot, we know more than we want to know.

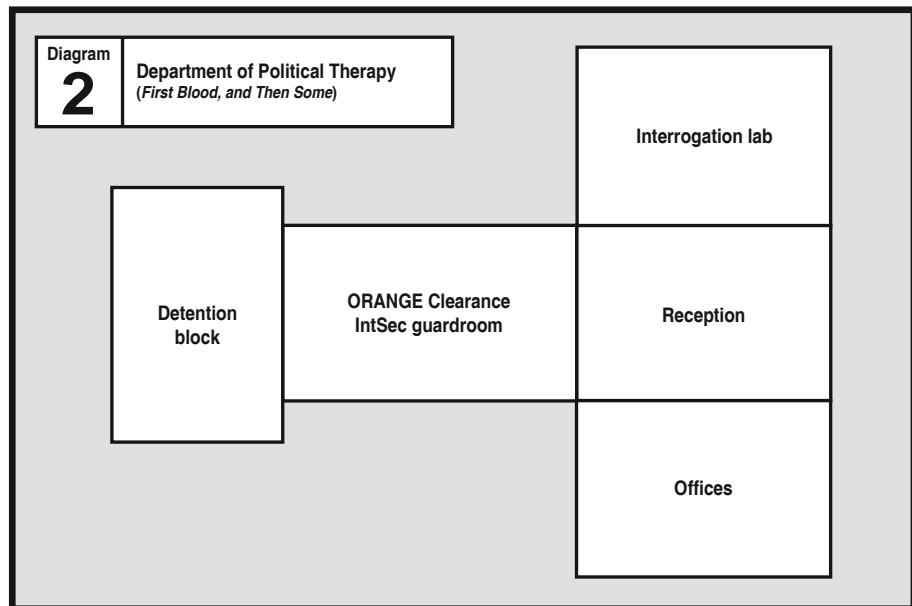
## The detention block

The detention block (like typical jail cells) is filled with the scum of HIL Sector—Commie mutant traitor scum—in fact, a cross-section of average HIL Sector citizens. POW Sector is nothing more than the HIL Sector prison.

When Rafe-B-AEU pokes his head into the detention block, he is greeted by a chorus of cheery voices—'Hooray!' 'Here we are, old man!' 'Jolly good show!' (To distinguish the captured citizens of Omega Complex as foreigners, we have chosen to characterize them as upper-class English twits. It will do you no good to protest the illogic of this decision. It sounds like fun to us, and we WFGDs are used to getting our own way around here.)

Rafe-B steps confidently into the detention block, aims his slughtrower at the lock and pulls the trigger. *\*Click\** Out of ammo. (*Pssst! Hey, players! Pssst! Out of Ammo.*) Rafe-B searches his bandoliers, his pockets, his *Star Wars* lunchbox (sorry we neglected to mention that before—an unforgivable oversight). No more rounds. He takes his last grenade, tells the twits to stand back from the door, yanks the pin and blows the cell door off.

Out scamper the Omega twits, sporting bowlers and umbrellas. Think Monty Python with a healthy seasoning of P.G. Wodehouse, Jerry Lewis and the Three Stooges. Let them prance about a bit. Some of them hang on Rafe-B-AEU affectionately, enthusiastically expressing their gratitude.



Rafe-B reflects. He is clearly disappointed at the quality of the characters he has rescued. He is Out of Ammunition. Completely. He considers abandoning them. He considers executing them for Unheroic Stature.

## So what have the PCs been doing all this time?

Face it. Initially there isn't much the PCs can do that will work. And it is really dangerous to expose themselves to Rafe-B's deadly marksmanship.

They will probably come up with a couple of good ideas that will conclusively solve the problem. Generally the consequences will also require relocating the DeePoITee offices—for example, collapsing the ceiling on Rafe-B, using tacnukes or plasma generators, using human wave tactics with INFRAREDS or bots, shutting down the ventilation systems, sealing all exits with explosives and so on. The Computer and the Troopers' superiors will discourage such ultimate solutions, insisting that the Troopers ought to be able to handle a single unarmored traitor.

So what else can they do? As we said above, they can get clever, using mutant powers, R&D resources or devious tricks to delay or trap Rafe-B-AEU. These brilliant plans require your brilliant improvisational response, as usual. The degree of success of any plan should reflect your reluctance to end the mission. After all, it would be a real shame if the PCs didn't get a look at the English upper-class twits from Omega Complex.

However, when Rafe-B runs out of ammo and he realizes the guys he has been sent to rescue are terminally dopey, we've reached the crucial apex of the rising action. Hereafter, Rafe-B's fortunes begin to decline, and the PCs once more gain the upper hand.

Rafe-B-AEU, his morale broken, no longer struts confidently about and tosses PCs around with gusto. He is impervious to aimed weapons, but his charges aren't. The PCs can pick them off like sitting ducks. He is stuck with the unmanageable problem of protecting the twits as he helps them escape.

Make sure this dramatic turn of events is graphically clear to the PCs. Emphasize the exhausted ammunition, the scampering idiots beleaguering Rafe-B, his hang-dog expression. At this point, several strategies will produce a satisfying conclusion:

☉ The PCs rush Rafe-B and overcome him in melee. Rafe-B fights desperately but ineffectively, distracted by the annoying twits.

☉ The PCs launch an assault on the twits. Once the twits are butchered, Rafe-B has no further mission, and he can concentrate on trying to escape. Maybe the PCs overcome him; maybe he barely escapes into a ventilation duct.

If the twits are gassed or stunned or the like, Rafe-B is forced to carry them as he tries to escape, a telling disadvantage in melee combat. (Can you say 'encumbered'?)

- ☉ Rafe-B, after listening to some stirring speech or slyly treacherous fast talk, despondently surrenders or is tricked into lowering his guard long enough for the PCs to overcome him.

In any event, make Rafe-B-AEU's defeat or exit suitable to his heroic stature. His spirit is broken, but the fault lies not in him but in the dolts he is supposed to rescue.

A classic ending leaves the twits in the PCs' hands, dead or alive, thus foiling the treasonous jailbreak and earning the PCs a commendation, but has Rafe-B-AEU,

desperate, wounded and exhausted, just managing to fight his way to the transit tubes, where he disappears into a ventilation duct or commandeers a passing transbot and makes his escape. This sets up the inevitable sequels (*Second Blood*, *More Blood*, *Vatloads of Blood* and so on), or cameo appearances in other action-packed **PARANOIA** missions.

### The Computer's gratitude

If the PCs kill or capture Rafe-B-AEU, it's worth a bonus of a month's salary—more if

the circumstances are particularly heroic or ingenious. If the PCs survive the encounter without disgracing themselves and manage to foil the jailbreak of the Omegan prisoners, it's worth an Official Commendation, even if Rafe-B-AEU escapes. In reviewing the reports, The Computer recognizes the extraordinary nature of Rafe-B-AEU-3 and makes allowances for failure.

If, however, Rafe-B tears up a lot of Computer property, then gets away with the Omega boys, or if the PCs are cowardly in refusing to confront him, then treason charges and/or fines for damage are in order.

## 5: IntSec agents at the Earth's core

### A mini-mission by Ken Rolston

#### MISSION ALERT!

**CODE 33, ARMED CITIZEN CREATING A DISTURBANCE IN HIL SECTOR POWER SERVICES BUREAU OFFICES. RESPOND AT ONCE. SUBDUE CITIZEN. CITIZEN IS NOT TO BE HARMED. REPEAT! CITIZEN IS NOT TO BE HARMED.**

**CITIZEN IDENTIFIES HIMSELF AS Tony-I-LLI-6, HEAD OF HIL SECTOR R&D'S EXPERIMENTAL PHYSICS DEPARTMENT. RECOMMEND COM LINK CONFERENCE WITH NEWMAN-R-NOI-3, Tony-I'S SUBORDINATE.**

**SUBJECT ALLEGES POWER SERVICES HAS TREASONOUSLY DENIED R&D ACCESS TO POWER RESOURCES. RECOMMEND COM LINK CONFERENCE WITH POWER SERVICES COMPLAINT BUREAU TO CONFIRM.**

### Summary

Tony-I-LLI-6, an INDIGO Clearance R&D genius deep in debt and on the verge of erasure, has gone to register a complaint against Power Services for power interruptions that are ruining his experiments. He has gone armed—R&D style. His already none-too-tranquil temper has been fanned to flashpoint by the ever-cooperative and solicitous staff of the Power Services complaint department.

After incinerating a few offices full of low-clearance bureaucrats, Tony-I has holed up in Power Engineering with a dozen mid-clearance hostages and the power control monitoring

systems for HIL Sector. Among Tony-I's complaints is that Power Services would never deliver the power he requested in sufficient quantities to really test the capacities of his experimental device. Now he intends to test his device's true potential; he has diverted all of HIL Sector's power to his experimental Gravity Potential Amplifier. According to an alarmed colleague in R&D, this device may be sufficient to establish intimate communication with the Earth's core.

The PCs should prevent Tony-I from further devastating Power Services' staff, from obliterating the sector's Power Engineering facilities, and from setting off a chain reaction that could end Life As We Know It on Spaceship Earth.

They also should avoid damaging a weapon capable of all this mischief (or the designer of said weapon). Armed Forces is real interested. ('Oh, boy! KaBOOM!') R&D is real interested. ('Oh, boy! *Big budget!*') The MAD Sector Science Network is real interested. ('Wow! Whatta concept!') They've all made The Computer real interested. That means the Troopers should be real interested too.

### Checking with R&D

Newman-R-NOI-3 is Tony-I-LLI-6's step-and-fetch-it. He's a little nerdy guy from PLC assigned as a clerical assistant to R&D. He has a squeaky, whining voice and doesn't like Tony-I or R&D very much, though he's just barely smart enough not to say so.

He thinks Tony-I is completely incompetent, and constantly dismisses any hint of real danger:

**'Oh, none of his projects are very important. I think he's working on some gravity thing, you know, but he's never been able to test it. Power Services just laughs in his face when he sends them those, you know... requisition forms. Oh, I'm sure he's quite brilliant, sure, or The Computer would never have approved his VIOLET Clearance, but... you know. Some of these R&D guys are so—you know—impractical.'**

### Checking with Power Services Complaint Bureau

Tony-I and his techbot horde currently have Power Services Complaint Bureau under siege. Secure behind 40-centimeter blast doors, Complaint Bureau staffers are still pretty surly. They speak in nasal, unpleasant tones, and they seem remarkably unimpressed by the BLUE Troopers and IntSec in general.

**'Yes, Citizen Tony-I did register a complaint... Yes, I believe he did file a number of form twenty-three dash eff-eff-one-seven-niner-dash ten-eleven's... No, I'm sorry, we can't discuss the nature of the complaint over the PDC... I'm afraid you'll have to come down to Power Services and discuss it with our service manager... Yes, we're quite busy right now—a little disturbance out in the control room, I believe— but if you come right down, I'm sure we can help you.'**  
[Click.]



## Tony-I-LLI-6

Tony-I-LLI-6 is a bespectacled, frantic, frizzy-haired, wild-eyed maniac of the *Gene-Wilder-Young-Frankenstein* variety. He has slipped his trolleybot, so to speak. When talking as Tony-I, tilt your head back, peer at your players wide-eyed along your cheeks and nose, open your jaws wide and rock your head to and fro in time to your ravings. Wiggle your fingers in the air from time to time.

When challenged, rave about the irresponsible interference of Power Services with your very important research. 'How can I do my research with all these interruptions!?' He waves sheaves of filled-out, processed and ignored Power Services complaint forms—'See? They are irresponsible! I stand in line for hours, and they give me another form, then I stand in line for more hours and see a person who sends me back for *more* forms...'

When coaxed and cajoled by solicitous Troopers (who are probably sneaking up to bash his head in) Tony-I is self-righteous, indignant and distrustful. 'No, someone must pay for this indignity! Why should I trust you? You're as bad as the rest of them! I'll do it My Way!'

## The setting

Around the room are a number of monitoring and engineering stations. Large wraparound displays, control-consoles and computer monitor and keyboard panels let the chief power techs keep an eye on HIL Sector's ever-fluctuating power needs.

## The corridors and techbot guards

Tony-I-LLI-6 has brought along an honor guard of R&D techbots armed with various R&D goodies. He has stationed a techbot at each of the corridors leading from the control room and has two with him on the platform where he holds the gravity potential amplifier. The techbots of course have no combat programming, but with their particular type of weapons, the issue of marksmanship is academic.

The techbots have been ordered to announce all visitors to Tony-I. No one is to enter the control room or any other corridors without Tony-I's approval. A good line of fast talk (Con Games skill) gets the PCs past these techbots; they are none too bright or aggressive. Tony-I approves any visitors who come with relatively benign intentions. A nice line of hooley is real effective here. ('We came to investigate a

complaint against Power Services.' 'IntSec sent us as observers for an R&D test—this is the place, isn't it?')

## The entrance

A 100 foot long tunnel leads from the transit tube destination station to an open iris at the southeast corner of the lower level. The PCs may only enter the control room through this entrance; the other corridors are not accessible via transit tube.

A techbot armed with a half-ton industrial table laser (W2K energy) stands in the open iris. A thick power cable leads from the table laser back into a panel in the Power Services control room.

Next to the techbot is a scrubbot drafted into Tony-I's service. It grips an experimental force sword (S3K energy) between two scrub-brush attachments.

The scrubbot is unhappy about this situation, and is constantly trying to slip away and scrub the corridor floor and walls. This is not a matter of overriding programming; the scrubbot knows this is currently a very unhealthy place to be, and it is eager to be somewhere else. Right now. But the techbot keeps catching it, yanking it back and reminding it the INDIGO gentleman ordered it to guard the corridor.

If the diplomatic situation starts to deteriorate, the scrubbot urgently tries to surrender to the PCs before hostilities begin.

Incidentally, the scrubbot happens to belong to Corpore Metal and has had its asimov circuits removed, but it is trying not to blow its cover by appearing more or less normally obedient.

## Clerical and administrative corridor

To the southwest are clerical and administrative offices. Smoke and fumes still emanate from between two shattered bulkheads leading to this corridor. A techbot with a smoking plasma generator (V1V energy) stands guarding this corridor.

Tony-I sent the techbot down this corridor to the Complaint Department. Frustrated by 40-centimeter blast doors (the Complaint Department is accustomed to visits from irate customers), the bot sprayed a few offices with the plasma generator and returned to stand guard.

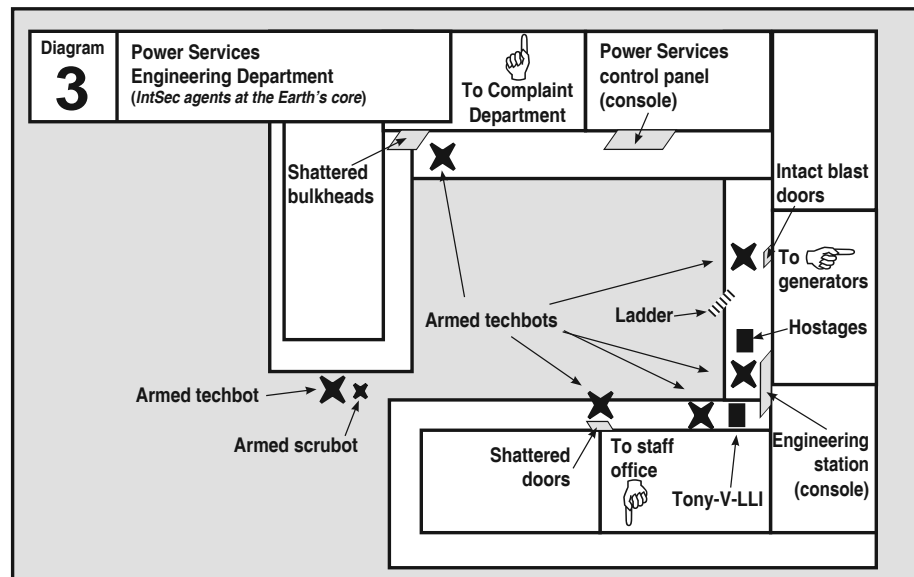
## The generators corridor

To the northwest are the reactors and generating plants. Enormous blast doors automatically sealed this corridor when Tony-I tripped the security programs while tampering with the power master control board. A techbot with a neat widget stands guard at these doors.

