PARANOIA xp

THE TRAITOR'S MANUAL

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PARANOIA

TRANSACTIONS RECORDED FOR YOUR PROTECTION

WARNING! TREASON!
These files can CORRUPT YOUR MIND

The *PARANOIA* roleplaying game's many secret societies are **illegal**.
Dissemination of their doctrines in **Alpha Complex** is **forbidden**.
Therefore, **your friend The Computer** politely orders you to **beware of this book:**

THE TRAITOR'S MANUAL!

This **unforgivably comprehensive** guide, for players and Gamemasters alike, details **all 16 secret societies** in the *PARANOIA* XP rulebook, from **Anti-Mutant** and the **Communists** to Psion, **PURGE** and the **Sierra Club**. **Lengthy individual writeups** describe, in **appalling depth,** each society's feuding factions, devious recruiting methods, code names, loyalty tests, means of advancement and current activities.

Oh yes, a crafty *PARANOIA* player might think it helpful, even *fun*, to learn specific **message-drop points** and **black market sites**, ways to **avoid surveillance** or **sabotage Troubleshooters** in rival societies, and even the means to obtain Emergency Bathroom Break Tickets. Citizens of untested loyalty *might* be tempted to read **secrets** and **scandalous gossip:**

- 👁 The **Death Leopard** Cool Scale (treason scored by Style, Scale, Witnesses, Annoyance and Clearance of Citizen injured)
- 👁 The apocalyptic **First Church of Christ Computer-Programmer** sect, **Church of the Impending Reboot**
- 👁 What a **Computer Phreak** can do with PDC.remcall(ME.fin).ac(04).set=univ.fin(gsbch).acloan(4,notrace,10000,0)
- 👁 The **Romantics'** fragmentary timeline of history (*"Very Old Times*: Jesus builds Stonehenge. Frodo defeats Voldemort and saves Christmas for Whoville. *The Great Age*: A mighty President arises and conquers the world to protect it from terrorists.")

But **do not be deceived!** Exposure to these dangerous ideas may encourage insubordination, sedition, free thought and excessive bathroom breaks. **This cannot be permitted!**

By continuing to read this text in violation of The Computer's directive, **YOU ARE A TRAITOR!** Only **TRAITORS** will buy, own, read, study, exploit, extend or propagate THE TRAITOR'S MANUAL!

(**EXCEPTION:** The Computer generously permits all citizens to read the list of 14 forms required for permission to repair a broken showerhead. Thank you for your cooperation.)

In this 96-page supplement for *PARANOIA* by **Gareth Hanrahan**, charmingly illustrated by **Jim Holloway**:

- * Lots of society secrets for **players** and **Gamemasters**
- * Ways to use societies to promote treachery and betrayal
- * Utter absence of annoying no-talent game fiction
- * 'Down and Out in Alpha Complex,' a **complete mission**
- * **Treason** rising like seductive perfume from every page

You need the PARANOIA XP rulebook to use this supplement.

For use with **PARANOIA XP**

For ALL players and Gamemasters

A world fit for Kafka, Orwell and the Marx Brothers

PARANOIA is a satirical roleplaying game set in a darkly humorous future. A well-meaning but deranged Computer desperately protects the citizens of an underground city from secret societies, mutants and all sorts of real and imagined enemies. You play a *Troubleshooter*, one of The Computer's elite agents. You track and destroy the enemies of The Computer. You hope The Computer and your fellow Troubleshooters won't find out *you* are one of these enemies.

PARANOIA: a lighthearted game of terror, death, bureaucracies, mad scientists, mutants, dangerous weapons and insane robots, which encourages players to lie, to cheat and to backstab each other at every turn.

Originally published in 1984, *PARANOIA* has sold over 150,000 copies. The 2004 edition, *PARANOIA* XP, updates Alpha Complex for this new and more paranoid time.

PARANOIA ™ XP

The Traitor's Manual

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THE COMPUTER
Traitor's Enemy No. 1

CONTENTS

Security Clearance RED

WARNING:
Actually, all this material is insanely treasonous at any clearance. Before reading, work up a cover story.

Welcome, traitor!

The Traitor's Manual, this fine 96-page supplement for all players and Gamemasters of the **PARANOIA** roleplaying game, describes all 16 Alpha Complex secret societies revealed in the rulebook. From Anti-Mutant to the Sierra Club, they're all here: doctrines, recruitment strategies, code names, drop points, squabbling factions, goals and activities at different degrees (ranks) and lots of mission ideas. After reading this book, you'll know everything you need to play any secret society member of any degree, at least long enough to last through the treason hearing and the march to the termination center.

We debated following the example of other (non-fun) roleplaying games and doing one whole book for each society: *The Compleat Frankenstein Destroyers,* maybe, or *The Incessant Mystics* or *The Thoroughgoing PURGE*. But that would be wrong. That would be a dishonorable attempt to milk funds unduly from you, our cherished customer.

Plus, the idea of writing a whole supplement about Mystics made us blanch. (Pages 1-6: 'They take drugs and get high.' Page 7: Umm...)

PARANOIA secret societies, at least as portrayed so far in the game's history, aren't like other games' clans, guilds, houses, moieties, union steering committees or similar 'splat' groups. They're not profound, seminal influences that condition your character's very outlook on life. They don't usually have large bodies of lore or tradition, nor a firm power base, nor a lot of infrastructure or politics. As presented in the Classic style that made **PARANOIA** loved and famous, Alpha Complex secret societies come across as ad-hoc assemblages of ignorant, desperate citizens. They're trying to strike out against their enemies in some unlikely and foolhardy fashion, or get ahead in a minor way, or just survive. Characters seldom live long enough to get a deeper view of their own society, let alone others. In that situation, more than four or five pages of description is overkill.

But who knows? The XP edition of **PARANOIA** tries hard to broaden the range of play experiences people associate with the game. The Straight play style, in particular, lets a charitable Gamemaster keep Troubleshooters alive long enough to advance in their societies. Politics and tradition could become issues. If this style catches on, the market will speak. If you want to buy 64 pages about Mystics, we Famous Game Designers can rise to the occasion. (They're, uh... *super*-Mystics! Yeah, and they commune with other-dimensional aliens in the Aboriginal Dreamtime! And they're all dogs!)

■ 'Clearance'?

Whether you're a humble and politely subservient player or the noble Gamemaster, you can read most of *The Traitor's Manual.* But if you're a player, **don't read the mission,** 'Down and Out in Alpha Complex.' You'll spoil your fun and possibly the fun of other players. That will in turn displease the Gamemaster, and then—well, we'd rather not imagine what happens to you. Gamemasters, of course, should read everything, including the mission.

To indicate this, we use the standard 'Security Clearance RED' and 'ULTRAVIOLET' division seen in all **PARANOIA** products. RED: Player; ULTRAVIOLET: Gamemaster.

But don't get confused! This 'clearance' terminology is just a real-world convenience, and doesn't carry over to the Alpha Complex setting. So far as The Computer is concerned, not much of this data is cleared for anybody at all! A Troubleshooter—nay, possibly even a High Programmer—would get into deep trouble with The Computer for displaying *any* knowledge of the stuff in *The Traitor's Manual.*

You, as a player, can read all the Clearance RED portions of this book—but your Clearance RED Troubleshooter definitely *isn't* authorized to know it. Aside from high-clearance Internal Security spies, the only folks in Alpha Complex who know this stuff are, well, traitors.

■ Degrees

The **PARANOIA** XP edition establishes one consistent set of rules for advancement in any secret society. For game purposes, each society has 20 degrees accessible to player characters (PCs), ranging from 1 (beginning neophyte) to 20 (illustrious leader of a sector or multiple sectors). Some societies may also have degrees above 20, available only to nonplayer characters or to PCs with the Gamemaster's express permission.

Owing to traitorous Communist sabotage—funny how those saboteurs strike during really tight deadlines—some secret society entries in the XP rulebook weren't correctly updated to this new 20-degree scheme. For instance, the Death Leopard entry lists eight ranks, a holdover from the game's earlier editions. This is incorrect; all societies now follow the same 20-degree scheme. In future printings of the rulebook we may correct these errors. If we remember.

Understand, the 20-degree range apply to PCs. If a society has NPC-only degrees above 20, its entry in this book details them. (The Illuminati go to 33! At least, that's as far as anyone knows for sure....)

Some Gamemasters loathe and abominate the idea of NPC-only anything. For these equal-rights GMs, we suggest collapsing each society's post-20 degrees down to a single uber-rank, degree 21. A player at degree 20 can get promotion to degree 21 by performing some exceptional service to the society, such as—oh, what would be a likely example?—say, bumping off his superior.

■ What's inside

The Traitor's Manual offers these treasonous goodies:

'Conspiracy theories': The reasons secret societies arise and persist, the ways they function and don't function, standard organization and methods, code names and similar minutiae.

Secret society descriptions: The glories of the book are these 16 detailed entries.

Gamemaster section: A brief discussion of the ways GMs can use secret societies to make their players' lives more, um, interesting.

Mission: This section is ULTRAVIOLET Clearance, meaning only the Gamemaster should read it. 'Down and Out in Alpha Complex,' a full-length mission suitable for both Classic and Straight play styles, brings in lots of society-related stuff from this book. —And even stuff that *isn't* in this book! Which brings us to...

■ What's *not* inside

The topic of secret societies, as well as a wild overestimate of how many words we could fit on each page, inspired Famous Game Designer Gareth Hanrahan to pour forth a whole extra chapter of great material we had to cut for space. But put down that knife, Gareth! We're making the deleted chapter available as a *free* download on the Mongoose Publishing web site—

www.mongoosepublishing.com

The deleted chapter covers **Elective Activity or Pursuit clubs**. The Computer encourages all loyal citizens to spend leisure time in approved harmless activities, sports and hobbies. The clubs that organize these activities keep the populace reasonably quiet and out of the corridors. The EAP clubs are also prime recruiting territory for secret societies, which is why Gareth described them. These EAP clubs figure prominently in this book's mission; there's enough context in the mission to make sense of it all, but you're missing a lot of good stuff if you don't visit the Mongoose site and download the *free* chapter. Go for it!

Conspiracy theories

There are five barriers to committing treason in Alpha Complex:

- 👁 You

- 👁 The Computer

- 👁 IntSec

- 👁 Your secret society

- 👁 Everyone else

Trip over any of these barriers, and you go flying headfirst into a Termination Booth. For the secret societies, IR Market, unregistered mutants, runaway bots, credit scams, petty bureaucratic empires, Byzantine intrigues and conspiracies to function and for, well, for life to be worth even slightly living in Alpha Complex, millions of acts of treason have to be committed daily. Treachery comes as naturally as breathing to every citizen; evading surveillance is as vital a skill as watching the color codes on the walls or digesting Fun without losing an intestine.

You

The vast majority of citizens are as loyal as the daycycle is long (this metaphor is deprecated during Power Saving Time). The same majority of citizens also commits treason of various kinds daily. The key is self-awareness. If a citizen believes he is really committing treason, then he is much more likely to be caught. Therefore, he must believe—or make himself believe—that Treasonous Action A (the one he commits) is merely a teeny-weeny nanoscopic breach of an outdated and irrelevant protocol and is wholly ethically justified anyway vis-à-vis the current situation and needs of Alpha Complex as a whole, while Treasonous Action B (the near-identical one another citizen commits) is a deliberate, premeditated, vicious, and underhanded attack on all that is good and pure and true and should be punished in the harshest, most vaporizing manner possible. A truly committed enemy of the state, like a member of PURGE or the Humanists, may acknowledge what he does as treason, but most rationalize it away quite easily—for example:

- 👁 It's not that I'm undermining the economy— buying a box of toilet cleansing pads off the IR Market is just easier than filling out the 17 requisition forms and waiting in line at PLC for eight hours.

- 👁 It's not that I'm a member of a secret society—most people just, like, aren't tuned

Senior Administrator Boron-B-HJU-4 learns the power of secret societies after discovering, on a Gray Subnet, a file labeled 'Hot shots of high-rise PLC guy, HJU Sector! 1,500cr, priced to move!'

into the Mystic vibe and The Computer; that cat don't even have a vein, nose or tongue to get to where we're at. We're not a danger to anyone, just as long as we're allowed to…whoa. Colors….

- 👁 It's not that I'm an unregistered mutant; things just spontaneously combust around me. I'd never use that to hurt The Computer, or anyone (except those who deserve it, like that &%$* in bunk 16 who keeps snoring….oops!).

- 👁 It's not that I'm a traitor; most people would never appreciate the world that was lost and the wonders of the past. We have to preserve it from thugs and barbarians, and

keep the flame of culture burning. Culture like…*American Idol.*

- 👁 It's not that I'm framing my coworkers as part of a Machiavellian plot to destroy them all and make a fortune doing so; I'm merely making the best use of these Organ Requisition Forms.

- 👁 It's not that I'm a Free Enterprise goon here to break your legs. It's just how the clone crumbles when he don't pay.

A close analysis of this double-think leads to an understanding of the anatomy of a lie, graphically depicted in the box on the next page.
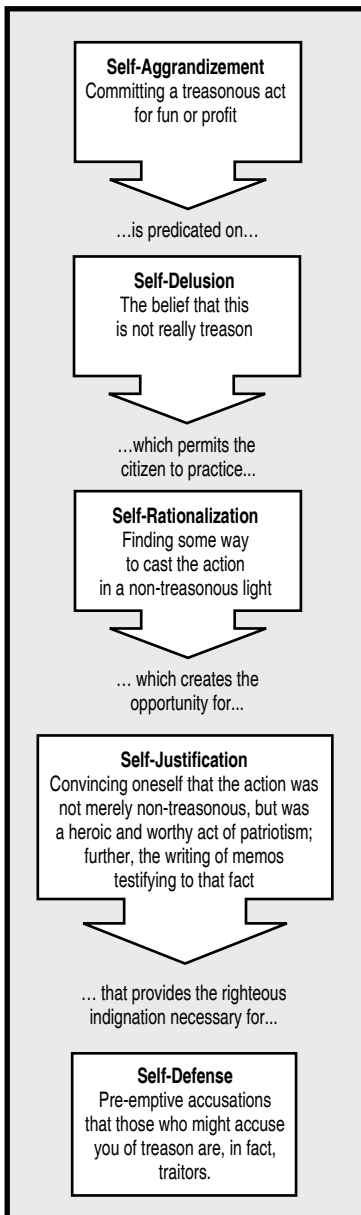
Each stage is built on the one before it, but—and this is the tricky bit—does not acknowledge the existence of the one before it in the slightest. Once a citizen enters Self-Delusion, he must completely forget about his initial motive of Self-Aggrandizement. Failure to successfully section off one's mind will result in incriminating slips of the tongue or pen. A citizen lacking mental hygiene will betray himself soon before anyone else catches him.

The Computer

The security camera is as omnipresent a feature in Alpha Complex as the fluorescent BuzzyLite 93% Longer Life Illumination bulb, the YumYum

The anatomy of a lie

Self-Aggrandizement
Committing a treasonous act for fun or profit

...is predicated on...

Self-Delusion
The belief that this is not really treason

...which permits the citizen to practice...

Self-Rationalization
Finding some way to cast the action in a non-treasonous light

... which creates the opportunity for...

Self-Justification
Convincing oneself that the action was not merely non-treasonous, but was a heroic and worthy act of patriotism; further, the writing of memos testifying to that fact

... that provides the righteous indignation necessary for...

Self-Defense
Pre-emptive accusations that those who might accuse you of treason are, in fact, traitors.