## Neat widget

This techbot is armed with an experimental X-ray laser that looks like a little cement mixer—you know, the kind on a wheeled cart that looks like a tapered barrel. For maximum terror effect, the barrel is brightly labeled in fluorescent letters—'Warning! X-ray Laser. Turn off all com units and PDCs when working in the vicinity of this device.'

The X-ray laser is powered by a strong force capacitor housed in a heavy backpack.



Pulse high-energy lasers in the barrel cause the tritium pellets to fuse in a magnetic bottle, releasing an unimaginably powerful beam of energy from the mouth of the barrel.

That is, of course, if the experimental device works.

Relax. The capacitor emits a floor-shuddering low-frequency hum, building to crescendo. There is a big clap of thunder, a flash from the barrel (like a misfiring flashcube) and a strong smell of ionized air. That's all. No big problem. Tony-I expresses mild disappointment. He didn't expect it to work, anyway—never did in the lab.

Maybe you want to have this device sputter inconclusively if the PCs try to use their com units or PDCs in the room.

Or maybe you want this device to work. K1V energy, 20m area, seems right to us. If this is the case, metal becomes suitable for use as a beverage in this area. *Real* big fines for damaging Computer property are in order.

### The staff offices

To the northeast are staff offices. A thin, white cloud of gas seeps along the floor from between the shattered doors. A techbot holding several unfamiliar canisters guards this door. A lot of hysterical screaming comes from this corridor.

The canisters contain a potent hallucinogen that causes the brain to scramble all incoming sensory data. The effect is something like that suffered by a concert cellist with a monumental hangover listening to acid rock at high volume on a portable music player while covered with flaming napalm and falling 6,100 meters without a parachute.

Now you understand all the screaming.

### Madman at the switch

Tony-I has gathered his hostages, disarmed them, tied them up and stacked them like cordwood in front of the engineering station on the upper-level platform in the northeast corner of the room. Two techbots armed with gluon packs guard the prisoners and, incidentally, function as Tony-I's bodyguards.

Gluon packs are high-tech backpack nuclear accelerators. They snafu the target. They also destroy any electronic gear and cause clothing to smoulder and other neat stuff.

Tony-I has taken over the engineering station on this platform; from this console he controls all the power in HIL Sector. He has removed an inspection panel next to the console and patched his device directly into the main power cable. He proudly claims to be able to divert

all of HIL Sector's power into his experimental device. The thickness of the cable leading to the device tends to lend credence to his boast. His finger is on the trigger, and his finger is itchy.

### Gaming fun

The problem is figuring out how to render Tony-I harmless, take him into custody and recover the weapon undamaged. It would be nice to save the lives of the hostages, preserve the Power Services Engineering department and avoid releasing the contents of the Earth's core.

### Bang, bang

Here's a bad idea.

The PCs could ignore their orders and drill him on the spot. So they can't get a clear shot at him because the techbots are in the way. It's a tricky shot at this range anyway. So they've been specifically ordered not to harm citizens. Big deal. If they get lucky and down Tony-I with the first shot, they can keep him from blowing up everything and everyone.

Otherwise he fires the weapon.

Maybe the weapon doesn't work so well at full power. Maybe only the hostages, Tony-I and a few lucky PCs get killed. Power Services is destroyed. Power is out for two weeks. HIL Sector must be evacuated. Surviving PCs wish they were killed, too.

Maybe the weapon *does* work. Activate Terra 2. Or dust off the orcs and elves.

### Think, think

Here are some *good* ideas:

- ④ Request support from Armed Forces specialists with chemical weapons (sleep gas).
- ④ Cut off power to the Engineering room (get technical support from Tech Services; then sneak in, posing as air conditioning repairmen or some such).
- ④ Call up Mutants' Registry and request a mutant with an appropriate power (Charm, etc).
- ④ Reason with Tony-I ('If your device works, you won't be able to write up your experiment in *The Journal of Big Explosions*').

- ④ Disguise a PC as a scrubot and send him in to polish the metalwork on Tony-I's device. Yeah, good luck with that.

Less ingenious players (or players with fiendish GMs) may have to make decisions about the priority of various objectives. For example, killing Tony-I is bad, but letting him blow up the hostages, Power Services and his super weapon is far worse. In debriefing you'll have to weigh how persuasively they defend their actions.

### Staging hints

Give the PCs no information—other than what they can pry out of R&D and the Complaint Bureau—until they arrive at the scene. (The Computer is keeping a lid on this incident.) When they arrive, describe the situation and let them talk to Tony-I. Then let them brainstorm some solutions.

Rookies probably try to solve the problem on their own—bad idea, because they are used to shooting a lot, and shooting is risky and unlikely to work in this situation.

More experienced Troopers try to get some help from specialists. Let them talk to Tony-I's colleagues back at R&D Central; they may have some idea how the device works, or whether it works at all—it's up to you.

Tony-I is an impulsive loony. He'll fire the weapon in the round immediately following *any* provocative PC action. Don't give the PCs a second chance.

And what does the weapon look like? What does it do? Look around the house for some object with a power cord—a floor lamp, table radio, vacuum cleaner, portable drill, television, toaster oven. Imagine it as an unimaginably powerful weapon. Pick something to be the trigger. Pick something else to be the point out of which ravening energies will pour forth when you touch the trigger.

Plug the object into a wall outlet, set it in your lap and tell your players this is what the weapon looks like. Put your finger on the trigger. Act crazy, and think about burning a hole in your living room rug, all the way down to the Earth's core. Cackle a lot. It may give your players clever ideas, like using area weapons for a sure hit on the power cord.

### The Computer's gratitude

This difficult mission is worth an Official Commendation and a healthy bonus if the PCs save Tony-I, his weapon, the hostages,



Power Services, Alpha Complex and the planet Earth. (If this seems a bit niggardly for saving Earth, toss in a couple of tickets to the BLUE Troopers' Ball or a plaque or something.) If they kill Tony-I, but save everything else, they get no bonus. Other varying degrees of failure result in

treason charges—up to automatic brainscrub for interruption of Power Service.

Or maybe the PCs get assigned a lousy autocar. Maybe they don't get to Tony-I in time. Maybe they get terminated. That'll teach 'em to get on the bad side of the motor pool.

**The number you have reached is imaginary. Please rotate your PDC 90 degrees and try again.**

## Pun name substitutions

New name	Pun name
Beth-V-DEE-3	Bea-V-DEE-3
Biff-G-OFB-3	Biff-G-BOF-3
Brett-I-HIL-6	Ben-I-HIL-6
Candy-Y-DAN-2	Cagne-Y-AND-1
Charles-B-NSD-4	Charles-B-RSN-4
Cinco-Y-RRR-1	Stan-I-LRL-1
Cody-V-TRE-2	Coe-V-ERT-2
Dirk-Y-RYH-5	Dir-Y-HRY-5
Flynn-I-MMA-2	Fluffy-I-AMM-2
Frank-I-OLL-5	Fur-I-LLO-5
Frank-O-RRK (Memorial Recreation Center)	Franzk-O-FKA (Memorial Recreation Center)
Hank-G-NMA-1	Hank-G-MAN-1
Herm-G-ELW-5	Herbert-G-WEL-5
Ian-O-YKA-4	Iam-O-KAY-4
Julius-V-NRE-5	Jules-V-ERN-5
Larissa-Y-DAN-2	Lace-Y-AND-2
Mabel-B-EEE-6	Ma-B-ELL-3
Martie-I-OLG-2	Mutie-I-GLO-2
Mitch-V-CEI-2	Miami-V-ICE-2
Newman-R-NOI-3	Newt-R-INO-3
Noam-I-TNO-6	No-I-NOT-6
Omega Complex	Oedipus Complex
Oprah-I-NSO-3	Operash-I-ONS-3
Oswald-Y-DDH-6	Oll-Y-HRD-6
Pip-G-NEO-4	Pid-G-EON-4
Preston-O-XEX-2	Profess-O-EXX-2
Rafe-B-AEU-3	Ram-B-EAU-3
Rocky-B-MBO-1	Rocky-B-BOA-1
Sammie-O-OXD-4	Sun-O-CCO-4
Sam-R-TDS-2	'Ziggy' Star-R-DST-2
Simon-R-IDO-2	Sigmunduf-R-OID-2
Spencer-G-RLE-6	Spen-G-LER-6
Sunny-O-OXD-3	Sun-O-CCO-3
Tony-V-LLI-6	Tooner-V-ILL-6
Wes-B-DBA-4	Wee-B-BAD-4

## Internal Security response codes

The following codes are the most common requests for assistance. Memorize them. Failure to do so is treason.

This list courtesy of the IntSec Ministry of Information, Office of Information Dispersal. Communications Central uses these special code numbers to concisely indicate the nature of the disturbance the Troopers are to deal with. They also serve to confuse any non-IntSec personnel who may be eavesdropping. Memorize them. Failure to do so is treason. These codes are subject to change without notice.

- |                 |  |                |   |
|-----------------|--|----------------|---|
| <b>Code 0</b>   | Commie subversion activity in progress. Respond immediately and capture all responsible. | <b>Code 34</b> | equipment at all costs. Citizen is expendable. BLUE citizen requests assistance. Respond quickly. |
| <b>Code 1</b>   | The Computer requests assistance. Immediate response is required. Failure is treason.    | <b>Code 35</b> | Trooper in trouble. Respond and assist.   |
| <b>Code 007</b> | License to kill. No termination voucher necessary.                                       | <b>Code 41</b> | INDIGO citizen requests assistance. Drop everything and respond immediately.                      |
| <b>Code 7</b>   | Routine mission. Perfectly safe. Perfectly routine. Perfectly.                           | <b>Code 47</b> | Essential services malfunction (usually life support systems). Investigate and report.            |
| <b>Code 8</b>   | Treasonous activity in progress. Stop at all costs.                                      | <b>Code 50</b> | Disturbance in subsector _____ . Investigate and report.  |
| <b>Code 9</b>   | INFRARED requests assistance. Response optional.   | <b>Code 52</b> | Troubleshooters request assistance. Respond as you see fit and with extreme caution.              |
| <b>Code 14</b>  | RED citizen requests assistance. Respond if available.                                   | <b>Code 53</b> | VIOLET citizen requests assistance. Get there. Now.   |
| <b>Code 17</b>  | Reactor meltdown. Requisition radiation gear and evacuate sector.                        | <b>Code 56</b> | Stray petbot causing disturbance. Catch and return to rightful owner.                             |
| <b>Code 23</b>  | ORANGE citizen requests assistance. Respond as time permits.                             | <b>Code 59</b> | This code reserved for future use.  |
| <b>Code 25</b>  | Major disaster in Power Services. Respond immediately.                                   | <b>Code 61</b> | Beserk bot. Approach with caution.  |
| <b>Code 28</b>  | YELLOW citizen requests assistance. Respond with reasonable promptness.                  | <b>Code 69</b> | This code left intentionally blank.   |
| <b>Code 30</b>  | GREEN citizen requests assistance. Respond promptly.                                     | <b>Code 75</b> | Lower-clearance citizen annoying higher-clearance citizen. Coroner has been notified.             |
| <b>Code 33</b>  | Citizen with possibly lethal equipment. Retrieve   | <b>Code 99</b> | ULTRAVIOLET citizen requires assistance. Need we say more?  |



# NPC roster

Name	Relevant skills & specialties	Weapons*	Armor**	Roleplaying notes
Beth-V-DEE-3	Energy Weapons 14, Unarmed Combat 12	Force sword	Reflec, Kevlar	Informant's Registry Supervisor. Sweet, innocent-looking, dangerous powermonger.
Biff-G-OFB-3	Energy Weapons 08, Unarmed Combat 07	Laser pistol	Reflec	Loyalty Officer. Torquemada Jr.
Brett-I-HIL-6	Energy Weapons 12, Unarmed Combat 09	Laser pistol	Combat suit	Communications Central Dispatch Supervisor. Genuinely (and therefore suspiciously) wise, loyal and helpful.
Candy-Y-DAN-2	Energy Weapons 09, Unarmed Combat 08	Laser pistol	Reflec	Forensic Sciences Technician. Friendly, cheerful and open, when Larissa-Y is mean, nasty and uncooperative, and vice versa.
Charles-B-NSD-4	Energy Weapons 14, Unarmed Combat 10	Energy pistol	Reflec	Surveillance and Covert Operations Supervisor. 'Desk-work good.'
Cody-V-TRE-2, Dirk-Y-RYH-5, Oprah-I-NSO-3	Energy Weapons 10, Unarmed Combat 08	Laser pistol	Reflec	Field Agents. Think Dirty Harry vs. Commie mutant traitors.
Flynn-I-MMA-2	Energy Weapons 05, Unarmed Combat 04	Laser pistol	Reflec	Dept. of Political Therapy Supervisor. Torquemada Sr.
Frank-I-OLL-5	Energy Weapons 14, Unarmed Combat 15	Laser pistol	Combat suit	HIL Sector BLUEs IntSec Captain. Fair, just, very ambitious.
Hank-G-NMA-1	Energy Weapons 05, Hand Weapons 13, Unarmed Combat 07	Neurowhip	Kevlar	Truth Technician. Scary when bored.
Herm-G-ELW-5	Energy Weapons 06, Unarmed Combat 11	Can't find it	Can't find it	R&D Technician. Acts like a 1960s Hippie.
Ian-O-YKA-4	Energy Weapons 06, Unarmed Combat 04	Laser pistol	Reflec	Ministry of Information Supervisor. Never available. PCs talk to Sam-R-TDS instead.
Julius-V-NRE-5	Energy Weapons 04, Unarmed Combat 04	Laser pistol	Reflec	R&D Supervisor. Eager to help, paranoid about his job, shifts blame to underlings.
Larissa-Y-DAN-2	Energy Weapons 08, Unarmed Combat 06	Laser pistol	Reflec	Forensic Sciences Supervisor. Friendly, cheerful and open, when Candy-Y is mean, nasty and uncooperative and vice versa.
Mabel-B-EEE-6	Unarmed Combat 04	Hangs up (skill 20)	Surliness	Dispatch Operator. Practical joker.
Martie-I-OLG-2	Energy Weapons 07, Unarmed Combat 05	Laser pistol	Reflec	Mutant's Registry Supervisor. Mutie-hater.
Mitch-V-CEI-2	Energy Weapons 12, Unarmed Combat 08	Sonic pistol	Kevlar	Political Orthodoxy & Interrogation Supervisor. Scary when bored.
Newman-R-NOI-3	Energy Weapons 04, Unarmed Combat 04	Laser pistol	None	R&D Clerical Assistant to Tony-V-LLI-6. Squeaky, nerdy voice. Dislikes Tony-V, but won't say so. Thinks Tony-V is incompetent, dismisses danger.
Noam-I-TNO-6	Energy Weapons 15, Unarmed Combat 13	Laser rifle	Kevlar	'Sarge' Duty Officer. PCs' best friend or worst enemy.
Pip-G-NEO-4	Energy Weapons 05, Unarmed Combat 04	Laser pistol	None	Registry Coordinator. New employee, scared of Beth-V.
Preston-O-XEX-2	Energy Weapons 08, Unarmed Combat 04	Laser pistol	Reflec	Registry Clerk. Protects mutants and compiles data on them.
Rafe-B-AEU-3	All Violence skills 19	All of them	Invulnerable to aimed weapons	Amiable killer.
Rocky-B-MBO-1	Energy Weapons 10, Field Weapons 12, Unarmed Combat 17	Laser rifle, Tangler	Combat suit	Armory Supervisor. Loves hearing things go boom.
Sammie-O-OXD-4	Energy Weapons 09, Unarmed Combat 05	Laser welder	Reflec	Motor Pool Mechanic. Tweedle-dee. (See Sunny-O.)
Sam-R-TDS-2	Energy Weapons 04, Unarmed Combat 04	Laser pistol	None	Information Officer. Snivelling, whining. Threats work vs. Sam-R.