Edifying examples of double-think

Stage	Classic	Straight	Zap
Self-Aggrandizement	Bob-R must die! I'll just adjust his grenade timers… I am the Equipment Guy, after all.	Bob-R must die! And he will—once IntSec discovers the evidence I've planted in his room.	Bob-R must die! Zap!
Self-Delusion	It was an accident.	I've got to get rid of these Psion pamphlets somewhere…	He deserved it.
Self-Rationalization	I'd just rechecked the timing mechanism on his grenade, and it was working fine. User error.	…if Bob-R neglects his cleaning duties, it's his own fault.	Aha! A picture of a bot! He was a Pro Tech traitor!
Self-Justification	Zero-second delay timers are ideal for this sort of close-quarter fighting. Bob-R was not properly trained in the use of such weapons.	Bob-R was a registered mutant, Mr. IntSec Interrogator. Obviously, he was a double agent, registering only to shield other mutants.	I heroically terminated the Pro Tech traitor before he sold humanity out to the machines!
Self-Defense	How dare you accuse me of blowing him up! I have here the Timer Adjustment Approval docket, signed by Bob-R. Yes, that stain is his signature!	You're taking the word of a registered mutant over mine? Are you sure about that? We've established that Bob-R was protecting someone; could it be you?	You're in league with your toaster, aren't you! Die!

dispenser or the suspicious bloodstain. Encased in a hardened plastic shell and equipped with a range of lenses, sniffers, microphones and bidirectional light processing tubes, cameras are mounted in practically every room and corridor.

Citizens are told that the little red light on the side of the camera glows when the camera is active. In fact, the light would continue to glow until well after the rest of the camera is smashed to atoms; it is connected directly to a chunky chemical power cell that will outlast the average sun. The little red light of love is meaningless as an indicator of camera status; it is more an aspiration of Total Surveillance than anything else. Less than a tenth of cameras are actually recording at any given time, and an estimated third of cameras have been destroyed, disconnected or otherwise disabled and never replaced. The chance of a camera being disabled and not replaced is exactly proportional to the kickbacks going to the local Tech Services firms—most techies know which cameras in their sector are offline.

Short-lived traitors think that it is an excellent idea to disable cameras before committing treasonous acts. Presumably, these traitors also think that carrying a copy of *The Communist Manifesto* and wearing furry hats are also excellent ideas, as cameras suddenly going offline for no apparent reason instantly draws The Computer's attention. (One of the most popular segments in the BLUE-Clearance show, *Troubleshooter Blunders Caught on Camera*, is the weekly bit where some benighted traitor shoots the wall camera with his laser, forgetting that his laser pistol has its own built-in camera recorder. It's funny every time.) Longer-lived traitors wait until errant cone rifle bursts or power surges fry the local camera network before setting about their nefarious deeds.

On the far side of the camera, there could be nothing more sinister than a recorder*, which studiously records everything and spools it off into the cavernous maw of the archives. There might be a bored high-clearance citizen, a bunch of camera-jacking Computer Phreaks, a Tech Services testing crew, an IntSec monitor—or The Computer itself.

The Computer is the most unpredictable of those potential observers. Traitors blasé about Our Friend's idiosyncrasies and idiocies should remember that it is a massive distributed artificial intelligence running across thousands of high-powered processing nodes with access to an inconceivable amount of information. On a good day, The Computer can cross-reference the Transbot Schedule for the sector you just left with the credit trail you made when you bought a *Teela-O Fan Club Magazine* to provide an alibi and calculate your travel time, thus proving you could have been in the room when Jill-R-UYF was shot. It then plots the trajectories of a dozen laser blasts reflecting off mirrored walls, creates a virtual model of the room and maps that onto the 2-D camera image and ends up working out exactly where you were hiding when you shot her and what gun you used. It correlates every psychological profile and evaluation form you ever filled in to create a subprogram that exactly replicates your personality and calculates why you did it to 16 decimal places. It even determines

* Under the Freedom of Some But Not All Information, for a Sufficiently Wide Definition of Freedom Initiative (FOSBNAIFASWDOFI), a citizen may request a copy of all camera footage containing him that is available at his clearance. This footage will be provided within six to eight weeks. However, to ensure that CPU is not overrun with requests for footage, the citizen is legally obliged to watch all the footage. As up to 80% of a citizen's life is caught on camera, and most of these recordings are archived, this can result in up to 50 years' worth of footage for a long-lived citizen. Which must be watched in chronological order. From the start. With no fast-forward button.

if the crime was unplanned or premeditated by calculating your hesitation time before firing. On a good day, The Computer is omniscient.

The Computer rarely has good days. Equipment failures, power brownouts, massive workloads, sabotage, misprogramming, counter-programs, counter-counter programs, counter-counter-counter-etc. programs, viruses, antiviruses, memory failures, backdoors, Computer Phreak interference, High Programmer turf wars, legacy code, uploaded personalities, rebellious subnodes, blown vacuum tubes, ants in the diodes—not to mention the niggling feeling that *something*, *somewhere* might have gone slightly wrong—means that The Computer is not always up to feats of brilliant deductive reasoning (or basic addition for that matter. It's got a terrible blind spot about sevens…)

These Bad Days can be tracked and even predicted in advance. Oneday always requires an unusually high amount of processing work, for example, as it's the start of a new week and all the forms collected on Mandatory Inspection Day have to be processed. The load on the subnodes means that The Computer has trouble remembering what that squiggle between six and eight is called, let alone catching traitors through devious analysis. Rolling brownouts and the usual low-grade information warfare means that the attention of The Computer is rather like the Alpha Complex equivalent of the weather. It's seasonal, erratic, often the topic of conversation,

never quite goes away and can kill thousands on a whim. Secret societies issue regular bulletins on the current state of The Computer's processing ability in a given sector. 'A front of PLC purchase orders is coming in from the northwest; processor time available for surveillance and analysis in RTE sector will be down 32%—time to go to work, boys,' or 'CPU has installed a new subnode; expect heavy laser showers.'

Cameras are not the only medium through which The Computer sends loving attention, but they are the most omnipresent. The Computer can also access any PDC, communicator, telephone or other communications device to eavesdrop on citizens. The SYNONYM subprogram runs constantly, intercepting every email and call made within Alpha Complex and searching them for keywords like 'Communist,' 'Bomb,' 'Terrorism,' 'Plot,' 'IntSec,' 'Mutant,' 'Secret,' 'Society,' 'Computer,' 'The,' 'It' and so on. SYNONYM is also constantly updated with new keywords as IntSec discovers what code words are being used to cover up treason. If a Commie mutant traitor cell is referring to bombs as 'dumplings' (as in, 'Comrades! We have a 12-kiloton nuclear dumpling hidden in ONO Sector! This glorious dumpling will annihilate the capitalist scum!'), then 'dumplings' is added to SYNONYM's search protocol (and the ONO Sector branch of the Home Baking Club is hauled off for interrogation).

> **Comrades!** We have a **12-kiloton nuclear dumpling** hidden in ONO Sector! This glorious **dumpling will annihilate** the **capitalist scum!**

informers hide their notebooks and use other stationery, such as the ever-popular backs of old forms or their PDCs. The standard practice is for informers to send in monthly reports, which are briefly scanned and then consigned to the trash; the informers are issued with an emergency secret contact number for IntSec, which is marginally more effective than the standard 'Automated IntSec Report-a-Traitor Confidential Hotline—Every Tenth Caller Wins a Prize'.*

Long-term informers are bitter, nosy people who begrudge their neighbors the slightest privacy or pleasure. Some have infested a particular dormitory or housing complex for years, learning every secret and hiding hole in the place. They know exactly where to put the glass against the wall to hear everything next door, or which ceiling panel is cracked enough to peer through. They dominate through fear. Other informers know and befriend everyone, using their IntSec contacts to get small favors and breaks for their friends—but cross them and they'll turn on you in an instant. Everyone knows who these informers are, of course, but they are afraid to speak out against them.

The really dangerous informers are the earnest ones who believe that by reporting treason they are actually making Alpha Complex a better place, and the real bastards who use IntSec as a weapon against their enemies and people who offend them. All informers can be dealt with by isolating them (identifying them and not letting them learn anything useful), exposing them (revealing their status as IntSec spies; even the threat of this can be used as blackmail) or the traditional method of dumping the body in a Food Vat. The secret societies filter out amateur informers during the recruitment method, in the same way a 15,000-degree furnace filters out impurities in a refinery.