\* All NPCs are assumed to have Unarmed Combat except as noted. Weapons listed above do the following damage: Energy pistol (W3K energy), Force sword (S3K energy), Laser pistol (W3K energy), Laser rifle (W3K energy), Laser welder (W3K energy, no range), Neurowhip (S5M energy), Sonic pistol (S3W energy), Tangler (snafu), Unarmed (O5K impact), Wrench (S5K impact).

\*\* Armor listed above provides the following protection: Reflec (E1), Kevlar (I3), Combat suit (5). For more information, see the **PARANOIA** rulebook.



## NPC roster (cont.)

Name	Relevant skills & specialties	Weapons*	Armor**	Roleplaying notes
Simon-R-IDO-2	Energy Weapons 06, Unarmed Combat 08	Laser pistol,	None	PLC Service Representative. Argues with boss, Spencer-G.
Spencer-G-RLE-6	Energy Weapons 12, Unarmed Combat 06	Laser pistol	Reflec	PLC Outfitting Supervisor. Taciturn, rude, suspicious. Always around.
Sunny-O-OXD-3	Energy Weapons 04, Hand Weapons 16, Unarmed Combat 08	Wrench	Reflec	Motor Pool Supervisor. Tweedle-dum. (See Sammie-O.)
Tony-I-LLI-6	Doomsday Weapons 20, Unarmed Combat 07	Gravity Potential Amplifier (V1V)	None	Violent, loony R&D genius.
Wes-B-DBA-4	Energy Weapons 03, Unarmed Combat 05	Laser rifle	Kevlar	Weapons Technician. Loves hearing things go boom.

## Bot roster

Type	No.	Speed	Weapons	Special equipment & abilities	Size	Armor
Techbot	6	Walk (legs)	Various* (skill 10)	As weapons require. Standard chassis; two light manipulators; medium brain; narrow, literal programming. Obey Tony-V-LLI-6. Susceptible to Con Games skill.	Man-size	None
Scrubot	1	Stroll (treads)	Experimental force sword (skill 08, S3K energy), scrub brush (skill 20, O4D impact)	Corpore Metal. Three extendible arms fitted with scrub brushes; one arm with force sword; small brain. Obeys companion techbot. More or less. (Usually less.)	A little smaller than man-size	None

\* Techbots have one of the following weapons:

*Industrial table laser (W2K energy), plasma generator (V1V energy), X-ray laser (K1V, if it works), unfamiliar canisters, gluon pack (always snafus when hits).*

**I've got my tinfoil hat on / Hip hip hip hooray!**  
**My tinfoil hat will shield me from your mind-controlling ray.**  
**I've got my tinfoil hat on / To insulate my brain.**  
**As long as I have got my tinfoil hat on I'll be sane.**

**Naughty little voices chanting**  
**Naughty little thoughts implanting**  
**Aluminium will strike them dumb.**  
**Wear a tinfoil hat!**

**Aliens and goblins / Were watching me in bed**  
**Until I got some Bacofoil and wrapped it round my head.**

**Now I've got my tinfoil hat on / My mind cannot be soiled.**  
**I've got my tinfoil hat on and their evil plans are foiled!**

—Miss Prism and others in the 4thur community (music by doghorse)  
 [ <http://eclectech.co.uk/mindcontrol.php> ]

# EXTREME INDIGO

## INDIGO contents

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**Salary:** 100,000 cr/month

**Food:** Gourmet meals and rich desserts.

**Housing:** A lovely big subsector all your own.

**Transport:** Several vehicles with chauffeur or pilot.

**Staff:** Full staff of humans and bots. You can go a month without seeing an ORANGE citizen.

**Authority:** May promote to GREEN or lower. May demote from BLUE or lower. You serve on the Boards of several service firms.

**Perks:** Obsessive coverage on celebrity vidshows, assuming you like that; always a table open or a room ready; you skip the lines and go directly to the manager. You pull lots of strings at IntSec. If you offer good reasons to The Computer, you can openly study Old Reckoning Cultures.

**Demographic:** A few tenths of a percent of the population; dozens, a hundred at most, in a standard sector.

## Typical INDIGO jobs

Senior execs, personal staff and cleaning crew for ULTRAVIOLETS; Armed Forces colonels; CPU chief director; HPD&MC vidshow studio chiefs, Teela O'Malley's agent; IntSec deputy supervisors and senior interrogators; in PLC, the guy who takes the fall when the new B3 recipe flops; in Power Services, the guy who designs power plants; R&D project leads; Tech Services surgeons; Free Enterprise liaisons to service group leaders.



## In apprehension how like a god

What is your Alpha Complex? Is it an actual utopia that's simply under constant attack by Communists? A barely functioning society on the verge of collapse? A scarily effective system of oppression and organization? The grandest attempt at mass mind-control ever performed by mutants? An experiment by an alien race? All of the above, sequentially or in parallel?

Whatever it is, by the time your players reach INDIGO Clearance, they should know—at least the first layer. INDIGOs don't know everything, but for the first time, they know what they don't know. That is, they understand enough to mark the boundaries of their ignorance. The dark areas of their world-picture are large but have sharp edges.

INDIGO citizens are the demigods of Alpha Complex, the seraphim without free will, the djinn of cosmic power chained to a rusted lamp. They aren't all-powerful, but they work every day with those who are. If an INDIGO wants it to happen, he can make it happen—so long as his superior approves.

There's little materially INDIGOs could want. No, at INDIGO, the fear is twofold: 1. Remaining stuck at INDIGO, and thereby always having to cater to the whims of VIOLETS. 2. *Not* catering to the often-conflicting whims of VIOLETS, and thus being promptly demoted.

If this doesn't drive your players up the wall, pose more conflict in their orders. For example, have one VIOLET citizen order the PCs to ensure all citizens wear special adamantium-foil hats to protect them from mutants. Have another order the PCs to ensure all citizens can be instantly inspected for regulation hair length and hygiene.

Finally, just to make matters worse, at this level it's painfully apparent the only way to become VIOLET is by stepping into the boots of a recently demoted VIOLET citizen. But how does a demigod take down a god? This question has spawned whole religions—and now **PARANOIA** too.

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CLEARANCE GREEN CLEARANCE GREEN CLEARANCE GREEN CLEARANCE GREEN

## Dossier: Thorwald-I-AJU-9



### INDIGO Clearance

Reference #: 784-67-623-341

[Last Update: 214.04.18 23:55]

Name: Thorwald-I-AJU-9

Decantationdate: 156.04.30

Service group: R&D

Service firm: HPD-BrainBudz

Occupation: Brain Trust Researcher  
(Class AA, Unattached)

Last known location: BMB Sector,

Subsector 0A, Room 29

Height: 170 cm

Weight: 65.7 kg

### ACTIVITIES & AFFILIATIONS

**Activities:** Independent research, organizing exploratory expeditions into the Outdoors and Underplex, experimental flavor testing, recreational drug use: zarobutyl acid (experimental), discussion groups, training of protégés

**Affiliations:** HPD-BrainBudz (board member), PharmaFill PLC (board member), Piffer Labs (board member), Yumee Bytes Snacks and Medicinals (board member), DNAssemblers TS (trustee), FunFoods PLC (trustee), R&D Brain Trust 47/E

### TREASONS & COMMENDATIONS

**Treasons:** possession of unauthorized information (41), possession of unauthorized equipment (4), possession of unauthorized pharmaceuticals (11), damaging / destroying assigned equipment (146), filesharing (50) (see records)

**Commendations:** Class A invention (1) (see also: Jelloidal InterNode eXchange), class B invention (4), class C invention (31), class D invention (16), type 2 invention (1), type 15a invention (1), efficient use of resources (5), enthusiastic leadership (2) (see records)

### GENETIC PROFILE & CREDIT RATING

**Genetic Profile:** Class 40X/91r4; anomalies at 0005c, 0290a, 1723a, 3272g, 3382t, 3094t, 6561a, 6608a. [23% chance of one or more psionic mutations; 28% chance of one or more metabolic mutations] (Note: possible side effects may stem from experimental template-scrub technology; see records)

**Cybernetics:** MindWire Cerebral Implant [legal, experimental], cybernetic eye T35342-47389 [legal, experimental], cybernetic hand 73147-8943r [legal, experimental]

**Credit Rating:** 12-INDIGO (129,560cr)

### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Known high-ranking member of Pro Tech secret society. Infiltrating Anti-Mutant society on behalf of Pro Tech. Known to have high-level contacts in Computer Phreaks, Corpore Metal and Mystics. Low-level contacts in Free Enterprise, Psion, Romantics and Sierra Club. Death toll from his experiments exceeds 1,200 citizens. GeneEst gives 99% chance protégé Shankar-G is cloned from his own modified DNA.

### ANALYSIS

**Primary drive:** scientific curiosity. **Secondary drives:** professional pride. Steals credit for research from subordinates to compensate for diminishing creative output. Cloning self to create protégés and proposing steadily more dangerous research projects and exploratory missions are symptomatic of need to cement place in scientific history. PsychEst gives 20% chance subject will attempt to immortalize self via cataclysmic project backfire (see also: Project Infinite Hole -> Analysis)

### RECOMMENDATIONS & COMMENTS

**Threat level:** low to moderate. Increase oversight of all research projects associated with subject.

**Comments:** [[ More useful if turned? Offer HOOC or historical revision in exchange for deep infiltration of Pro Tech, Phreaks. -Ibrahim-I ]]

[[ Not until scientific use is exhausted. Pro Tech not currently a major threat, and deep Phreak infiltration unlikely. -Deirdre-I ]]

[[ TreasEst gives 60% chance of deep Corpore Metal involvement networked through cybernetics and unaccounted for by surveillance. I recommend remand to Brain Reclamation. -Shreyas-I ]]

## INDIGO improvements

**It feels like the weight of the world is on you, doesn't it? How you pine for those earlier days, when all you needed to do was figure out how to survive one more day without being shot.**

---

**Food, drink and consumables**
**TwinklePies: 75cr each**

A faithful reproduction of an Old Reckoning classic, these fluffy, cream-filled snacks are one of the purest food pleasures ever discovered. (It is rumored that, for around two grand, you can buy an actual, original TwinklePie, still in its pre-disaster plastic wrap!)

---

**Drugs and recreation**
**Trioxyniacinbiflavin (aka Supermind):  
15cr per dose**

This fast-acting inhalant super-accelerates the neural pathways to the brain for a few minutes, during which time you can recall past events with perfect clarity, establish indelible new memories, perform advanced calculations and even identify and break post-hypnotic suggestions that have been placed by others! Use the other 99% of that mind of yours! (WARNING: Not to be used more than once per day.)

**Flowers: 30 – 50cr per bouquet,  
100 – 500cr per pot**

These beautiful, colorful decorative items were actually alive at one time. Or, if you're feeling really adventurous, purchase a still-living plant to grow in a corner of your home! (Jackobot with garden-care programming sold separately.)

**DeSuppressant: 100cr per dose  
(ILLEGAL! Heavy medication if caught)**

This amazing pill temporarily counters the battery of bio-suppressants that build up in the body from the food and water supply. Experience the unadulterated sensation of being human for up to 50 minutes at a time!

---

**Hygiene and maintenance**
**NewFace accessories: 400cr each**

Temporarily change your eye color, hair color and other facial characteristics with these custom prosthetics. Pass unnoticed among your workers and servants! For decorative purposes only; not to be used for escaping justice by assuming a new identity, not that such an outlandish thought crossed your mind.

**High-Gene spray: 1500cr  
(ILLEGAL! Censure if caught)**

Minimize your 'genetic wake' with this body-spray. Breaks down dead skin cells and loose hair before they can fall off and be left behind wherever you go. No longer worry about your genetic scan turning up as evidence in someone else's crime!

---

**Clothing and accessories**
**Custom-tailored uniform: 600 – 4500cr**

Have your entire uniform hand-cut from the ground up, every piece specially designed to fit your current body shape. For the cost-conscious, you may make do with the same synthetic fibers everyone wears, but for the well-compensated citizen, a suit woven from all-natural material will turn every head when you walk by.

---

**Survival and technology**
**BotVox: 2000cr**

Worn around the neck, this transmitter translates sub-verbal speech directly into binary radio signals understandable only to bots, allowing you to issue instructions with your fellow citizens none the wiser.

**Implantech: 5000cr + (device cost x 500)  
(ILLEGAL! Termination if caught)**

Have chronometers, laser pistols, hygiene gear and the like cybernetically placed (discreetly) inside your body, so you never have to wonder where they are again.

---

**Services**
**Armed Forces escort: 50,000cr per week**

How many times did you cower in fear at the heavily-armed bodyguards of higher-clearance citizens? Now you're the one with a half-dozen ruthless soldiers ready to 'deal' with any sort of irritation!

**Sector shutdown: 20,000 – 75,000cr  
(ILLEGAL! Termination if caught)**

Throw enough money around and you can orchestrate the complete halt of some key piece of infrastructure in an entire sector for several hours. All the transbots stop moving? All the lights go out? Comlinks go down? Elevators halt? The mind reels! As always, the cheaper you go, the more likely someone will rat you out.



# Troubleshooters: Secret agents

by Joshua Moretto

Most Troubleshooter duties in this book use a 'slaps and bennies' format. Here, at Security Clearance INDIGO, things are a little different, because this duty consists of a single benny: The Troubleshooters might survive it, and will move on to VIOLET if they do. Everything else about this duty is a slap, and deserves a more detailed treatment. Trust us, it'll be fun.

## The low life of high clearance

Rank has its privileges. As the Troubleshooters have been scaling the ladder of security clearance, life has, on the whole, been improving. They've scrambled up from the food vats of the INFRARED masses. They have their own rooms, vehicles and, perhaps best of all, real food. The life at the higher clearances is opulent, and richly deserved after

all the betrayals and felonies they committed to get here.

INDIGO Clearance *Troubleshooters*, however, usually get none of this. Nada. Zip. Zilch. Nothing. Not a sausage. *Especially* not a sausage.

Goodbye, real food. Goodbye, private living quarters, masseuses, optional pharatherapy and private autocar. It's back to the communal bathrooms for you, citizen!

**Q1.** Why? **Q2.** And why would anyone want to be INDIGO if this is true?

**A1.** Because INDIGO Troubleshooters are spies. **A2.** It's a Troubleshooter's only route to VIOLET.

## Spies? Spies!

Ahem. *Secret agents*, if you please, citizen. The most common duty for an INDIGO Clearance Troubleshooter is life as a secret

agent. A few lucky Troubleshooters at this clearance receive other, very public duties purely to keep the populace from noticing the curious absence of INDIGO Troubleshooters. These lucky Troubleshooters are so ferociously hated by the rest that many who make it to VIOLET are picked off shortly thereafter by former secret agents who survived to reach VIOLET themselves. Vengeance is sweet, if long in coming.

INDIGO secret agents are assigned the dangerous task of infiltrating a secret society. Living entirely undercover, they become members of a cell (cabal, club, congregation or whatever) and worm their way into the ranks, gathering information and feeding it back to The Computer. They might be undercover for months or even years among their society brethren (assuming they live that long and have enough clones). By rising in degree, they gain

## INDIGO secret society life

INDIGOs are—not trusted, obviously, but less *not*-trusted than lower-clearance citizens. The threshold of mandatory informational hygiene (i.e., not knowing what you're not supposed to know, forgetting if you find out anything you're not supposed to know, forgetting if you find out that there are things you're not supposed to know) is considerably lower for INDIGOs. They are permitted to hold treasonous thoughts for official purposes. A YELLOW IntSec agent who investigates a Commie cell might be scrubbed to get the propaganda out of his brain, but his INDIGO supervisor views the propaganda for future reference.

INDIGOs undertake long-term infiltration missions of secret societies. Normally, disposable low-clearance Troubleshooters are assigned such dangerous missions, but longer-term IntSec-sponsored deep cover positions are best given to experienced INDIGO spies. Of course, seeing as most of these spies are already secret society members, they end up being double agents, triple agents, quadruple agents or worse. This induces an oddly detached mindset. Once you've spied on the Frankenstein Destroyers for Pro Tech for Psion for the Anti-Mutants for Frankenstein Destroyers for IntSec while still trying to hide your fervent Sierra Club beliefs, being asked to spy on the Sierra Club for the Frankenstein Destroyers seems eminently plausible.

Not all INDIGO secret society members have such stressful and confusing assignments. Sometimes one is sent to spy on one's own secret society. The bulk of society administration is done by high-level INDIGOs spying on themselves. They spend most of the day doing official society business, then spend ten minutes merrily writing up fictitious reports about society activities. Many of the completely erroneous beliefs held by IntSec and The

Computer stem from these agents: 'All PURGE agents are nine feet tall. Corpore Metal members can only be killed by gold dust. Phil-I-HNB is a harmless Romantic, despite his large personal collection of heavy weaponry.'

## Societies with a major INDIGO presence

**Computer Phreaks:** Only a handful of Phreaks are actually INDIGO, but their influence means they're best discussed here. Phreaks often incur dangerous judgments in their permanent records like 'not a team player' or 'stays up past Approved Bedtim^^^THIS CITIZEN IS A MODEL CITIZEN AND YOU SHOULD GIVE HIM HOT FUN', so they rarely get promoted. However, many putative BLUEs, INDIGOs and VIOLETs only exist in computer records. Hackers use these puppets to issue orders that benefit the low-clearance Phreaks.

**FCCC-P:** The FCCC-P is the only society in which degree is directly proportional to security clearance. After all, INDIGO is next to godliness. This can cause problems for the society, as fast-track Troubleshooters suddenly find themselves promoted to head of a congregation without a clue about approved doctrine. Cue heresy. Truly, The Computer works in mysterious ways.

**Illuminati:** They don't exist. Move along, citizen. If they did exist, they'd all be ULTRAVIOLETs anyway, right? They wouldn't be manipulating everything from positions of comfortable obscurity. Everyone knows vice presidents and executive assistants have no power. Fnord.

—Gareth Hanrahan

ever deeper access and expose more of the dark heart of treason to The Computer.

Still, you may well wonder why being secret agents means such a drastic drop in privilege for these poor sa— er, loyal citizens. Think of James Bond: tuxedos, fancy hotels, expensive cars and, for some unfathomable reason, baccarat.

It's simple: High-clearance citizens are rare. The last thing you want to do as an undercover operative is stand out. More to the point, entering a secret society from a position of lofty status is highly suspicious. No cell of traitors will believe a YELLOW citizen, or even an ORANGE, isn't already working for someone else. So it's back to RED as our secret agents assume their cover identities.

Interestingly, most secret agents retain their roles as Troubleshooters in their cover identity. You probably see where this is going: INDIGO secret agents, impersonating RED Clearance Troubleshooters, relive the exact same anxieties as they did back in their RED Clearance days, only now with the added problems of being undercover secret agents piled on top. Welcome to **PARANOIA** hardcore.

Particularly sadistic GMs (or masochistic players) may try running a series with the premise that all PCs are actually INDIGO agents masquerading as the RED Troubleshooters. We recommend only experienced players and GMs attempt this; a **PARANOIA** series can be daunting enough with the default assumptions.

## The making of a secret agent

By the time a Troubleshooter has reached INDIGO he's well known, at least among higher-clearance citizens. If the Troubleshooter has spent any significant time in Civic Pride Detail, he may be famous all over Alpha Complex. This is not the stuff of undercover operatives. So The Computer orders the following drastic preparations:

### Step 1. Remove the Troubleshooter from his mundane life.

Acquaintances and coworkers gradually see the Troubleshooter less and less, until they finally lose interest in where Ben-I is these days. The Troubleshooter lives in an undisclosed location, sometimes confined for days at a time with no outside contact.

To conceal prominent Troubleshooters, The Computer makes a public announcement, dramatically chastizing him for some fabricated

**The perfect anarchist was not recognized as a fellow creature by Chief Inspector Heat. He was impossible—a mad dog to be left alone. Not that the Chief Inspector was afraid of him; on the contrary, he meant to have him some day. But not yet: He meant to get hold of him in his own time, properly and effectively, according to the rules of the game. The present was not the right time for attempting that feat, not the right time for many reasons, personal and of public service.**

—Joseph Conrad, *The Secret Agent* (1907)

failing and sternly demoting this wastrel to BLUE. It officially assigns the Troubleshooter Outdoors Duty, and has IntSec create and file periodic reports in his name.

With bona-fide Troubleshooter celebrities, The Computer officially announces the death of the Troubleshooter, generally with lavish descriptions (and even video, when possible) of the hero's tragic fall while fighting menacing Commie mutant traitors.

### Step 2. Alter his appearance.

Most Troubleshooters only require a haircut and a dye job. The more famous must undergo cosmetic surgery to radically alter their faces. The most widely known agents brave even more extreme alterations. The most advanced Alpha Complex docbots take off an inch or two here, add a bit there and massively change the victi— *agent's* entire build. Short Troubleshooters become taller, the heavy end up skinny and so on.

**Step 3. Construct a cover identity.** The Computer renames the Troubleshooter, reassigns him to a new service firm and relocates him to a distant sector to minimize the chance of recognition. Timid Power Services nerds find themselves enrolled in the Armed Forces and other such mismatches, but not too often. CPU creates an elaborate array of forged documentation in sundry databanks, providing deep coverage should anyone pry. These records are then linked to the agent's tongueprint, and his life's original records are disassociated from it.

The entire process systematically severs the Troubleshooter from his former life. All information trails are erased.

What with the alterations to their appearance, some agents fear these efforts are so complete nobody will remember who they actually are, and all knowledge of their role as undercover agents will be lost. This almost never happens. Or if it did, well, how would you ever know, you know?

Nonetheless, rumors persist that this occurs with disturbing frequency. Alpha Complex lore even asserts that at least one High Programmer attained his position after being 'lost' in exactly this fashion and then climbing back up through the ranks in his cover identity.

## Life undercover: Staying in character

Living as a secret agent isn't easy. To begin with, there's the disgruntling loss of privilege, going from cushy INDIGO opulence to the drudgery of a RED dormitory. Troubleshooters in this position struggle not to break cover and rebel against their reduced status. When a secret agent can't handle the loss and unfortunately starts demanding real food and a massagebot, he's treated exactly like a RED Clearance Troubleshooter would be: extensive pharmaceutical therapy and disciplinary action.



Some secret agents, especially those who rose slowly in clearance, have trouble remembering to 'be' RED Clearance. A careless agent might absently walk down a BLUE corridor, casually give orders to a GREEN officer or offhandedly refer to information far above his cover identity's RED Clearance. These lapses are treated as instances of insanity (common enough in Alpha Complex), providing a certain amount of inherent damage control and protecting the operation. However, with repeated violations, the agent may be 'neutralized', rather than risk exposing the operation.

### Swimming with sharks, or, my life as a pretend traitor

IntSec assigns the agent a secret society to join. Finding a contact for the given society can be either trivial or tricky. Certainly many citizens find it hard to go a month without becoming embroiled in something at least

vaguely treasonous. A clever Troubleshooter can follow up on such illicit doings and trace them back to a secret society contact. Another popular method is to contact the IR Market and pursue leads there.

Inevitably, a secret agent who has, in his RED cover identity, no attachment to a secret society will eventually be recruited—by somebody or other. An agent who seems excessively picky about hitching up arouses suspicion, so a prudent spy may need to join a number of interim societies, then arrange to get drummed out, all while waiting for the right contact to whisper a rendezvous in his ear. He must beware of repercussions from being ousted; some societies are less forgiving of apostasy than others. If he has to get himself thrown out of PURGE, the agent might as well head back to HQ and start over, because otherwise his tour of duty will end quick.

Sometimes an unlucky agent gets assigned to infiltrate the secret society he belongs to in his regular identity. Because he already knows drop points, secret signals and code words, making contact is easy. Given the disjointed

structure of most secret societies, an agent can simply start showing up at meetings as a new recruit ('Bob-R sent me').

But the secret agent spying on his own society must report ample, accurate information to keep his superiors happy without injuring his society's aims. This should test even an INDIGO's Chutzpah rating.

It would seem best to spy on some third-party society (so to speak) for IntSec, while informing one's own society of the undercover operation. Then the spy can report to IntSec *and* his own society, earning favor with both. But this seldom happens, because the cosmetically altered agent can't prove his own identity to the society that knew him best. They consider him a stranger—a spy, rightly enough—and may take punitive action.

Having found, contacted and joined a secret society by whatever means, a secret agent now faces the task of living his life: going about the life of a RED Clearance citizen, probably as a Troubleshooter, while meeting with a secret society, avoiding discovery (both by the society itself, exposing the agent as a spy,

Ossipon gasped, as it were, discreetly. 'Do you mean to say you would hand [your explosives] over to a tec [detective] if one came to ask you for your wares?'

The [Professor] smiled faintly. 'Let them come and try it on, and you will see,' he said. 'They know me, but I know also every one of them. They won't come near me—not they.'

His thin, livid lips snapped together firmly. Ossipon began to argue. 'But they could send someone—rig a plant on you. Don't you see? Get the stuff from you in that way, and then arrest you with the proof in their hands.'

'Proof of what? Dealing in explosives without a license perhaps.' This was meant for a contemptuous jeer, though the expression of the thin, sickly man remained unchanged, and the utterance was negligent. 'I don't think there's one of them anxious to make that arrest. I don't think they could get one of them to apply for a warrant. [...] Because they know very well I take care never to part with the last handful of my wares. I've it always by me. [...] I walk always with my right hand closed round the indiarubber ball which I have in my trouser pocket. The pressing of this ball actuates a detonator inside the flask I carry in my pocket. It's the principle of the pneumatic instantaneous shutter for a camera lens. The tube leads up—'

With a swift, disclosing gesture he gave Ossipon a glimpse of an indiarubber tube, resembling a slender brown worm, issuing from the armhole of his waistcoat and plunging into the inner breast pocket of his jacket. His clothes, of a nondescript brown mixture, were threadbare and marked with stains, dusty in the folds, with ragged button-holes. 'The detonator is partly mechanical, partly chemical,' he explained, with casual condescension.

—Joseph Conrad, *The Secret Agent*



and by the ordinary authorities, exposing his RED Clearance identity as a traitor) and filing clandestine reports. But the clock is ticking.

The longer a secret agent remains undercover, the more suspicion he draws—not from the secret society, but from his superiors who (in theory) closely monitor his reports. They worry constantly about blowback. The agent has spent so much time among traitors, their logic goes, the society may have ‘turned’ the agent. They start giving the agent’s reports excruciating scrutiny, and take any errors or misstatements as evidence of subversion. An otherwise extremely successful secret agent who gets a little careless filing his reports may find his career abruptly cut off. Wily agents, recognizing this threat, work hard to orchestrate a dramatic ‘purge’ of their cell. This usually ruins their cover, but it can get the agent promoted out of his job.

However, sometimes the agent is too successful. Interrogation of the captured society members opens a new line of investigation. Well, who better to follow up—who knows the society’s practices better—than...? So the agent’s superiors construct yet another secret identity (complete with all-new reconstructive surgeries), and re-insert him for a second round of infiltration.

As a side note, secret agents who infiltrate Psion had best be registered mutants in their real identity if they enjoy breathing. That brazen admission of treason is a surefire way *not* to reach VIOLET.

### Getting caught

Remember how an agent can blow his cover simply by not acting like a RED Clearance citizen? This usually just results in accusations of insanity and resultant therapy. The *real* danger for the agent is drawing suspicion from his secret society.

The agent must file regular reports, usually via confession booth using a Computer-provided code that allows him to file a voice report. If the agent is bugged, or the booth itself is compromised (*nah, never happens*), the report may get back to his secret society, with disastrous consequences.

Furthermore, the agent must carefully time his reports. If IntSec invades the cell five minutes after every visit Harold-R makes to the confession booth, his fellow members may grow suspicious.

The level of suspicion depends strongly on which secret society he joins. Class A (mostly

harmless) societies tend to be comparatively trusting, whereas PURGE and other dangerous Class C societies are paranoid.

Assuming he is not caught red-handed, an exposed agent must evade assassination attempts, frame-ups and traps, and survive long enough to report the failure to his superiors. If his superiors choose to acknowledge the agent’s existence, and do not terminate him outright, they can extract and debrief him. And discipline him extensively. And give him more surgery, and reassign him with a new cover identity to a different sector.

More dangerous than the embittered society are the ordinary authorities of Alpha Complex. All the usual worries a citizen has in belonging to a society apply to the agent. Plus, if IntSec or another authority catches him, the agent can’t report in and seek extraction. Being caught by the authorities doesn’t blow the agent’s cover, so his superiors prefer him to tough out the normal corrections. Afterward, he—or his clone backup—can resume his duties.

An agent’s clone, upon decanting, must undergo rush surgery to match the cover identity. At least there’s an easy way to explain the post-surgical scars and stitches to the secret society: ‘IntSec interrogated me.’

### The Devin-R scenario

Named after the cover identity of the Troubleshooter who first recognized the situation, this is an unfortunate consequence of the miserly control of information in Alpha Complex.

Devin-R was a deep-cover secret agent who had successfully infiltrated a Death Leopard cell. Over several months he had garnered their trust, and his reports were considered satisfactory. However, Devin-R began to suspect the other members of his cell were pursuing mysterious agendas. He began tailing them, planting surveillance devices and conducting clandestine inquiries.

Devin-R eventually discovered that every single member of his cell was, in fact, an INDIGO Clearance secret agent working to infiltrate the secret society. None of them were aware the others were agents, and due to the carefully eliminated data trail, nobody at IntSec had noticed all these agents were filing reports on each others’ cover identities. Devin-R gathered enough evidence to prove the situation to his superiors, and was promptly promoted, while simultaneously causing the extreme embarrassment and demotion of the

other agents involved, and their superiors. After a politic interval to let the ruckus die down, his superiors trumped up charges against Devin-R and had him terminated and erased.

Unfortunately, Devin-R’s situation was simply the first time any secret agent had become aware it had occurred. It has since been seen a number of times, but statistical analyses (and common sense, insofar as this concept is applicable) suggest it occurs more often than is recorded. High-clearance supervisors seldom warn new secret agents to look out for the Devin-R scenario, simply because it makes everyone look stupid. Nonetheless, new agents still hear rumors, and a folk wisdom of sorts has grown around it.

However unlikely, if a secret agent finds himself the victim of the Devin-R scenario, it is widely agreed the best policy is to not do what Devin-R did, but to keep quiet. Their superiors would be eager to prevent further embarrassments from entering the records. Instead, smart agents in this position gather extensive evidence—or rather, blackmail material.

In rare instances, the entire cell of secret agents may open up to each other, and forge an alliance of mutual benefit. The cell then fragments, and each secret agent recruits a new cell around himself which he can subsequently betray to his superiors.

### The (presumed) payoff

If the secret agent survives these hardships, his superiors eventually recall him from the undercover assignment. The recall usually follows a pogrom of his cell, and IntSec arranges for the agent’s cover identity to ‘die’ in the process. The agent crosses his fingers that he doesn’t share his cover’s fate.

Following his recovery, the Troubleshooter undergoes cosmetic surgery to reverse earlier alterations. While recuperating, he’s extensively debriefed and carefully monitored for signs of having been infected by long contact with a traitorous organization. If everything checks out, and if The Computer remembers the Troubleshooter used to be INDIGO Clearance—and really, could The Computer ever forget? Does that sound even remotely plausible?—the Troubleshooter resumes his former life, where the promised promotion to Security Clearance VIOLET will soon follow. He hopes.