Top 10 tips for avoiding Computer surveillance

1. Pay attention to Secret Service Weather Reports.
2. The cameras have a limited field of vision and can't see anything directly below them.
3. Smile while you're treasonous; computer algorithms look for unhappy people!
4. Useful distractions are your friend, so schedule spontaneous loyalty demonstrations or vigorous group calisthenics in the foreground.
5. Five words—Hot Fun on the Lens.
6. The Computer searches by name, so surround yourself with people whose names begin with 'A.' They'll get investigated first.
7. **ERROR: ENTRY NOT FOUND.**
8. Glue colored sheets over the camera; color blindness is a common fault in cameras, and allows citizens to enter higher-clearance areas or use higher-clearance equipment.
9. Power blackouts are happy hour for treason.
10. When in doubt, hide in the closet.

IntSec

Internal Security is the fastest growing of the major service groups. While PLC's effective production drops year by year (despite daily glowing announcements of quotas exceeded), Tech Services becomes less efficient and more surly and R&D vanishes into a budgetary black hole of fringe science and incomprehensible research, IntSec just keeps on recruiting more and more spies, double agents, informers, wire tappers and a seemingly endless army of clerks and snitches. Surveillance of citizens is so pervasive that a new IntSec file is opened the moment a baby is decanted from the cloning vats.

While The Computer is limited to spying through electronic means, IntSec makes much more use of human intelligence gathering. An estimated 96.2% of citizens have reported another citizen for treason, criminal acts, spreading propaganda or disinformation, misuse of Alpha Complex equipment or seditious or suspicious behavior. Some 31.4% have an ongoing, long-term arrangement with IntSec, regularly making reports to an IntSec handler.

Some of these informers are easy to spot. IntSec is such a big consumer of PLC-produced stationery that it purchases one particular type of little black notebook and blue pen in bulk and issues these to its informers. The cleverer

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*'If you want to report a generic act of treason, press #1. To request IntSec surveillance of your current location, press #2. To report membership in a secret society, press #3. To report an unregistered mutation, press #4. To report corruption or bribery, press #5. *bleee* Hold #6 and press hash-smiley-321, then give your ME Card number to have your IntSec record erased for 500 creds *bleee* -ess #8. For more options, press #9. By staying on the line this long and not pressing a button, we assume you wish to confess. Please leave a complete confession after the tone. Beep.'*

Professional IntSec infiltrators are even more of a problem for the security-conscious secret society. While the amateurs are just chancing their arm when they try to join a society, ('Yes, I've always harbored a deep, treasonous desire to be a Frank Stein. All hail Frank Stein and his glorious new regime'), professional infiltrators have the full backing of IntSec and so have access to mountains of information. If IntSec is meeting its Involuntary Privacy Sharing Quotas for the month, then it might be able to provide its infiltrators with the correct passwords, handshakes, code-signs and message drops needed to walk into, say, a PURGE meeting and be acknowledged as a high-degree member of the society. (Note that even if an IntSec firm fails to meet its Involuntary Privacy Sharing Quotas, it will still attempt to make up the difference in Citizen Friendship Outreach and Interrogation, so infiltrators may be sent out with amusingly incorrect passwords and information.) Societies counter infiltration by setting tests and feeding false information to new recruits. Everyone in the society spies on everyone else for their own security.

IntSec uses the same surveillance methods as The Computer, but in very different ways. Its monitoring staff falls into three categories, informally referred to as 'splats' (after what happens to citizens who run afoul of them). First, there are the voyeurs who track a particular person for weeks at a time, switching from camera to camera to follow their target. For a Troubleshooter, this is something like a pesky cricket sitting on one's shoulder, a conscience with a death ray. A Troubleshooter has to do something special to attract this kind of attention; those who arouse IntSec's suspicions, who are on especially important missions or who cut in line in the Commissary ahead of a camera monitor are all fair game.

Other camera operators switch randomly from location to location, scanning for suspicious behavior. These operators tend to follow news reports, fire alarms, immanent reactor failure newsletters, Local Reassurance Alerts, Unfocused Anxiety Indices and futile Troubleshooter Priority Backup Requests; experienced Troubleshooters instinctively respond to large explosions by spontaneously declaring their love and loyalty to Friend Computer.

The final splat is the obsessive analysts who pore over a single frame for days at a time, analyzing every pixel for disloyalty. Reflections in a laser sight, smudges of dirt or inappropriate facial expressions are scanned, plotted, rotated and magnified endlessly to reveal something treasonous.

The relationship between secret societies and IntSec is something like that between a carnivorous steamroller and a pack of wolves with opposable thumbs. The wolves don't need to outrun the steamroller, they just need to outrun the slowest wolf. A wolf is made slow either by attacking it and tearing chunks of its flesh so it cannot run, or by using those handy opposable thumbs to hold tools and nail another wolf to the floor so the slow-moving steamroller can easily catch it. IntSec is never going away as long as The Computer exists—Our Friend is, after all, the most paranoid individual in all of Alpha Complex, so it cannot tolerate the idea of its enemies going unpunished or unwatched. As long as the secret society community can keep IntSec busy with the dregs of conspiracy, the really important and effective conspiracies can continue to thrive. While IntSec's goons break up another dozen Death Leopard cells, the Computer Phreaks can hack another CompNode and widen their influence within Alpha Complex.

Most traitors, then, spend more time reporting their rivals to IntSec than anyone else.

Your secret society

The various secret societies operate a cell structure—each member only knows a limited number of other members, and so cannot betray more than a handful to IntSec. A variety of methods such as message drops, code names, secret signs and so on (see below) is used to preserve the integrity of societies, but still; when your fellow Sierra Clubber gets caught green-handed with a proscribed pot plant, then he's going to give your name to IntSec faster than he can say 'ancient texts speak of this as being a cute cactus.' To mix metaphors with furious abandon, a secret society cell is only as strong as its weakest link.

Secret society damage control is a key skill to have. Successful conspirators keep tabs on their fellow cell members so they can scatter or destroy evidence when one is captured. This entirely contradicts the ideal of knowing as little as possible about other society members so you can reveal as little as possible when captured. The sentiment of every member is that the rules should apply to the others, not to him; others cannot be trusted. Paranoia about the incompetence or failure of one's fellow conspirators is rampant in Alpha Complex.

Most members therefore prefer solo missions: Fewer lips to flap, fewer feet to trip and fewer citizens to feed into the waste disposal.

Some secret societies have secret sub-societies within them, elite members a cut above the rest who can therefore be somewhat relied upon not to draw the wrath or attention of IntSec. This hard core of competence is just as rife with distrust and backstabbing as the rest of the society—it's just conducted with more skill and style. Members of this hard core are chosen after a series of missions designed to test their abilities and loyalty.

A secret society may present a united front, but inwardly is divided into dozens of sub-societies. There is the main body of the society, made up of rank-and-file members and new recruits. There are the elite who can be trusted with sensitive missions, the compromised and mistrusted who are fed false information, the little cliques, counter-cliques and power blocs centered around a particular member or activity as well as all the little splinter groups and factions. Perpendicular to all this, of course, are the levels of degree in the society, denoting seniority and rank. Every society, even the smallest and most united ones, are so divided by infighting that a member must be very careful who he relies on. Every secret message and mission must be evaluated based on who it might come from and what their agenda might be.

Everyone else

Despite the best efforts of terrorists, killer robots, reactor leaks and most Troubleshooter teams, Alpha Complex is full of people. The Computer's cloning policies means that an ever-increasing population is crammed into an ever-decreasing number of habitable sectors. Prying eyes are everywhere and a treasonous act is almost certain to be observed by someone, even if it is just some piddling little INFRARED paperweight. As reporting others for treason is a sure route for commendation, the successful traitor employs one of the following strategies to avoid termination.

The simplest and most direct is **pre-emptive termination**. This usually causes more trouble than it solves—vaporizing a poor INFRARED just to hide your Mystic-sponsored sabotage of the Mandatory Happy Blood Filtration Plant may seem like an easy option, but every vaporization brings more questions (from the INFRARED's clone backup if no one else). Pre-emptive termination is normally used only when it can be smoothly integrated into the act of treason itself (waiting until said INFRARED is standing next to the Filtration Plant before you detonate your explosives, or even waiting until he's being filtered before you switch the plant from 'Standard Circulation Cleansing of Non-Approved Fun Chemicals' to 'Speed Wash').

Lower-clearance citizens can also be **threatened** or **ordered** to keep quiet, and pulling rank will usually shut up a low-clearance citizen. However, the moment the citizen is out of your sight, he will instantly be calculating the odds of getting you terminated versus the likelihood of you terminating him first. Even citizens who failed their Basic Junior EZ-Learn Mandatory Mathematics Exams at age eight are suddenly capable of performing absurdly complex risk assessments when it comes to getting a superior in trouble.

For other citizens who have observed a criminal act and are of equal or greater clearance to the traitor, the options are more restrictive. **Bribery** is a keystone of the Alpha Complex economy, but spending credits to cover up every treasonous act

will quickly bankrupt most citizens. Bartering for equipment, services, favors or sponsorship into influential secret societies is more common than straight credit transfers.

Blackmail is as common and popular as bribery; indeed, it has become institutionalized. Reporting a citizen for treason brings with it a reward from The Computer, but the size of this reward varies depending on The Computer's current mood. Originally, loyal citizens who reported treason were lavishly paid and promoted, but pats on the head and meaningless awards are more common these days. Not every act of treason gets reported; a citizen might prefer to sit on the evidence of another's wrongdoing for months or years, holding the threat over them. As insurance, the evidence can be uploaded to any of the gray subnets and file trading networks.

Blackmail is even a tradable commodity. There is a roaring trade in the underground sections of C-Bay in blackmail material. Messages like 'want to know when Jonny-B-GUD was bad? 1,500 credits, genuine photos' or 'GREEN-Clearance supervisor from DET-Sector Food Vat, original blackmail material, 1,000c or best offer' cross C-Bay screens daily. Observant citizens can make a handsome living off C-Bay, as long as their trustworthy seller ratings stay high. Most blackmail items are marked as 'non-exclusive,' meaning that they have been sold and used before. 'Exclusive' items are considerably more expensive, but are uniquely known to the seller and buyer. A non-exclusive item can expire (the poor GREEN-Clearance supervisor gets sick of a stream of REDs coming up and threatening him with blackmail on a daily basis, and either throws himself into the Food Vat or heads for a confession booth, taking the penalty for his original crime but removing the power of the blackmail material) before it is used by the buyer.

Some citizens (especially within IntSec) make a lavish living by selling blackmail material on C-Bay. Paranoid people run automated computer searches for their name or description, hoping to buy or counter the threat of blackmail before it can be used on them.

Secret society pervasion

There are dozens, possibly hundreds of secret societies active within Alpha Complex. The more The Computer tries to flatten out the character of the individual citizen by medication, education, brainscrubbing, propaganda and crushing rollers, the more weird mutant memes and subcults show up. Underground culture in Alpha Complex is like bubbles in wallpaper paste—push one down, and another two pop up in even more noticeable and inconvenient places. (Official culture, by contrast, is more like porridge—push it down, and you find that it is dull, warm and sticky.)

Blackmail costs

Clearance	Minor non-exclusive	Minor exclusive	Major non-exclusive	Major exclusive
INFRARED	5 cr.	25 cr.	50 cr.	200 cr.
RED	25 cr.	125 cr.	250 cr.	1000 cr.
ORANGE	50 cr.	250 cr.	500 cr.	2000 cr.
YELLOW	100 cr.	500 cr.	1000 cr.	4000 cr.
GREEN	200 cr.	1000 cr.	2000 cr.	8000 cr.
BLUE	400 cr.	2000 cr.	4000 cr.	UNAVAILABLE
INDIGO	800 cr.	UNAVAILABLE	8000 cr.	UNAVAILABLE
VIOLET	UNAVAILABLE	UNAVAILABLE	UNAVAILABLE	UNAVAILABLE
ULTRAVIOLET	UNAVAILABLE	UNAVAILABLE	UNAVAILABLE	UNAVAILABLE

Non-exclusive: This information remains available to purchase after any particular buyer purchases it, and may be have been used by others.

Exclusive: This information is guaranteed 100% fresh and is known only to the seller, the buyer and (presumably) the blackmailee. The seller promises to never ever sell this information onto any other buyers. Ever. Not even if they offer him mountains of untraceable credits, or threaten to report him as a blackmailing traitor, or feed his entire clone family into a garbage disposal. Ever ever ever. (Not a guarantee.)

Minor: The information proves the blackmail victim committed some indiscretion that will not destroy him, but will inconvenience him somewhat if it is revealed (generally O5M treason). Examples include theft, unauthorized abuse of equipment, conspiring with a secret society.

Major: The information proves the blackmail victim is guilty of a major crime that will probably result in his termination if revealed (generally M3T treason). Examples include being a mutant, member of a secret society, Communism, undermining The Computer, murder, blackmailing other citizens and so on.

The oldest secret societies date back to before the founding of Alpha Complex; indeed, they seem to have been reactions against The Computer. Most are of more recent origins—EAP clubs driven underground, pet projects of High Programmers gone wild, splinter groups, Junior Citizen fads, rediscovered Old Reckoning cultural artifacts and the occasional new idea. CPU analysts have produced this partial diagram of the heritage of the more common societies.

Regardless of their respective heritages and natures, every secret society operates using similar techniques, ones used by conspiracies since before The Computer was a glitch in an ATM.

Cells

Every society is built up of a number of interlocking cells. Each member in a cell only knows the other people in the cell, and only the cell leader knows how to communicate with the next higher cell all the way up to the head of the society. The smaller the cell, the less damage done to the society should a single cell be captured. Of course, the smaller the cell, the slower communication between different cells becomes, and the overall effectiveness of a single cell is also diminished.

In Class A societies, calling an individual unit a cell is quite ludicrous—a 'cell' in the First Church of Christ Computer-Programmer is more properly a church with dozens of members and a high priest. Covert meetings have to be held in warehouses or big Activity Center squash courts, and secrecy is more a part of the mystique of the society than an actual necessity. Members may wink and say they are going to 'you-know-what at the you-know-where for a bit of you-know-in-your-infinite-electronic-wisdom.' A single cell can be easily penetrated and links to other cells are obvious.

More paranoid and threatened societies use progressively more secret and smaller cells. A Free Enterprise cell, for example, might run protection rackets and IR marketeering in a particular subsector, communicating with higher cells only to send money back up the chain and receive material for sale. PURGE or the Communists have three-person cells, walled off from the other cells by a strictly observed set of protocols and codes.

Secret societies can be divided into **organizations** and **conspiracies**. In an *organization*, the cells are only loosely connected, and the links between them are primarily there to facilitate the exchange of information, equipment or members between cells. For example, Corpore Metal is an organization—each cell comprises a few wannabe cyborgs and sympathetic bots, and the cells swap cyborg prosthetics and usage tips between each other. There is no Complex-spanning conspiracy to turn everyone into half-machine cyborgs, and there is certainly no nanotech in the cloning tanks. The members are united by a common interest, not a common goal.

On the other hand, a society like the Humanists is more properly a *conspiracy*—each Humanist cell is supposed to work together towards a

Arbitrary division of societies table

Organizations	Conspiracies
Death Leopard	FCCC-P
Free Enterprise	Sierra Club
Romantics	Computer Phreaks
Anti-Mutants	PURGE
Corpore Metal	Humanists
Mystics	Psion
Communists	Illuminati
Frankenstein Destroyers	High Programmer program groups
Pro Tech	

long-term goal, a Complex-wide reconstruction of society and birthing of an alleged utopia. The Humanist Conspiracy might develop and distribute propaganda leaflets across the whole of Alpha Complex, or coordinate the destruction of CompNodes across several sectors at once. Because of the greater cohesiveness of a conspiracy, the loss of a cell is much more damaging to the society as a whole.

A secret society can flip-flop between states—the Anti-Mutants could form a conspiracy to, say, subvert the construction plants and make them build giant sentinelbots to hunt down and destroy every mutant. Alternatively, they could just stick to their usual stack of beating the registered mutant down the hall with FunBall racquets and calling it a vital step in the preservation of humanity.