## R&D mad scientists

by Allen Varney

Each of 3–6 players (4–6 is best) becomes an INDIGO Clearance R&D scientist of uncommon brilliance, unjustly robbed of his rightful glory and consequently ‘gone critical’.

Before your players create characters, give each of them a photocopy of the ‘R&D motivations’ handout on the facing page. After they have read it, read this aloud to them:

**All of you are scientists in Alpha Complex. You’ve had a long career serving The Computer in the Research & Design service group, creating new equipment and researching cool stuff man was not meant to know. Now you each run your own research lab.**

**You are all of lofty INDIGO Security Clearance, meaning The Computer trusts you deeply. You are each about to betray that trust to avenge a terrible injustice visited upon you by one of your fellow scientists.**

**You each start with 25 valuable Perversity points. You will spend some of these precious Perversity points in two pre-game auctions. In both of these auctions, remember this important point: Every point you bid, whether you win or lose, is spent. The points you bid are gone for good!**

**In the first auction you bid points for your *Brilliance*: the maximum resources you can exert in your quest for justice. The one who spends most in the Brilliance auction is the most gifted scientist. The rest of you are ranked second-most-gifted to least gifted, based on the points you bid. More-brilliant scientists can procure vital equipment more easily than can less-brilliant scientists. Plus, you are allowed to sneer at and patronize those of lesser brilliance.**

**Immediately after the Brilliance auction, you will then bid for the right to set your discovery’s *Importance*: the maximum glory you can achieve in your quest. The player who bids the most in the Importance auction has the chance to achieve the most glorious triumph over his rivals. The rest of you can expect successively less recognition, again ranked according to the points you bid.**

**After both these auctions are done, the game will begin. If you still have Perversity points left, you can spend them during play to help your chances to succeed, or to hinder your rivals, just as in standard *PARANOIA*. You can still earn more Perversity as usual, by being entertaining.**

### Conducting the auctions

Players may bid in any order and any number of times per auction. All bids are public. All bids must be in whole points, and each bidder must bid at least one point higher than the previous bidder. **All points bid are spent**, regardless of whether the bidder wins. After each auction, write down the final amount each player bid; the totals are important.

After the Brilliance auction but before Importance, have each player describe his scientist’s lofty intellectual dimension. The highest Brilliance bidder describes his innate intellect first; encourage glowing self-esteem and supercilious boasts. Next the second-highest bidder speaks, and so on. Each player after the first must describe his scientist’s intelligence in lesser terms than the player preceding him.

Now conduct the Importance auction. You may see much higher bids this time.

Importance determines not only the potential impact of the player’s discovery on Alpha Complex, but also (unbeknownst to the players) the magnitude of its deadliness. A low-Importance discovery—a bid under five, say—represents danger sufficient to take out a few individuals or maybe a corridor. High-Importance discoveries (bids over 15) are powerful enough to wipe out whole sectors, the entire city, and even large swaths of a continent. If a player bids all 25 Perversity on Importance, his discovery can shatter the Earth like an egg.

Again, have each player in descending bid order describe the illustrious significance of his discovery. As before, each player after the first must describe his discovery in lesser terms than its predecessors.

### Creating scientist characters

After you conclude both auctions, have the players generate INDIGO Clearance characters in the R&D service group. Follow the usual character creation procedure from the *PARANOIA* rulebook, as modified by the high-clearance flowchart at the end of Chapter 2 in this book. Each scientist has, in place of the vital specialty Energy Weapons, any Knowledge specialty. Ideally this specialty is related to his discovery. This vital specialty’s rating is the governing skill’s rating plus four.

Each scientist’s service firm is his own lab, which he may name with your approval. Ask the players to describe their labs, with histories and reputations. Encourage rivalries among the labs, because they’ve all been competing hard for The Computer’s research funding.

### Lab minions (‘you incompetent imbeciles!’)

Like all *PARANOIA* player characters, each scientist PC has six skills. In this game, a scientist’s skill ratings measure not only that PC’s individual abilities, but also the number, competence and loyalty of the PC’s trusted assistants—his minions.

An INDIGO Clearance scientist does not go mucking about with minor details of logistics and assembly. Instead, he entrusts these to a few, or many, minions. Some of these are workers in his lab. Some are secret society contacts. Some may be thugs hired out of the corridor.

When he wants to accomplish something, the scientist’s player rolls against his own personal skill and specialty ratings to represent his minions’ performance. Each skill represents a different kind of minion(s):

- ☉ **Management:** Administrators, marketers, con artists, bureaucrats
- ☉ **Stealth:** Spies, forgers, covert operatives skilled in service-firm espionage and skullduggery
- ☉ **Violence:** Thugs, goons, assassins

[continued on page 116]

# R&D scientist motivations

**They called you mad! They called you a hopeless lunatic!**

**For too long you have suffered in silence, but your silent suffering will soon be silent no longer! You will suffer loudly! – Or, that is, you'll stop suffering, and everyone who opposed you, *everyone*—the thieves and betrayers, the skulking cold-smiling mediocrities with their measured words and their ill-smelling talk of 'proper conduct' and their faintly antiseptic saliva—everyone will suffer loudly instead, as you have suffered all too long, except in silence!**

**Anyway. Where were we? Oh yes—they called you mad. They were right.**

## Discovery = Immortality!

—*graffito found on the wreckage of Experiment 3847B*

R&D is filled with crackpots, traitors looking for the easy life and lifetime bureaucrats, but its most dangerous denizens are its dedicated scientists. They realize a simple truth: In Alpha Complex, scientific breakthroughs are a citizen's best shot at immortality. In a world where the official history changes every three minutes or so, names of units of measure must remain consistent to ensure survival. Otherwise reactors go critical, people get run over and ULTRAVIOLETS get 500x the lethal amount of radiation during dental visits.

The names of units and phenomena have survived since Old Reckoning times: joules, roentgens, watts. That, citizen, is immortality!

What are scientists willing to do to leave this legacy? Blackmail, bribe, sabotage, kill and drive themselves (and everyone around them) to the end of their clone line.

The treasonous cycles of a dedicated scientist's life fall into two categories: **Pre-Breakthrough** and **Post-Breakthrough**.

## Pre-Breakthrough

An INDIGO scientist is in charge of a high-tech lab investigating the fringes of scientific knowledge. Dozens of other INDIGO scientists are doing the same thing. Because the honor goes to the first person who discovers it, rivalries are even more intense than on a Troubleshooting team. Any scientist who wants the newest particle discovered in *his* lab must deal with the following:

- Ⓞ **Overdrive:** PLC laborers have nothing on these guys. Lab assistants grind 20-hour days, building and testing prototypes. Outside complaints about worker abuse stop when they meet the head of the lab: a frazzled, jittery man

with bags under his eyes who's been up for four days, scribbling equations all over the walls and surviving solely on BBB. After all, he who finishes first wins, and they aren't going to let a little thing like mortality get in the way.

This explains why R&D equipment is pushed onto the field for testing so fast. Some researchers eschew self-preservation entirely, manning prototypes or injecting themselves with experimental drugs when deadlines and paranoia loom.

- Ⓞ **Theft:** Why spend precious hours gathering experimental data when you can use some other sucker's instead? Scientists must watch out for envious rivals and bitter lab assistants eager for their piece of fame.
- Ⓞ **Sabotage:** An old standby. Sabotage is often a retaliation for theft, inasmuch as only the original designers know the workings well enough to deeply but undetectably screw them up.
- Ⓞ **Assassination:** Some scientists, wary of rivals or underlings stealing ideas, keep everything in their head. MemoMax transfers don't do well transmitting such detailed knowledge, and a well-placed laser could set research back months. Some rivals go for the gusto and try to drive their competitors to early erasure.

## Post-Breakthrough

Once a scientist has discovered a breakthrough, it's on to the hard part: getting it accepted by The Computer and high-clearance authorities.

## Review

Almost every service group gets its mitts on experimental equipment before it goes public. Tech Services and Power Services review it for compatibility, PLC reviews its production, HPD&MC reviews its advertising potential, IntSec reviews it for abuse by traitors.... Rivalries or bureaucracy can bring the product's acceptance to a screeching halt.

Abstract particle theory doesn't do much better; such papers are reviewed by fellow R&D scientists, who not only disagree with the findings but hate the discoverer himself. No wonder so many scientists prefer to work on experimental equipment instead.

Either way, absent lots of bribes and secret society pull, product review and acceptance can easily take five to ten years. Some theories aren't accepted until long after their creators die of old age.

## Credit

Reaching INDIGO Clearance doesn't protect a scientist from attack from above. His VIOLET superior can steal the credit for his discovery, even if the thief couldn't tell a proton from a photon. Careful and patient scientists wait until they have *two* discoveries and bribe their superior, offering him one discovery in exchange for letting them keep the other. Others blackmail their manager, either by gathering incriminating evidence or threatening to give the discovery to a more generous manager.

The unluckiest and most impolitic scientists of all get screwed royally, their lifetime accomplishments stolen, their new unit of measurement unjustly named for a rival or a VIOLET executive. These unlucky ones may go mad with bitterness, and vow revenge on their superiors, R&D, and possibly the entire Complex. In R&D talk, they've 'gone critical'.

That's you.

—Jeff Groves



## CLEARANCE ULTRAVIOLET

[continued from page 114]

- ☉ **Hardware:** Mechanical engineers, bots and bot technicians
- ☉ **Software:** Programmers, hackers, workers skilled in obtaining software
- ☉ **Wetware:** Biochemists, cloning techs, specialists in psychological duress, workers who use a lot of test tubes

The player should roleplay the minion(s) he sends to accomplish a task. Multiple rolls against the same skill can represent using the same minion multiple times, or different minions each time, as the player prefers.

### Choosing a revenge plot

Each player randomly selects one of the other players as the chief betrayer who stole his offended scientist's rightful glory.

Write each PC's name on a separate slip of paper. Remove one character from the stack and let that PC's player choose a name

randomly from the rest. Repeat for all players, making sure no player chooses his own PC. Each scientist should seek revenge on one other PC, and each also should be the object of exactly one PC's remorseless vengeance.

What is each aggrieved victim's motive for revenge? Leave this to the victim's and offender's players to improvise, in the event they roleplay their confrontation. The rule is, whatever one of the two asserts, the other *must* accept as fact. However, he can then embroider on, offer extenuating circumstances for, or point out the other's sadly misguided interpretation of the fact.

### The doomsday device

Each scientist conceives a dramatic and lethal gesture of revenge and, to that end, develops a terrible weapon—a doomsday device—based on the scientific discovery he made for which he was cruelly, callously, *unjustly* denied credit.

To enact his hideous scheme, each scientist must collect certain components, essential requirements for his particular doomsday device. The chart explains the kinds of tasks required to secure the components, and the types of minions a scientist may send to acquire them.

Photocopy the 'Nefarious doomsday device chart' (below) and give out copies to all players. Ensure they understand the chart.

Each player secretly chooses one method from the chart, writes it on a slip of paper and passes it to you.

### The road to apocalypse

Run the game as a series of turns. In each turn, each player may try to acquire one component for his device. Two or more players trying for the same category of component in a turn must contest for ownership of the component.

## Nefarious doomsday device chart

The game proceeds in turns. A turn represents an indefinite interval of a few days to a month. In each turn you try to secure *one* indispensable component for your unspeakable doomsday device. If you fail to secure the component in one turn, you must try again in a later turn.

You need one component from each of three general categories: **logistics** (transport, containment vessels, software, etc), **materiel** (specialized mechanisms, chemicals and tools) and **power** (exotic energy sources). The three components you seek are rare, highly specialized and delicate, and each originates from a single source. Each is vital to your device. When you have all three, then... *then...!*

REVENGE METHOD!	LOGISTICS!	MATERIEL!	POWER!
<b>Android army, unstoppable</b>	Mngmt, Hardware, Software	Stealth, Wetware	Violence
<b>Blob, horrific all-consuming</b>	Hardware	Management, Wetware	Stealth, Violence, Software
<b>Bomb, antimatter</b>	Stealth, Software	Mngmt, Violence, Hardware	Wetware
<b>Death ray, annihilating</b>	Violence, Wetware	Software	Mngmt, Stealth, Hardware
<b>Earthquake machine</b>	Mngmt, Stealth, Wetware	Violence	Hardware, Software
<b>Robot, rampaging giant</b>	Violence	Stealth, Hardware, Software	Management, Wetware

The skills listed under each category represent the **minions** you can send to secure that component. You have six trusted minions or groups of minions, one for each of your six skills (Management, Stealth, Violence, Hardware, Software, Wetware). Each minion specializes in the skill associated with him. Improvise these minions as needed, with the Gamemaster's approval. Roleplay them as the GM requires. The minions have skill ratings equal to your rating in the governing skill.

*Example:* You have a Software skill rating of 7. You have a trusted hacker minion you send on Software-related errands; he has skill ratings of 7, because your Software is 7.

The table lists the type of task required to secure a given component, and the type of minion you can send. For instance, if the table entry says 'Hardware', you must send your most capable bots or hardware technicians to acquire the component. If it lists multiple skills, you can send a minion associated with *any one* of the listed skills. You can never send minions associated with more than one skill at a time.

Work with your GM to improvise the specific component you need, as well as the method of securing it that requires the listed skill.

A player who has successfully acquired one of each type of component—Logistics, Materiel and Power—can then construct his doomsday device. That's assuming his minions haven't screwed up and his rival scientists haven't purloined his stuff.

## Steps of the turn

### 1. Select target component

At the start of each turn, each player chooses the one component he wants to acquire this turn, and decides which minion he will send on this errand. The scientist can either attempt to secure a Logistics, Materiel or Power component using the chart, or can try to steal a component from another player (see 'Stealing components' below).

A scientist who has no minion appropriate to the errand can instead send a Troubleshooter team. See 'Troubleshooter teams' below.

Players decide in order of lowest Brilliance to highest. The least Brilliant scientist commits his minion—publicly, for all players to hear—then the second-least Brilliant, and so on. The most Brilliant scientist chooses last.

### 2. Conflicts?

Don't tell the players this until they've committed to their first-turn choices: If two or more scientists try to secure the same type of component in a turn (Logistics, Materiel or Power), their minions encounter each other at the scene. It turns out they're seeking the same component. They struggle for ownership.

Stage the encounter by having each player roleplay his minion. Set the scene using the players' suggestions. (You can also use the mission blender booklet in the *PARANOIA* Gamemaster's Screen.)

Based on the players' roleplaying and the circumstances, resolve the conflict as a free-for-all contest (see Chapter 21 in the *PARANOIA* rulebook). Each minion rolls against his own rating (the rating of the scientist's associated skill). Whoever wins by the largest margin secures the component. If all minions fail, no one gets the component.

**A minion who fails the contest roll is arrested for treason and is out of the game.** The scientist cannot use the associated skill in any later attempt.

### 3. Resolve other attempts

After resolving the conflicts, resolve the remaining, uncontested minion attempts.

Make a hidden skill roll against the scientist's associated skill rating. For instance, if the minions are Hardware specialists, roll against the PC's Hardware skill rating. Success means the scientist procures the component; a small margin of failure means the scientist must try again on a later turn.

A large margin of failure means the minions bring back the component, but unknown to the scientist, it's defective. The scientist can use it in his doomsday device, but the defect causes the device to malfunction, perhaps catastrophically. See 'Revenge' below.

### 4. Commence revenge?

If any scientist has secured three components—one Logistics, one Materiel and one Power—he can try to activate his doomsday device and wreak havoc on the object of his revenge. See 'Revenge' below.

## Troubleshooters teams

When a minion dies, the scientist cannot use that skill in later attempts to secure any component. A desperate scientist who lacks any appropriate skill to secure a component can instead resort to—oh, no—a Troubleshooter team.

The INDIGO scientist trumps up a plausible traitor-hunting mission that just happens to involve securing the component he needs. He puts the mission in the Troubleshooter Dispatch queue and crosses his fingers.