Code names

While every society uses code names, the meaning and purpose of the names differ from society to society. In Class A societies, code names are used not to ensure secrecy, but to reinforce a sense of belonging and elitism. A recruit is no longer just Avery-R-BFC; he glories in the name of Brother Zork or Captain Sulu or Member #555432! He can look down on the other citizens he meets in the corridor, for he has a secret identity and that makes him special.

In B and C societies, secrecy is paramount, so the purpose of different names is to ensure that a captured member cannot name his fellow traitors by name. These code names are much more likely to be plausible-sounding names, often based on a member's rank in the society (Adam-7, Washington, Mr. Blue and so on), although a reference to the society's goals or history is often incorporated into the code names.

Recruitment

Recruitment patterns vary from society to society, although all are constantly trying to expand their membership base. The Class As skirt the boundary of legality and can hold almost open recruiting drives, passing propaganda out to a large number of citizens. The more hunted societies tend to be much more selective, with members only recruiting their friends or coworkers whom they know they can…well, trust is certainly the wrong word, but it is the best term for the moment. (The Revised Language Committee has proposed replacing 'trust' with *trest*, defined as '1) the knowledge that it would be counter-productive for another person to betray you in the immediate future; 2) the knowledge that you can draw your laser faster than the other person in the immediate future.')

TIMES

The prevalence of code names and codes within secret societies has forced IntSec, R&D and CPU to work together to crack the problem. Their solution was the development of the Traitor Identification, Match and Elimination Service (TIMES), a software program based off IntSec's SYNONYM surveillance system. TIMES eavesdrops on conversations both physical and electronic, attempting to match known codenames to the real names of citizens. For example, if a despicable Communist cell leader goes by the name of Trotsky, then the program will attempt to cross-reference overheard communications that mention Trotsky with real citizen names, to work out which person is calling himself Trotsky.

Developed at huge expense, the TIMES program promised to crack the secret society problem within five years. Careers—big, shiny VIOLET-Clearance careers—were staked on the success of the program. Unfortunately an early programming bug mistakenly identified the VIOLET citizens as traitors, and IntSec terminated them.

Though the system has an acceptable success rate for traitors who are kind enough to use unusual and easily tracked titles like 'Trotsky,' it falls down slightly for conspirators who call themselves 'Member #654' or 'Mr. Corridor.' Results are much more likely to be, say, an R&D technician working on project #654, or a corridor maintenance bot. TIMES v1.1 has various pattern matching programs to reduce these false positives, and has been deemed 'perfect' by the review board. (The one known issue is that it has a habit of identifying a random member of a Troubleshooter team looking for a code-named traitor as *being* that traitor. After all, they're all using the search term, so one of them *must* be the traitor….)

Some common recruitment sites:

◉ **Commissaries:** The number two channel for treasonous communications, after the illegal Gray Subnet computer networks, is the Fluffy-Cleansing Almost-Lemon-Scented Standard Issue Double Absorbency Napkins used in the standard mess halls throughout Alpha Complex. Secret messages are scrawled on these napkins in ink, blood, Mishtard* and any other substance that comes to hand, then passed from person to person. Some citizens have reported finding half-a-dozen notes from secret societies in their dinner, with an official summons from IntSec hidden in the dessert.

◉ **Elective Activity or Pursuit clubs:** The Computer approves various harmless clubs and societies that keep citizens preoccupied and harmless. These EAP clubs are heavily infiltrated by secret society agents, IntSec informers, double agents, triple agents, ambitious citizens trying to make connections to IntSec or a secret society, terrified citizens trying to get IntSec's help to deal with their secret society problems, or a secret society's help to hide from IntSec, confused or crazed quadruple agents, secret society infiltrators trying to get recruited by a rival society and the occasional ordinary citizen who just turned up for FunBall practice or Bubbly-Yum Wrapper Appreciation Society. (We had to cut a whole chapter about these clubs because it wouldn't fit in this book, but you can download the chapter for free from the Mongoose Publishing web site, **www.mongoosepublishing.com**.)

◉ **Briefing rooms:** Troubleshooters and indeed most citizens are quite used to being sent to dark and suspiciously sticky briefing rooms and given bizarre and contradictory orders. This ingrained acceptance is used by some secret societies as a recruiting tactic—just send a high-clearance society member into a room and 'brief' the assembled citizens that for the good of the Complex, they must straightaway go down to LIE Sector's Reactor Coolant Overflow Holding Tank and swear allegiance to the cause of Corpore Metal or whatever. By the time the dupes realize that they have been duped, they will already have been initiated and are therefore screwed.

◉ **During missions:** Leaving aside the disastrous incident where a senior

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* Slogan: It's like *mustard! It's mustard*-ish*! It's* Mishtard*! Enjoy!*

FCCC-P member got hold of the phrase 'there are no atheists in foxholes' and attempted to implement it on a Complex-wide scale, a surprising number of secret society members are recruited during missions. Successfully completing an impossible mission without multiple terminations often requires that a Troubleshooter be 'morally flexible' and ally himself with one or more secret societies. A mission to test a new R&D drug is much easier if one has Mystic aid; solving the mystery of the mission teleportation device calls for the help of Pro Tech. Moral flexibility is not a problem for most Troubleshooters, who do the ethical limbo six times before breakfast.

◉ **During service firm interviews, reviews and evaluations:** Success and advancement in one's assigned career is a mark of loyalty (failing one's service firm by not giving 110% wastes your firm's credits; wasting credits damages the economy; damaging the economy undermines Alpha Complex; undermining Alpha Complex is treason; therefore sick days are now deemed treasonous). Secret societies try to recruit successful and skilled workers during private review sessions—a citizen might find his senior manager tapping out 'if you want to get ahead, join me in bathroom cubicle 27 in 10 minutes' on his knee). This leads to a positive feedback loop—successful citizens are promoted and recruited into secret societies, where they can use their society connections to be more successful and get promoted more (and possibly recruited into yet more secret societies). Meanwhile, those virtuous citizens who refuse recruitment offers are stuck at the bottom of the ladder and mistrusted by their superiors because of their sheer honesty.

◉ **During transtube failures and power cuts:** A recent CPU report gave a 146% correlation between power failures and secret society recruiting drives, assassinations, planting of evidence, misuse of laser pistols and theft of equipment. (When asked what exactly a 146% correlation was, the CPU researchers muttered something about a power cut during their final calculations.) Anyway, as soon as the lights go dark, the traitors come out to play. If a transtube is stuck for hours in a lightless tunnel, then secret society members generally take the opportunity to propagandize and recruit their fellow passengers. After all, they're not going anywhere soon, and six hours of droning propaganda can convert the most resilient citizen.

Recruitment consists of filling the prospective new member's head with society propaganda, possibly handing out flyers, pamphlets, free samples, Viral Thought Patterns or Compli-Joy Chewable Mind Control Tablets and finally convincing the recruit to show up at a prearranged place for initiation.

Initiation

The purpose of initiation is threefold:

First, the initiate must prove himself to the secret society by committing some deed that shows his loyalty, commitment and willingness to betray The Computer and Alpha Complex to further the society's goals.

Second, the initiation rite wins the new recruit's loyalty by further reinforcing the idea he is different and special, an individual who has risen above the common herd. Once awakened, the desire for identity is a powerful motivator—most citizens of Alpha Complex are so dulled by conformity that the idea one could be an individual in and of oneself is quite unthinkable.

Third, and most important, the initiation rite forces the recruit to perform a treasonous act the society can use to threaten or blackmail him if he tries to betray them. Though this is not a sure protection against official IntSec spies (who, after all, can just claim they betrayed The Computer in order to gain access to the society, gambling that The Computer is in Vaguely Lucid Mode), it does safeguard against casual betrayal. Of course, higher-ranking members watch a new recruit closely for months before trusting him even slightly.

Initiation rites vary from society to society, but generally involve treason, high explosive, laser fire, harsh language, adult situations and partial nudity.

Message drops and communication

Different societies communicate differently. Leaving aside bizarre mutant freak societies full of bizarre mutant freaks like Psion, societies favor three major media.

Message drops: Secret societies used these long before Alpha Complex and the advent of Rampant Capitalization. In a message drop, one society member drops a message into a prearranged place, and another member retrieves it at a later date. The two members do not know each other and never have any direct contact—the first one is just told where to drop messages, and the other knows where to pick them up. A conspirator has at least two message drops. At one, he receives orders; he uses the other to send back reports or requests for aid.

Variations on the message drop system:

Random message drop location (Table 1)

Roll	Location
1	In the waste recycling bin in corridor
2	Above a loose ceiling tile in bedroom
3	Behind the water tank in the communal bathroom cubicles
4	Flushed down the communal toilet
5	Slipped into the change slot on the third food dispensing machine in the commissary
6	Dropped down a hole in the floor
7	Pushed into a crack in a cubicle wall
8	Placed inside a broken pipe in the heating system
9	Stuck to the underside of the cleaning booth with a scratched symbol on its chassis
10	Dropped down an alarmingly open reactor vent
11	Placed in the 'out' tray of the sector Lightbulb Replacement Team Backup Rota Junior Planner
12	Taped to the back of the 16:23 transtube to UTF Sector
13	Slipped down the back of the couch in the Garry-G Memorial Vidshow Room
14	Tucked in behind the rather hot MegaBriteLite that illuminates the sector FunBall pitch
15	Taped to the FunBall
16	Taped to the back of the reflec armor worn by the third Troubleshooter to enter the briefing room
17	Placed on top of the highest and most precarious cabinet in an office
18	Pushed into a crack in the glass that says 'break glass to activate fire alarm and toxic fire suppression foam delivery system'
19	Hidden inside the ninth foam cup from the bottom inside a particular hot drink dispenser
20	Taped atop the security camera in Corridor #53

◉ One-shot drops that are never used again

◉ Having lots of members using the same message drop; the cell head can then collect all the messages at a single place

◉ Two-way drops, where a citizen receives replies in the same place he leaves his messages

Members change drop locations regularly to avoid detection. Normally, messages are written on scraps of paper (usually in code or cipher), but some unusual drops require the message to be put inside a protective casing such as a Reusable Toilet Cleanser shell or TopWare box.

Roll on either of the 'Random message drop location' tables, and remember that a society member can be using a given message drop for delivery or pickup.

Random message drop location (Table 2)

Roll	Location
1	Filed under 'Sector Waste Flow Projections and Samples' in the HPD&MC office
2	Buried under spare pens in an office's stationery cupboard
3	Sent using internal mail as 'Attention: Infectious Disease Storage'
4	Tucked inside a Synthetic Replacement FoamBone femur that's earmarked for implantation inside an injured Troubleshooter
5	Folded up inside a transtube timetable and left at the station
6	Sent into a CPU Sector office and marked for 'Translation Department'
7	Taped inside a confession booth
8	Taped inside a termination booth
9	Taped inside an electricity supply substation (please use nonconductive tape)
10	Tucked inside the air hose inside a RED Radiation Protection and Improved Fashion suit
11	Slipped into the shirt pocket of the citizen standing under the 'in the event of an emergency, please exit the transtube in order of security clearance' sign
12	Taped to the back of a target on the local R&D test firing range
13	Dropped into the path of a waste paper collecting scrubot
14	Written on the chalkboard in room #101 of the local Activity Center
15	Thrown into the updraft from a reactor heat exhaust vent
16	Inserted into the gaps between segments on a conveyor belt heading off into an unknown part of the factory
17	Kept in your left jumpsuit pocket. Wear a Teela-O Fan Badge upside-down on your right lapel.
18	Inserted into the battery compartment of a PDC that you will find recharging in the briefing room (note that tampering with a PDC is an offense)
19	Handed to your briefing officer with a big smile
20	Placed under your pillow at night

Replacement codes

Roll	Verbs	Adjectives.	Noun1	Noun2
1	Dance	Purple	Box	Corridor
2	Eat	Furry	Toothpaste	Monument
3	Collect	Delicious	Dinner plate	Cafeteria
4	Tickle	Happy	Reactor sealant	Sewer
5	Tantalize	Color-coordinated	Camera	Briefing room
6	Confuse	Calibrated	HotFun	Bathroom
7	Gyrate	Fumigated	Clone	Food vat
8	Eclipse	Entertaining	Gadget	Cloning tank
9	Explain	Gelatinous	Vidshow	Water tank
10	Report	Wrapped for Freshness	Scrubot	Waste recycler
11	Categorize	Trained	Boot	Hydroponics
12	Refuel	Flavored	Belt	Electrodes
13	Launch	Shielded	Glue	Booth
14	Inflate	Genocidal	Bouncy Bubble Beverage	Doorway
15	Gargle	Explosive	Bottlecap	Hotel
16	Rub	Radioactive	FunBall	Toilet Permit
17	Implicate	Approved	Medication	Transtube
18	Abuse	Jumbo-sized	Circuit	Gymnasium
19	Elope	Protruding	Pipeline	Nunnery
20	Knit	Smelly	Remote control	Rotunda

As described earlier, IntSec and The Computer regularly sweep personal e-mails for suspicious and treasonous terms and phrases. To stay one step ahead of the electronic hunters, secret societies use codes and ciphers. The ciphers are based on mathematical formulae generated by computer programs. Because cracking these ciphers is improbable (the capacity of The Computer is absurdly huge, especially when experimental FTL CompNodes are taken into consideration, but it can apply only the tiniest fraction of that vast intelligence to a problem), Tech Services and IntSec send out hunter programs to locate and subvert cipher-generating programs. There is a constant IR Market demand for new and better encryption programs.

Codes are more common, as an individual can implement them as long as he has the code memorized or has a codebook on hand. The codes change on a regular basis—for each important word in a message, roll on the 'Replacement codes' table above for the current code (reroll for duplicates).

The following terms are always encoded. Other words may or may not be replaced by code words, depending on the current code in use.

INFRARED	GREEN	ULTRAVIOLET	INTSEC
RED	BLUE	CLEARANCE	BOMB
ORANGE	INDIGO	SECRET	MEETING
YELLOW	VIOLET	SOCIETY	MISSION
SECURITY	ALPHA	COMPLEX	THE
COMPUTER	TRAITOR	TERMINATION	CODE
	TROUBLESHOOTER		

For example, the message 'Put the stolen document in the message drop' might be encoded as 'Confuse shielded happy vidshow in monument camera electrodes,' a sentence that makes no sense whatever. (Any similarity to official briefings is purely coincidental.)

Note that this code system has no rules for decoding a message. A generous and fair Gamemaster simply provides the correctly decoded message if the characters have access to the current codebook.

There are many semilegal chat programs, instant messaging and discussion groups online in Alpha Complex, most run by Pro Tech or Computer Phreak agents. Every society has at least some electronic presence, though, ranging from the Phreaks' vast Gray Subnets to a unreliable, outdated website presenting a veritable armada of animated pictures around the text 'WELCOME TO THE MYSTIC OH MAN AM I HUNGRY.'

E-mail and computer messaging: Though The Computer is an omnipresent figure of fear for secret society members, its compromised Gray Subnets and communications systems are also an efficient messaging methoc. All the technophile groups like Pro Tech, Computer Phreaks and Corpore Metal make heavy use of Gray Subnet e-mail.

A lower-tech version of this method is just painting codes onto the corridor walls as graffiti, or writing personal messages on subsector community whiteboards.

Personal messengers: The smallest and most paranoid societies use personal messaging—one conspirator tracks down another and whispers the message in his ear. Though this does avoid the vast majority of surveillance techniques, it does mean that the messenger must know his target. This breaks the cardinal rule of secret societies: Cells must be kept separate. To preserve secrecy, messengers have as little contact as possible with their targets; only the most trustworthy messengers are used; and the society operates on a sort of meta-cell structure, with a given messenger only contacting cell members within a specific group of cells.

The upshot of all this is a lot of very shifty-looking people wandering around the alleyways and dark corners of Alpha Complex asking one another 'Are you Alan-R-WIG?' or 'Is your name Francie-O-THR? If so, heed my words!'