Time permitting, you may have the players roleplay the Troubleshooter team. Either improvise the PCs on the fly, or use any group of RED Clearance Troubleshooter characters from published missions, such as the handy 'six-shooter' packs of pregenerated characters in the *Crash Priority* supplement.

The player who dispatched the team becomes team leader, working in the certain knowledge that other team members directly oppose the team's success. But really, how does that differ from a standard mission?

If you prefer not to roleplay the team, resolve the attempt as an Arbitrary Justice roll, using the scientist's Brilliance as a target number. Let *everyone* spend Perversity on this roll!

If the team succeeds in the mission, the dispatching scientist gets his component. If not—well, there's always another Troubleshooter team on a later turn....

## Stealing components

A scientist who dares not rely on minions or Troubleshooters can always try theft. The

scientist announces the target player he wants to steal from. For stooges who commit the theft, the thief can send either a Stealth or Violence minion or a Troubleshooter team. The target can defend against the attempted theft with any minion (except a minion already committed elsewhere this turn) or even himself, armed with all the weaponry an INDIGO R&D scientist can bring to bear.

Stage the theft attempt as a contest between thief and target, in the same way as other contests (see '2. Conflicts?' under 'Steps of the turn' above). If the thief's minion fails the roll, not only is the minion lost, but the thieving scientist is convicted of treason and brainscrubbed. Colleagues regard the target with newfound interest. **The thieving scientist loses one point of Brilliance and the target gains one point of Brilliance.** If the target INDIGO defends himself personally and loses, he marks off a clone number but is otherwise unaffected.

## Revenge

A scientist who procures all three components can try on the same turn to activate his device. Encourage the player to describe this theatrically, with cackling and Tesla coils.

Then make a hidden 1d20 roll. If the PC's minions had previously brought him defective parts, ignore the roll and describe the device's embarrassing failure. (See '3. Resolve other attempts' under 'Steps of the turn' above.) The scientist can analyze the problem, secure a replacement next turn, and try again.

If no components are defective, compare the 1d20 roll to the scientist's Importance. If the roll is higher than Importance, the device looks impressive but needs tuning or tinkering, and the scientist must try again next turn.

A result less than or equal to Importance means the device performs effectively for the rest of the game. The player names a target, presumably the hated rival who stole his rightful glory. If the target has no doomsday device ready, he perishes ignominiously.

If the target's doomsday device is already active, there is a titanic battle among all working devices. Stage this as a free-for-all using rolls against the devices' Importance. The worst-performing device in the battle is destroyed, and its scientist with it.

The first scientist to successfully execute his revenge wins the game. Assuming no one has blown up the Earth, you may wish to continue playing until everyone has achieved revenge or failed.

# EXTREME VIOLET

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**Salary:** 600,000 cr/month

**Food:** Huge Hollywood-scale dinner parties catered by a GREEN master chef. (You fought hard to get your chef, and you constantly fend off marauding rivals who want to spirit him away.)

**Housing:** A subsector or more.

**Transport:** Many autocars, truckbots, private flybots and maybe a sub; full motorcade with IntSec escort.

**Staff:** Full human staff. (Bots are so working-class.) You hardly ever encounter anyone YELLOW or lower.

**Authority:** May promote to and demote from INDIGO or lower. May order summary executions and erasure of clone templates.

**Perks:** You see this sector? It's yours. You don't go to managers; they come to you. You can freely say almost anything short of outright Commie propaganda. 'Internal Security? Oh, you mean my staff police.'

**Demographic:** At most one-tenth of 1% of the population, probably much less; no more than a dozen in even a large sector.

## Typical VIOLET jobs

CEOs, generals, majordomo to a UV's estate, supervisors of a UV's operations; IntSec chief supervisor; Free Enterprise society capos, Machine Empaths.



## Are we there yet?

After a lifetime or four of climbing the ladder, the life of a VIOLET is very much like the life of an INFRARED. The VIOLET Clearance citizen lives in a world of ease where he need desire nothing. Everything is provided: safety, lodging, entertainment, everything, all guaranteed.

VIOLET citizens are like INFRAREDs in another way: Both are obsessed with ways to game the system—for INFRAREDs, the enormous volumes of precedent and rules they don't have access to; for VIOLETs, the whims and ideas of the ULTRAVIOLETs, which, as you may guess, they don't have access to. Nobody but ULTRAVIOLETs know how you become an ULTRAVIOLET, and typically once someone becomes one, that avenue is immediately closed off.

Hence VIOLETs are the most neurotically random and unpredictably pressured citizens in Alpha Complex. Their every waking moment is devoted to trying to figure out what is the secret, the key, the magic trick that gets them into that final, topmost tier. Like a caterpillar devouring a leaf to fuel its self-spun chrysalis, they will utterly consume all resources required to get them over that last hurdle.

There is, however, one major difference between the life of a VIOLET and the life of an INFRARED. When you're an INFRARED, nobody wants to be where you are. When you're a VIOLET, everybody does, and the only way to do it is by filling your boots. As a result, VIOLET citizens tend to either give up ambition and find a safe niche well protected by an ULTRAVIOLET patron, find the elusive secret to getting promoted or burn out and get clawed back down by the waiting throngs of INDIGOs.

For your players, put on the pressure from the INDIGO citizens. Remember that INDIGOs have seen it all and done most of it, and have access to nearly as many resources as VIOLET citizens themselves. Then add in the paranoia of other VIOLETs. Nobody wants to share information in case that last bit might be the missing link to make the final leap to ULTRAVIOLET. At the same time, they all spy on each other to see if they can get a leg up. VIOLETs who don't seem to be doing much probably get the most scrutiny of all, and we're talking about people who can mobilize entire sectors and secret societies.

Hey, at least it keeps everybody busy.

Refresh

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CLEARANCE GREEN CLEARANCE GREEN CLEARANCE GREEN CLEARANCE GREEN

## Dossier: Marisol-V-FRL-7



### VIOLET Clearance

Reference #: 437-84-783-239

[Last Update: 214.04.20 11:30]

Name: Marisol-V-FRL-7

Decantationdate: 163.04.30

Service group: Power Services

Service firm: GoodFusion

Occupation: Chief Executive Officer

Last known location: GLD Sector,

Subsector 00A, Room 07-a

Height: 175.2 cm

Weight: 70 kg

### ACTIVITIES & AFFILIATIONS

**Activities:** Overtime work: at service firm, at service group; off-the-record negotiation with other high-clearance citizens; visiting scenic Power Services facilities; day trading; reading

**Affiliations:** GoodFusion (CEO), Power Services Group (COO); Power & Traffic Networking Group; extensive service firm portfolio (see records)  
Network of conspirators — see file 7843-8754-8178-5454  
IntSec infiltrated! do not distribute

### TREASONS & COMMENDATIONS

**Treasons:** None listed for current clone (see records); purged by order of IntSecCom — msg. me for details

**Commendations:** See attached file: Commendations -> Marisol-V-FRL-7

### GENETIC PROFILE & CREDIT RATING

**Genetic Profile:** Class 40X/91r4; no anomalies found. 45% chance Machine Empathy!!! 98%+ Hypersenses — prob. also Bureaucratic Intuition or Deep Thought

**Credit Rating:** 24-VIOLET (388,463cr); over 30 mil in gray accounts, plasticred

### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

No known secret society membership. Contacts in FCCC-P, Free Enterprise. (see records)

Known member of FCCC-P, Free Enterprise. 85% chance Psion. Possibly Illuminati? — contact Brother 4 in TreasEst. Intermittent cessation of hormone suppressants — maritally linked with Jordan-V-FHI-12. Four-month deletion of records in year 202 suggests impregnation, biological offspring.

### ANALYSIS

**Primary drive:** compulsive work ethic. **Secondary drive:** Loyalty to The Computer and Alpha Complex.

**Primary drive:** sadism!! **Secondary drive:** cover own ass — see sealed records for nuclear facility RON-372/B.

### RECOMMENDATIONS & COMMENTS

**Threat level:** none. Take no action.

**Comments:** [[ EXTREMELY DANGEROUS!! Pass word to Sister 26 in Gray Ops — initiate protocol CHAIN-7 ]]



### Troubleshooters: Personal assistants to a High Programmer

Security Clearance VIOLET—the big time. Top of the heap, top of the food chain... almost. At this rarified height, rewards are immense, dangers equally so. VIOLETs live in the shadow of the ULTRAVIOLET High Programmers, and the rare Troubleshooter who survives to reach this level is their greatest threat. After all, no other route to power is as fast, ruthless and, above all, dangerous. Anyone still alive with a viable clone template has to be considered one of the most clever, devious, cutthroat and deadly people alive. Either that, or preposterously lucky. Whichever it may be, such Troubleshooters are High Programmers waiting to happen, and ULTRAVIOLETs don't like to share. So what is in store for these walking targets?

As the saying goes, keep your friends close, and your enemies closer. UVs often draft VIOLET Clearance Troubleshooters as their personal assistants – sometimes singly, more often as a team. Teams, stymied by infighting, tend to keep any one VIOLET from mounting a serious bid for the High Programmer's job. In the best case, the UV can use the Troubleshooters to take out some of his rivals, get them promoted in place of the fallen foes, and have new allies who owe him a favor.

Of course, High Programmers didn't reach their positions by being fools. If all they wanted was to prevent competition from rising from below, there's 42,376 ways to eliminate the threat before it even gets close. (The full list appears in Mervin-U-GTN-11's bestselling management handbook *Keeping the Bastards Down*, 54th edition). A VIOLET Clearance Troubleshooter has power and authority second only to the High Programmers themselves, and as such make an extremely useful, if dangerous, tool. Personal assistants are the ULTRAVIOLET's right hand (or hands – some High Programmers have such well-worn clone templates, you never know). The UV tasks them with all his highest-level plots, plans, and goals. They are his spymasters, gophers, assassins and eventually his patsies, but never his bodyguards. No High Programmer is that crazy.

#### Bennies

- ④ VIOLET personal assistants enjoy comforts above even other VIOLET citizens. They have access to many of the High Programmer's resources (although the UV carefully monitors them); they speak with his authority (or at least the listeners assume so); and in their official capacity Troubleshooters have license to investigate the underlings, and by association the plans, of their peers. Still, if they try it, call for a few Chutzpah rolls.
- ④ The Computer grants personal assistants a certain leniency not even other VIOLETs enjoy. If the assistant is carrying out official Troubleshooter business, The Computer overlooks or gently corrects actions that would usually draw probation or worse. Even in serious circumstances, the ULTRAVIOLET may step in and dismiss any charges brought against his assistants. They may be dangerous tools, but they are still useful, and High Programmers won't let others take them away.

- ④ VIOLET Troubleshooters have their own staff, INDIGO Clearance and down, and these staffers have staffers of their own. Troubleshooters become well versed in the puppetmastery required to advance.

- ④ Finally, being a personal assistant puts you close to your target. Despite the constant scrutiny, the danger of betrayal, the zealous and competitive peers, and the omnipresent possibility of being squashed like a bug, a personal assistant has access to the UV himself that maybe, just maybe, will provide one good opportunity... or one clear shot.

#### Slaps

- ④ The life of a VIOLET personal assistant is a merry-go-round with a broken throttle: fast, stomach-churning and dangerous, but with the brass ring ever present. Of course, reaching for that same brass ring are your fellow VIOLET personal assistants. An assistant's life is like those competitive reality TV shows: you're on a team, but you're also each trying to win the big prize, and that means accomplishing the team's goals while simultaneously picking your teammates off one by one. But in this case the losers don't get a lucrative run on the talk-show circuit.

- ④ Life at the top means being a clear target for the ambitious. Beneath each VIOLET Troubleshooter are all the teeming masses, INDIGO Troubleshooters especially, gunning for his job.

- ④ Being a rook or queen in the High Programmer's chess game is well and good, most of the time: you're powerful, feared, and even protected. Protected, that is, until the High Programmer decides to sacrifice you to achieve some larger goal. Or because he's bored. Or he doesn't like your haircut.

- ④ Security clearance VIOLET is a glass ceiling. Everyone wants to reach it, but nobody knows how to advance from it. 'Making room at the top' seems an obvious method, but works like fighting a tank with a toothpick. So the VIOLET Troubleshooter climbs this high, then stalls within sight of the goal. With his nose constantly rubbed in his superior's lifestyle, he may become prone to obsessive envy.

- ④ Got a plan to get rid of your master and supplant him? You've worked it out in minute detail, covered all your bases, set everything up? Whoa, who would have guessed your UV master knew all along? This is the ultimate pain of personal assistance: Your master is your enemy, and he is one of the most devious, cunning and (in all likelihood) sadistic people in Alpha Complex. Enjoy your brainscrub.

—Joshua Moretto



## VIOLET variety

What do you give the citizen who has everything? That's a good question, because unfortunately the one thing you still want, you can't have yet. However, if you can find some balance in your life, the perks at the top are mighty fine. Enjoy 'em while they last.

### Drugs and recreation

#### ■ **Ouija Board: 250cr** *(ILLEGAL! Medication if caught)*

This mysterious device of the Old Reckoning allows one to contact and receive advice from those who have been terminated!

#### ■ **Service group show** *VIP invitation: 500 – 2,500cr*

Why settle for sporting events and concerts when you can attend an Armed Forces war-games demonstration, an R&D tech festival or Internal Security interrogation marathon? See all the top service firms compete to show their very best work!

#### ■ **Club Sunn vacation: 5,000cr per day**

When it's time to really get away from it all, take a relaxing trip to this resort community on the far edge of the complex, where the very best of the Outdoors is perfectly simulated indoors! Walk among actual trees, see real animals and even feel real sunlight coming through the protective glass. Top psychotherapists available immediately after any upsetting animal encounter.

### Hygiene and maintenance

#### ■ **ToppDogg pherofluid: 225cr**

Even though most citizens are chemically subdued, they'll still subconsciously respond to the oxytocin hormone and pheromones in this handy spray. It's like having the Charm mutation without all that icky mutation!

#### ■ **Universal Access Tool: 3,500cr**

The micro-assemblers inside can analyze any situation and project the correct tool from within the unit: wrenches, screwdrivers, power drills, keys—you name it! Always have the right solution at hand.

### Clothing and accessories

#### ■ **Megashades: 750cr**

The ultimate in eyewear, these designer sunglasses can stream up to 64 simultaneous sources of information directly into your peripheral vision at all times. Keep tabs on security cameras, market data, sporting events, sector news and more, while looking your stylish best!

#### ■ **AnyWear: 8,000cr**

The ultimate executive uniform: a single suit that can modify itself into dozens of different forms, from industrial work jumper to sleek formal event wear. It can even change security clearance color for those 'incognito' times.

### Survival and technology

#### ■ **Terrain maps: 250cr per square km** *(ILLEGAL! Censure if caught)*

The Outdoors is big, but all of it within reasonable reach of Alpha Complex has been mapped within the last 20 years or so. Some maps even include indications of surviving Old Reckoning structures, known secret society enclaves and other 'features of interest'.

#### ■ **Genetic tester: 6,000cr**

Though no known test is 100% reliable in detecting mutations, this mobile cart is able to identify more than 300 different genetic markers that have been linked to higher-than-normal mutation rates.

#### ■ **Tracking dust: 15,000cr per tracer;** **40,000cr for tracker**

Just toss one of these tiny grain-sized bots onto your employee's uniform, where it will record video of their surroundings for up to 16 hours before expiring. The tracker uploads the recordings remotely, as well as telling you exactly where all your tracers are in the complex.

#### ■ **Refurbished reactor: 30,000 – 60,000cr**

Because your growing service firm has growing power needs. Be sure to buy plenty of 'optional' warranty coverage as well!

### Services

#### ■ **Internal Security raid: 10,000 – 50,000cr**

You can worry about what the charges are later. For now, just get your opponents safely restrained and unconscious!



## Executives

by Dan Curtis Johnson

When the RED asks, 'How can I advance?' I tell them, 'You must find out what everyone else is hiding.'

When the ORANGE asks, 'How can I advance?' I tell them, 'You must prevent everyone else from finding out what you are hiding.'

When the YELLOW asks, 'How can I advance?' I tell them, 'You must make others say YES when they meant to say NO.'

When the GREEN asks, 'How can I advance?' I tell them, 'You must learn to make NO sound like you are saying YES.'

When the BLUE asks, 'How can I advance?' I tell them, 'You must make it clear that you are able to handle all the power you can get.'

When the INDIGO asks, 'How can I advance?' I tell them, 'You must make it clear that you have less power than everyone thinks.'

But when the VIOLET asks, 'How can I advance?' I tell them, 'Buddy, if I knew the answer to that question, would I be sitting here, talking to you?' Then I shoot them through the head, because frankly, they're better off that way and I don't need the competition.

—excerpt from the treasonous Mystic document *Zen and the Art of Transbot Decoration* (author identity classified ULTRAVIOLET)

- ☉ Making greenlight and cancellation decisions about HPD&MC vid entertainment and choosing media campaign 'look-and-feel'
- ☉ Securing enormously lucrative Power or Technical Services contracts to entire sectors at a time

Unfortunately, being in charge of daily life in Alpha Complex means there are no small problems. Everything is a potential crisis of epic proportion. Every decision you make has ramifications for hundreds, even thousands of other citizens. The financial cost of a wrong choice can be enormous. And the price of failure is almost always termination... or worse.

So you, as a VIOLET, have two choices: Find a niche where you are shielded from the bad decisions you inevitably sometimes make, or escape entirely by breaking into Alpha Complex's equivalent of university tenure, the ULTRAVIOLET ranks of the High Programmers. These two career paths are colloquially known as 'cruising' and 'crashing'.

Either way, the key to success is *delegation*.

### It's all fun and games...

A lot of people think ULTRAVIOLETs run Alpha Complex. Those people—by and large, either low-clearance citizens or ULTRAVIOLETs—are basically wrong. The High Programmers don't run Alpha Complex; they're too busy running The Computer.

No, the day-to-day success (if that's the word we want) of Alpha Complex relies on the VIOLET 'executive' citizens, that one-tenth of one percent who have somehow threaded the convoluted gauntlet of **PARANOIA** life only to find themselves—many clones later—in charge of the monolithic institutions that the other 99.9% feel like they're being ground up in. They are the military generals, the chief service firm officers and board members, the superstar media producers and the top policymakers for every aspect of life. Depending on his service firm, a VIOLET citizen's daily routine may include tasks like these:

- ☉ Ordering Armed Forces into military action against enemy complexes, internal rebellions and other foes both real and... 'potential'
- ☉ Acting as judge in major Internal Security interrogations and setting complex-wide security strategies based on classified intelligence
- ☉ Commissioning new programs for cutting-edge research and reviewing bids from competing R&D subcontractors
- ☉ Setting high-level goals for efficiency, to be implemented by the lower-rank CPU bureaucracy, and analyzing the results
- ☉ Identifying exploitable new markets that need products and assigning PLC design teams to create those products

### VIOLET secret society life

VIOLETs and ULTRAVIOLETs are too valuable to their societies to risk on minor missions. VIOLETs gather information and subtly influence policy in favor of the society. An ULTRAVIOLET sponsor for a society is a huge advantage, so the VIOLETs are coddled and protected in hopes they'll advance.

This is often where it all goes horribly, horribly wrong; formerly loyal and motivated society members get lazy and corrupt during their VIOLET prince-in-waiting time. Fighting for International Communism/Mutant Superiority/The Overthrow of The Computer—whatever cause that was so important when a citizen was sitting in a dank INFRARED barracks whispering to other conspirators—now seems so dull and so hard when lying on a real leather sofa in a luxurious VIOLET mansion being fed real grapes by a host of nubile and hormonally-suppressed BLUE servants. These VIOLETs cause a great deal of headaches for their societies, but the potential reward of an ULTRAVIOLET ally makes the society endure the pain and the tantrums and the unreasonable requests. INDIGO members must deal with most of the VIOLETs' requests, although sometimes an ULTRAVIOLET may feel moved to discipline a troublesome VIOLET.

Some VIOLETs spend more time manipulating their society than serving it. VIOLET Romantics are the ones with the huge collection of ancient artifacts; VIOLET Mystics are so far out there they can see a whole new color spectrum. Even idealistic societies like the Humanists can be wracked with corruption at higher clearances. (Of course, higher clearance does not necessarily mean higher society degree, but the chances of a VIOLET not being promoted into the higher degrees are vanishingly small, just like the lifespan of a lower-clearance citizen who says 'no' to a VIOLET.)

—Gareth Hanrahan

## Almost like doing it yourself

Delegation is that magical tool that allows you to be seen as having gotten a great many things done, without having actually done them yourself. In that beautiful mechanism the hardest thing you need do, personally, is figure out what needs to be done. Some citizens might say this is a terrible spot, because it makes one responsible for failure solely because underlings were incompetent or careless. But the enlightened student of the Greatest Art (career advancement) recognizes this attitude's error. This incorrect thinking is typical among citizens who are bad at casting blame upon the underlings who are to slow or stupid to avoid taking the fall.

In other words: To succeed, a VIOLET must grab all the credit and shed all the fault.

For the 'cruiser', delegation lets you deal with crises in the vaguest terms possible, leaving the hard work of implementation to underlings. If things work out, your vague directions look like masterful high-level planning; if they don't, well, it's a shame your staff was unable to rise to the challenge and needs to be 'turned over'. It's rare that a VIOLET executive who is trying to 'cruise' will personally roll up his sleeves and directly solve a problem. No, the VIOLET way of 'solving' a problem is to assign their BLUE and INDIGO staff to it and wait for word it has, in fact, been dealt with. The executive himself remains removed from the problem, and can pursue what really matters: completing his collection of rare Old Reckoning postcards.

For the 'crasher', on the other hand, delegation means not having to spend brainpower and energy on anything but finding the way to ULTRAVIOLET. This quest is a full-time job.

Lower security clearances have well-established regulations regarding advancement.

When you're a RED Troubleshooter, a lot of paths lead to ORANGE, and if you stay on your toes, you'll probably manage promotion with only one or two lost clones.

But there is no known protocol for becoming an ULTRAVIOLET High Programmer. In fact, nobody but the High Programmers themselves know the criteria for joining their elite class. Newly-promoted High Programmers never tell their former peers how they did it. It is perhaps unsurprising that, in a setting ruled by control of information, the most classified info of all is the key to the greatest power. Among all the secret societies that lurk in the corridors of Alpha Complex, the most powerful—and most secret!—are the High Programmers themselves.

But crashers didn't scratch their way to the almost-top so they could reflect on irony. They're there to win, and they'll do whatever it takes. Policy decisions about the lives of thousands of lesser citizens are a distraction; a crasher needs all his time for seeking out patrons and sponsors among the High Programmers, throwing lavish events to impress them, searching through ancient archives for hints of past ascensions and performing any random errand that might, somehow, curry the favor of the True Élite.

Both types of executive need the right people working for them. 'Right', in this case, often means people with skills appropriate for the tasks. It can also mean people who will take the fall for you. Unfortunately, in both cases these are INDIGOs.

Though there are still a few naïve fools among the BLUE ranks who can be easily motivated and safely discarded later, few genuine idiots make it to INDIGO, and absolutely *every one of them* is jockeying for VIOLET. There are only so many VIOLET positions, and a large reservoir of INDIGO citizens who have what it

takes to advance. If we may be permitted to take an analogy way too far: Every VIOLET citizen is a swimmer surrounded by a sea of circling INDIGO sharks. The moment the swimmer slips, they will pull him down and tear him apart. Crashers seek to escape this fate by getting out of the water; cruisers simply try to surf above the snapping jaws.

But there are worse things than INDIGOs to worry about. There are the ULTRAVIOLETs.

## Several hundred really bad parents

Cruisers try to avoid High Programmers, because they don't want more demands made on them. Crashers get as close as they can, because being known among the program groups is the only way to be nominated for promotion. They think. Maybe.

Of course, neither group gets what it wants. The High Programmers are constantly sticking their noses into VIOLET business when they're least wanted, but then they vanish when they might actually be some help.

'Sticking their nose in VIOLET business' means 'injecting their random and unpredictable ideas into situations that were already unstable, bordering on explosive'. Your sector's reactor is two years beyond its scheduled retirement date and technicians are warning you 'she's gonna overload and melt real soon'? That's about the time an ULTRAVIOLET wants to hold a 'World of Atomic Light' parade that will add 400 gigawatts to your grid load. Some mutant monstrosity busted out of your research center and is roaming the halls eating hapless citizens? An ULTRAVIOLET wants it as a pet. Fungal bloom has destroyed 80% of your current vat harvest and the stockpiles of surplus food are rapidly dwindling? That's when the ULTRAVIOLETs decide the whole

**Former Enron CEO Jeffrey Skilling appeared before Congress. Do you think they even bothered swearing him in? Now he is denying he lied to Congress last week. He's saying it was just the liquor talking.**

**Skilling married one of the Enron secretaries this week. It's amazing how romantic these Enron guys can be when they realize that wives can't be forced to testify against their husbands. Skilling said today she was the best secretary Enron had ever had. She could shred 950 words a minute. I guess they are on their honeymoon right now. That's going pretty well. Hey, he's used to screwing Enron employees.**

—Jay Leno, *The Tonight Show*



sector should have a Feast Day. While you're trying to get your staff to prevent yet another crisis, they're ringing you up with whatever whim popped into their head that day:

- ☉ 'I hear Communist subversion is up to one citizen in three in DHG Sector. Round up 90 DHG citizens and an interrogation team. I bet Clyde-U it's more like one in five.'
- ☉ 'We should recycle everything. I want to live in a house made out of discarded food wrappers. Build me one.'
- ☉ 'Wouldn't it be exciting to crash a Vulture Fighter? I mean, ride it all the way into the ground without ejecting! Wow! C'mon, let's go try it.'
- ☉ 'I know you're secretly a robot. Show me your robot brain. I know you can open up your head at will. Do it. Show me your brain, robot!'
- ☉ 'I've decided to get the band back together. We're going to tour and make it really *big* this time. We need a manager and booking agent. Huh? No, you're going to drive our transbot.'

We're not afraid to admit it, okay? ULTRAVIOLETs are crazy.

By the time you've made VIOLET Clearance, you know for a fact what many at lower clearances only suspect: High Programmers

are random, arbitrary and fickle. Some of them occasionally get so hopped on drug cocktails they no longer have any sense of consequence, understanding of cause and effect, or mental activity beyond simple reptile-brain impulses. And let's face it—insanity is contagious, and the single entity High Programmers have the most contact with is The Computer.

It is an understood and accepted fact of VIOLET life that High Programmers are clinically insane. There is nothing to be done; all you can do is cope while trying not to go mad yourself. (Unless... could going mad be the key to promotion? Hey, maybe it's worth a try!)

## Six executives walk into a bar

What is this executive life like at a practical (i.e., you-and-your-players-getting-together) level?

Typically, VIOLET executives come together only to handle problems that require a **Cross-Functional Cabinet (CFC)**—that is, firms from more than one service group working together. In theory, CFCs should be rare. In practice—High Programmers and The Computer being what they are—almost anything can prompt a CFC. In theory, problems should be clear-cut, with an objective solution; in practice, they are vague, poorly defined, imponderable and often well below the level that should require VIOLET attention:

- ☉ 'Self-terminations are rising. How can we reverse this trend?'
- ☉ 'Autocar parts are disappearing in record numbers. What are they being used for?'
- ☉ 'What caused the explosion that destroyed Chapstick Factory A440?'
- ☉ 'We need a new kind of bot. What should it do?'
- ☉ 'How can the process for requesting medical aid be streamlined?'
- ☉ 'There are too few uses for thumbtacks. Expand the approved list.'

A VIOLET executive's instinctive response to a CFC problem is shaped by his service firm's core competence and resources. A PLC executive wants things handled very differently from an Internal Security exec. When all you have is a complex-wide network of 400 million hammers, every problem looks like a nail.

You see where we're going with this: The VIOLET player group forms a CFC to resolve a problem you throw at them. The game plays something like a Troubleshooter mission with about five zeroes on the end.

## Forming the Cross-Functional Cabinet

Each player in the CFC game plays not only an individual VIOLET character but also an entire service firm, of which the VIOLET is the chief executive, silent partner or power behind the throne. More than personal attributes or gear, what matters for a VIOLET character is his service firm.

Start the game by having the players create their characters and service firms. These firms will form the CFC that deals with a particular problem. *Don't* reveal the topic of the CFC to the executives until after they have created their firms!

The service firm has a name, a **Mission Statement** and **Firm Assets**.

### The Mission Statement

The best Mission Statements sound like you're devoted to something everyone agrees is good, in some unique way, without committing you to specific requirements or objectives. For example, the PLC service firm Archive Sentinels might have the Mission Statement, 'To insure safe and secure storage of precious

**No job in my experience with Goodyear has been as frustrating as the CEO job. Because even though the perception is that you have absolute power to do what you want, the reality is that you don't have that power. If you really had a free hand, if you really did what you wanted to do that suited your personal thoughts and your personal priorities, you'd act differently. But as a CEO you cannot do that.**

**—Sam Gibara, former CEO and Chairman, Goodyear Tire and Rubber Co.**

record resources through education and infrastructure improvement.

## ■ Firm Assets

Each executive's firm needs assets. Unfortunately, budget limitations being what they are, every service firm has its soft spots. From each executive, you should get a list of *five* Firm Assets (FA) he wants for his service firm. Each FA must be one word. Assets do not have to be physical; they can be adjectives or descriptors. For example:

- ☉ Bots
- ☉ Efficient
- ☉ Cash
- ☉ Feared
- ☉ Advertising

Write each FA on a separate piece of paper. For each player's firm, pick *two* of the items from that set (randomly or deliberately, as you like) and give them back to the player. These are assets he already has. Take *one* remaining FA, draw a line through it, and give it back to him as well. He has failed to maintain this asset; it is his weakness. Pick *one* of the two left and give it to another player; that executive's firm has this FA instead.

Each player should lose one asset and gain one asset this way. When you're all done, everyone has three assets in hand and one weakness. All assets are face-up.

(You might consider an interesting variant where players keep their weaknesses hidden initially, forcing them to discover or expose each others' flaws before they can be exploited.)

Put the last asset from each player on the table, face up where everyone can see them. These 'up for grabs' assets are available to service firms that are active, aggressive and effective during the CFC.

(Alternately, write down all the assets yourself—five for each player you have. Shuffle them all face-down on the table. Have each player draw three at random for themselves, plus one weakness, and turn the rest face-up as the available pile.)

## ■ We call it Alpha 'Complex' for a reason

Now inform the executives of the problem handed to their CFC, and turn them loose to solve it. The Cabinet does not end until one of

the participating service firm executives can *actively* (not just theoretically) demonstrate a solution to the posed problem that fits his Mission Statement.

As you might guess, CFCs can drag on for quite some time.

## ■ The flow of play

In general, the more abstract you keep things, the better they flow. Try to handle game progress in terms of days, not hours or (heaven help you) combat rounds.

Discourage the players from trying to do everything directly and in detail. Instead of going out into a hallway with gun in hand, a VIOLET executive calls up a squad of BLUE Troopers and orders them to secure the hallway—or, better yet, the entire subsector.

### Personal skills as firm skills

Treat the executive's own skill ratings as analogues of the 'skills' of his entire service firm. When he wants his firm to accomplish something, he rolls against his own personal skill and specialty ratings to represent his firm's performance. Determine the skill along these lines:

- ☉ **Management:** the size and loyalty of the firm's senior staff (GREEN and up), and how likely they are to correctly follow orders.
- ☉ **Stealth:** the firm's skill at hiding evidence of its activities, as well as its skill at gathering intelligence about others.
- ☉ **Violence:** the firm's effectiveness at executing physical tasks, whether actual violence or simple harvesting of vat product.
- ☉ **Hardware:** how much physical gear the firm has on hand, and the relative quality of that equipment.
- ☉ **Software:** the firm's connection to databases, communication networks and other digital resources.
- ☉ **Wetware:** how numerous, and how competent, the firm's lower-clearance (YELLOW and below) employees are.

Thus, the players still roll against their skills, even though most of the actual work is being done by their underlings. They can even use their specialties, if the orders they give relate to that specialty.

Players still have and use Perversity; think of this, in a way, as their firms' emergency slush-fund budgets.

### What can executives do?

Almost anything! As the Gamemaster, your improvisation skills will be seriously tested, because VIOLET executives can order anything from the commissioning of a new R&D device to a cluster-bomb airstrike to the filming of a blockbuster vidmovie. They might try assassination, propaganda, hacking, creation of bizarre technology, bribery of each others' minions... just about anything goes.

But maintain these two stringent limitations at all times:

**First**, if the PCs try to drag The Computer into the situation at any point before they are ready to declare the end of the Cabinet (i.e., victory), it will not be amused. Warn the players in advance: The executives are there to solve The Computer's problems, not vice versa. VIOLET citizens who whine to The Computer get corrected even faster than RED Troubleshooters who do the same thing. Friend Computer expects such behavior from the rank and file; VIOLETs should know better by now.

**Second**, if they try to drag High Programmers into the situation at any point, the ULTRAVIOLETs are *all too happy* to get involved. But this invariably causes more trouble than it solves. For each bit of 'help' that the High Programmers provide, they'll make at least two new demands—probably mutually exclusive ones—and the Cabinet's problem becomes that much trickier to solve.

### Using Firm Assets

When an executive orders something done and the roll fails, he can try to change the failure to success by expending a Firm Asset.

The player must offer you a reasonable justification for how that FA comes into play and makes him more likely to have succeeded. For example, an executive who has 'bots' as an FA might send an army of bots along with his underlings on an assassination mission.

If his use of the asset is reasonable, then he tears up that FA—it is no longer available to him—and re-rolls the failed test. If this re-roll succeeds, he not only has his order carried out successfully, but he can pick one of the available (unclaimed) assets face-up on the table. The player then jots down some new one-word FA on a slip of paper and puts it face-up in the available pile as a replacement. If he fails the re-roll, the order still fails and he does *not* replace the lost asset.



## CLEARANCE ULTRAVIOLET

Likewise, a player can expend an FA to attempt to make another executive's successful roll fail. This works the same way—the 'blocking' player needs a reasonable justification for why his firm's asset interferes. If you find this explanation compelling, the player tears up that FA and his opponent must re-roll the test. However, the blocking player does not get to replace the expended asset; if the player being 'blocked' still succeeds on the re-roll, *he's* the one who gets to pick yet another asset from the available pile, replacing it with a newly written one. And if he fails the re-roll, nobody takes an asset from the available pile. The player who used his asset to block does not get to replace it.

Alternately, an executive can try to make someone else's successful roll fail by exploiting their weakness, the asset with a line through it. The basic mechanic is the same: The 'blocking' player must provide a reason why his opponent's weakness has tripped him up. The opponent must re-roll the test. If it fails, the order fails. However, if it still succeeds, his service firm has overcome this weakness. The player tears it up. He then picks one of the available assets on the table to become a

new weakness—whichever one he wants. The player puts a line through the asset and makes it his weakness, and writes a new asset word to add to the 'up for grabs' pile.

No executive can exploit a specific weakness of another firm more than once, but when a firm's weakness changes, it becomes fair game again.

**Getting more Assets:** An executive can attempt to add a new FA to his firm if the firm succeeds at three different tasks (i.e. skill rolls) that are all in some way related, in your judgment, to one of the available Firm Assets on the table. The successful rolls do not have to be in a row. After three such successes, the player takes that FA for his firm and replaces it with a new one as usual.

...until someone puts out an eye!

Eventually (maybe), circumstances are such that one of the executives can actually claim, somehow, his Mission Statement has solved to

the problem. Here at Famous Game Designer Central, we held something of a CFC ourselves to determine the best, most correct word for this circumstance. After many days of lively debate, inarticulate cursing and the occasional outbreak of gunfire, we settled on the word 'victory'.

For the victor, the end of the CFC brings him what he wants. For cruisers, this may be an extended period of peace and relative calm, free from serious obligations, in which they can pursue hobbies and indulge senses. For crashers, this might well be the catapult that launches them into the Biggest League. It will certainly bring them to the attention of the High Programmers... though the attention span of an ULTRAVIOLET can probably be used as a unit for measuring atomic spin.

The other members of the Cabinet face a range of unpleasant outcomes, depending on how bitter the competition. Demotion and replacement by an INDIGO—termination—even erasure is not uncommon. But, as often as not, the hapless VIOLET executives are simply thrown into the next problem, convened in yet another trivial CFC, while the real problems of Alpha Complex pile up untended.

**The first quarter results are in and they are not inspiring. We neither met The Street's expectations nor those of our own Board. Quarter-over-quarter profits were down. The share price had already dropped based on a pre-announcement warning to analysts. Our conference call with these same analysts confirmed the bad news.**

**Following the call, other senior managers and I were called into the office of our CEO [...] He wanted an audit of a plant expansion project that had run into delays and cost overruns. He wanted to understand why, if we were sold out, we were still making deals in the market. And why we were not passing along to our customers the freight surcharges being imposed on us by our carriers. Mostly, he wanted to know why our forecast was wrong. All in all, a pack for every back.**

**I looked at our manufacturing VP. He is a likeable fellow, slim, slightly balding, a pocket protector stuffed with colored pens always at the ready. He looked back at me with a shrug. Like me, he could smell a witch hunt brewing. [...]**

**For some reason, the story of Boethius, a Roman statesman and philosopher, popped into my head. Boethius enjoyed the confidence of the king and, as a patrician of Rome, was looked up to by the Roman nobility. When, however, his enemies accused him of disloyalty and sacrilege, neither his noble birth nor his great popularity served him. He was cast into prison, condemned unheard, and executed. During his imprisonment, he reflected on the unreliable favor of princes and devotion of friends. He wrote these memorable words, 'Whom prosperity maketh our friend, adversity will make our enemy'.**

—'Anger Has No Eyes', [bigpicturesmalloffice.com](http://bigpicturesmalloffice.com) (April 24, 2005)

## VIOLETS: A High Programmer's view

*As part of a panel of ULTRAVIOLETS preparing a report for The Computer on the intricate and wide-ranging Toothpaste Disaster (an online Lexicon game run in Spring 2004, [paranoia.allenvarney.com](http://paranoia.allenvarney.com)), High Programmer Jan-U-ARY-31 (a.k.a Eric Minton) wrote this entry:*

Ah, yes. VIOLET executives. They are, in their way, all things to all clones. The INFRARED worker will be lucky to encounter one in her lifetime; they see the VIOLETS as mysterious elder presences, as oligarchs of unthinkable power and authority. To the ULTRAVIOLETS, such as my fellow committee members, VIOLETS are ever-present aides, escorts and minions, scarcely competent to organize one's paperwork. So: who are these magenta magnates, these lackeys in lavender? What function do they serve in Alpha Complex?

This is, of course, a rhetorical question (asked in accordance with the Approved Rhetoric Transitional Sequence, *Laws of Alpha Complex* ed. 39/B.3.9, section 5C, subsection 92, chapter 34). They are the chief administrators of Alpha Complex: the CEOs of service firms, IntSec branch chiefs, the generals of Armed Forces battalions. Likewise, they comprise the chiefs of staff of the Armed Forces and the executive boards of the other service groups. And, of course, VIOLET executives serve directly under the High Programmers, compiling our instructions and seeing that they are carried out. They have their hands on the levers of power, waiting only for the word from on high to set our plans in motion on our behalf.

We define the policies. We give the orders. The VIOLETS obey.

Or do they?

Think, fellow High Programmers. How much of your information is filtered through your 'trustworthy' VIOLET executives? How often do you turn over assignments to VIOLETS and trust the work will be done? How much access do your VIOLET executives have to your records? Your command codes? The food you eat?

Reflection makes it clear: We cannot be certain our VIOLET executives are doing their jobs. At least, we cannot verify it without

investing so much time and effort we are unable to fulfill our own responsibilities. So we do what we can to minimize the risks, and we hope for the best.

All of us learn to deal with the most obvious VIOLET machinations. After all, we know they have their ambitions, and we can play ambitious underlings off one another. And it works—or at least it seems to. But this strategy has a flaw. What if the VIOLETS are working together? They know our strategies. They've used them, just as we have.

I can tell what you're thinking. 'There can't be a VIOLET conspiracy. I was a VIOLET, and I never saw any sign of a conspiracy. And anyway, if there were such a group, surely they would have invited me to join! But they didn't, did they?'

In the old days, a VIOLET executive might spend years, even decades, at his post before being considered for promotion into the ranks of the High Programmers. But today promotions come at a lightning-swift pace—two years, six months, sometimes even a single month.

How could they have gone up in rank so fast? Was it talent? Loyalty? Treason? No—well, yes, treason, but the rise came through the collusion of their fellow VIOLET executives. You see, so many High Programmers these days allow themselves to be isolated by their dependence on their subordinates. The VIOLETS don't need to be promoted to get the power they crave; they need only manipulate the data they present to us, and then alter the orders we give them, to get almost anything they might want. So they *avoid* promotion. They pull strings to make sure VIOLETS who do not belong to their conspiracy get promoted over their heads. Thus they remain at the levers of power, unopposed by those whose loyalty and talent might uncover their insidious schemes.

Look around at all those VIOLETS. The one on your left, organizing your papers the way you like best. The one on the right, serving you your noonday meal. And the one in front of you, who always seems to know what you're thinking. Then ask yourself: does he belong to the cabal? Does she?

Stay alert, High Programmer. Trust no one. Keep your laser handy.

— Jan-U-ARY-31

### VIOLET Chocolate

**Amedei-Porcelana—Beautiful looking chocolate (though on breaking some bubbling was found), with a fine aroma of red wine. Fantastic tangy flavor, that evolves through wine and blue cheese to almost too-sharp citrus—a real journey! Some 'bits' found marred an otherwise smooth texture. Length is also sharp at the beginning, but soon settles down to leave you satisfied after only a small piece. These artisan, hand-numbered bars are a connoisseur's delight—that's if you don't mind the equally fine price!**

**Aroma: 9.5 (/10 - weight: 10/100)**

**Look: 9 (/10 - weight: 5/100)**

**Taste: 9 (/10 - weight: 35/100)**

**Melt: 8 (/10 - weight: 5/100)**

**Length: 9 (/10 - weight: 15/100)**

**Opinion: 9 (/10 - weight: 30/100)**

**Total: 9 (/10 - weighted Total)**

— review by Martin Christy, 7 Jun 2002  
([http://www.seventypercent.com/chocop/bar\\_detail.asp?ID=67](http://www.seventypercent.com/chocop/bar_detail.asp?ID=67))



# Appendix: AlphaNet

by Bill O'Dea

*Traitor Recycling Studio designer Bill O'Dea wrote a great eight-page article about AlphaNet, the Alpha Complex version of the Internet. It's all great stuff, but eight pages—sheesh!*

*We're breaking up this monumental piece across various PARANOIA supplements. This appendix talks about AlphaNet as it relates to changing clearance and career. In the service group book, Service, Service!, another extract talks about how the groups use AlphaNet. The STUFF 2 equipment book is all about the illegal Gray Subnets, so we'll use... you get the idea.*

*Actually, we're hoping we can get you to buy six or seven different supplements to get the whole article. Then we'll sell instructions on piecing the whole thing together.*

*Just wanted to help you budget for future purchases. Enjoy!*

One of the most popular authorized uses of AlphaNet is **C-mail**, the Alpha Complex e-mail system. All citizens are assigned a C-mail address when they receive their service group assignments at age 14. The protocol for addresses is simple:

**givenname@CLEARANCE.birthsector.servicegroup**

So citizen Ronnie-R-TLF who works as an Armed Forces grunt has the C-mail address **ronnie@RED.tlf.armf**.

The domain names for the service groups:

- Armed Forces: **.armf**
- CPU: **.cp**
- HPD&MC: **.hpd**
- IntSec: **.ins**
- Power Services: **.pow**
- PLC: **.plc**
- R&D: **.rnd**
- Technical Services: **.tech**

Troubleshooters continue to use their service group C-mail addresses throughout their careers, regardless of how short those careers might be.

There is one other domain: **.com**, reserved for The Computer. Many a brave citizen turned into a quivering crybaby after receiving a C-mail with the return address **thecomputer@thecomputer.com**.

What happens when a citizen is promoted or reassigned to another service group? A whole mess of confusion, that's what. If Ronnie-R becomes Ronnie-O, then Armed Forces personnel are supposed to transfer his C-mail folder to an ORANGE C-mail server. There's usually a two- to four-week backlog, and sometimes the RED folder is deleted and a new ORANGE folder is created just to make it easier for the clerks. If Ronnie-O is transferred to R&D, he needs to complete Armed Forces form ARFAC 14542.5 'Permission To Delete C-mail Folder—Reassignment', R&D form C1545-EZ 'New C-mail Storage Folder Assignment And Liability Waiver', CPU form 66TT.43/g 'C-mail Change of Address Request'....

**Storage ceilings:** Because C-mail can take up a lot of time and available memory, service groups assign C-mail storage limits to their workers. The limit varies by security clearance and job description. A GREEN HPD News Services citizen has a lot more storage than a RED Food Vat Cleaner. Going over your limit is... *bad*. Most groups issue severe fines, but Armed Forces and IntSec usually have more creative methods of punishing chatty citizens.

## Getting up to speed

For the newly promoted citizen looking to learn the ropes of his new clearance, AlphaNet is awash in information sites. Service firms may not sell their wares on their own sites, but they can create pages of data to keep citizens informed of all the nifty ways they serve Alpha Complex. Sometimes the information on these sites is quite helpful. The Swingvolt netsite (<http://RED.swingvolt.tech.baw/swingme>) lists planned brownouts and blackouts by sector and date, and the netsite for Watch Your Words! Semantic Co. (<http://RED.semantics.hpd.rtr/correctspeak>) includes recent changes to spelling and grammar mandates. Citizens can actually save a lot of hassle and clone replacements by reading these netsites.

Some details are blocked out for security reasons, but The Computer usually wants

citizens to know the latest mandates and regulations that pertain to his current clearance. A citizen who knows about new HPD&MC regulations but ignores them anyway is clearly a traitor. Sure, a citizen who doesn't take the time to find out about HPD&MC's new regulations is also a traitor, but that only highlights the need to post these regulations in an easy-to-find location such as HPD&MC's NewRegs netsite (<http://RED.newregulations.hpd.wdw/thehomepagefornewalphacomplexregulations/>).

Not all sites are helpful, or it wouldn't be Alpha Complex. The Re-Education Guides netsite (<http://RED.reeducate.ins.cfh/learnyourright>) is supposed to be a storehouse of information concerning re-education centers and their current 'students'. Instead, the page forces the browser into displaying a quiz. Scoring too low on the quiz puts that character's name on the top of the firm's Student Recruitment list, and failing to complete the quiz results in a score of zero. Some sites, such as the Sector Tourism Board (<http://RED.tourismboard.hpd.nsd/travelandspend>), are completely blank to anyone under GREEN Clearance. And the FunFoods PLC site (<http://RED.funfoods.plc.jsu/funfoodsarefun>) contains enough information to make a citizen go on a voluntary hunger strike.

Other sites are so open, it's either an IntSec trap or just stupidity on the part of the site's administrators. For example, BulletBoys AF (<http://RED.bulletboys.armf.oop/die4u>) lists the names of people their bodyguards are trying to protect and includes a detailed schedule of where those people will be for the next week. Can it be used to thwart the guards and assassinate that person, or is it a false schedule to throw would-be assassins off the trail? Workers can be so incompetent, and IntSec so devious, it's hard to know which is correct.