Personal messaging would likely have died an unmourned and laser-filled death if it were not for The Computer's ill-conceived Musical Mission-O-Grams, where Troubleshooters were recruited by singing briefing officers instead of by PDC alerts or announcements. For a while, irritated briefing officers thronged the halls of Alpha Complex, forced to swap comfy and intimidating briefing rooms for sheet music and songs like 'Oh, there's a Commie cell in RUS Sector and you must shoot them?' or 'The Warbot Must Be Tested.' Personal messengers can usually avoid detection by pretending to be singing briefing officers.

Ranks

Even the more chaotic (Death Leopard) societies have a hierarchical rank structure. Any other arrangement is difficult for most citizens due to their upbringing. ('Fellows! We stand in complete opposition to the hated Computer and all its ways! Let none of the foul customs or false beliefs of Alpha Complex taint our meetings! Now, how shall we organize ourselves?' 'Er…how about we all have colored security clearances?')

Society ranks generally go from 1 (new recruits) to 21 (leaders); smaller societies obviously have fewer tiers, while the larger societies are rumored to have up to 36 levels. The average member can expect to rise to rank four or five after a few years with the society, but getting any higher than that requires special effort.

While responsibilities and ranks vary, the average arrangement is something like that in the 'Typical ranks' table on the next page.

A member's rank (or degree) determines how much influence he has in the society and how much help he can obtain from them. Up until around degree 10, it also determines how much time the society demands of him. Rank 10 citizens often find their every waking minute dominated by

Typical ranks

Rank	Status	Rank	Status
1	Untrusted new recruit	11	Still a sector leader
2	Still an untrusted new recruit	12	What, you're still alive?
3	Probably not an IntSec plant	13	Jockeying for promotion
4	One of us! One of us! Gabba gabba hey!	14	Multiple sector leader
5	Potential cell leader	15	Senior multiple sector leader
6	Probably a cell leader	16	Potential scapegoat for all society activity/stand-in for leadership when IntSec comes calling
7	Senior member	17	Person who selects potential senior scapegoats
8	Influential on a sector-wide level	18	Potential society official (treasurer, secretary, head of secret police, etc.)
9	Senior official	19	Society official
10	Sector leader	20	Senior society official

If, as is theorized, societies have ranks extending beyond the 20th degree, they would presumably be ordered something like:

Rank	Status	Rank	Status
21	Still a senior society official, but more senior than a player character is going to get	29	Clone brother of mysterious figure
22	Public head of secret society, if such a thing is possible	30	The mysterious figure reborn!
23	Senior public head	31	The mysterious figure rides again!
24	Member of shadowy council of elders who run things behind the scenes	32	Really, truly, not joking this time, super-senior official who's in charge of everything
25	Senior member of shadowy council of elders	33	Member of ruling council
26	Leader of shadowy council of elders	34	Head of ruling council
27	Confidant of mysterious figure who founded and guided shadowy council of elders in days of yore	35	Real head of ruling council. Probably has own mysterious island or something. And real pet cat.
28	Chosen heir of mysterious figure, prophesied to draw the laser pistol from the stone holster	36	UNAVAILABLE AT YOUR SECURITY CLEARANCE

secret society business. After that, the workload does not so much diminish as get delegated.

Information control and disinformation

Even after a new recruit has proved himself by passing through initiation, his society superiors still watch him. IntSec plants and spies from other societies must be identified so they can be contained. The response to spies varies from society to society. Some engage in elaborate disinformation matrices, where a whole false cell or cells is constructed around the spies so they can be fed convincing lies about society activities. Others engage in elaborate beatings with iron bars, where a whole cell or cells stand around the spies and beat them so they can be fed their own internal organs as part of a society activity.

The best disinformation, of course, mixes truth and lies. The societies do their best to infiltrate each other so they can pass information about other societies' plans to their own internal IntSec spies. An agent pretending to be a PURGEr might be fed tips about upcoming illegal FCCC-P rallies.

As a society member rises in degree, he spends more and more time screwing over other societies and conspiring against lower-degree infiltrators than he does performing missions on behalf of his own society.

This combination of a mass of semi-trusted new recruits, a middle group of relatively loyal and trustworthy (but ambitious and backstabbing) proven agents, a handful of known spies wrapped in disinformation matrices, a vastly greater number of suspected spies and a few increasingly harried and paranoid high-degree members trying to keep all the above separate and under control means that most secret societies are filled with bitter infighting and cliques. The society may take endless and complex precautions to ensure that a secret message gets through safely, only for the message to be ignored by its recipient because he's not talking to the cell leader who sent it (because he suspects him of being a spy, believing in a variant doctrine, snubbing him at a rally and so on). Eventually, the pressure becomes too great, and a section of the society cleaves off from the rest, purifying itself of suspect elements and beginning again with a hard core

of trustworthy believers, dedicating themselves to the *pure and original* purpose of the society and putting all the politicking and power games behind them.

Nothing unites a secret society like having a bunch of splinters to hate.

▌ Splinter groups

Every society generates at least half-a-dozen splinter groups a year. Some are just cells that have lost contact with their superiors and are forced to act independently, but most have cut themselves off from the rest of the society over petty personal grudges or reinterpretations of the society's mission or core doctrines. (Usually, these reinterpretations of core doctrine are fueled by petty personal grudges anyway…)

The enmity between splinter groups and their parent society, not to mention the hated *other* splinter groups is far greater than that between societies and IntSec or The Computer. Splinter groups are competing for the same resources and the same recruits. Furthermore, when the glorious day arrives and The Computer is Overthrown/We Return to The Outdoors/Everyone Gets Turned On/The Evil Bots Are Destroyed/Enlightenment Through Science Is Achieved/The Mutie Freaks Are Wiped Out/International Communism Rules The World/delete as appropriate, the thought that *those* splitters over in the Eco-Preservation branch of the Sierra Club might claim the credit is intolerable*.

The only solution is to wipe the bastards out first.

** **PARANOIA** is above parroting jokes from other sources, especially hackneyed and tired Monty Python references that only mouth-breathing overweight gamers in black T-shirts still quote out loud. Still, this is the Peoples' Front of Judea, not the Judean Peoples' Front.*

Secret society descriptions

As described in the **PARANOIA** core rulebook, secret societies are divided into three classes: 'A,' 'B' and 'C.'

Class A societies: The Class As are the largest and most common societies, and are largely tolerated by the authorities. They serve as mostly harmless vents for the common citizen's antisocial or conspiratorial urges (some High Programmers have suggested that all that hormone suppression might be causing more trouble than it solves). IntSec has thoroughly infiltrated the Class As, which pose little danger to the safe functioning of Alpha Complex.

Class B societies: The Class B societies were once semi-tolerated Class As, but have left the sphere of influence of the ULTRAVIOLET caste and are now essentially on their own. The activities of the Class Bs are not so damaging to the smooth operation of Alpha Complex that

they need to be hunted down and vaporized immediately, but neither are they approved of in the slightest.

Class C societies: Death to the Class Cs! These are the hated enemies of Alpha Complex and The Computer. Every last one of them is a Commie, a mutant and a traitor and they must be terminated on sight! Beep! Class C societies are as close as the Complex has to a functioning opposition or resistance to The Computer's rule.

Each society is described as follows:

Name: In a shocking display of originality, this is the name of the society. Bet you weren't expecting that.

Class: A classification The Computer and IntSec created to designate the depths of traitorous activity in which a society engages.

Class A societies are the least traitorous, Class Cs the most.

Beliefs: The philosophy and goals of the society, usually as expressed by themselves.

Recruitment: The society's standard recruitment protocol.

Initiation: Common ways for new members to prove themselves to the society.

Code names: If the society uses code names to keep the identity of members secret, some sample names are given here.

Societies also produce **propaganda**: What the society tells or shows new members, in the form of lectures, vidtapes, pamphlets, haranguing on the transtube, Viral Thought Patterns or whatever. Propaganda is in boxed text throughout the society descriptions. All propaganda is in boxed text, but not all boxed text is propaganda. Good luck figuring it out!

History: The origin of the society, as told to members.

Structure: How the society is organized, or lack thereof.

Attitudes: Common society opinions on a variety of subjects.

Subfactions: Splitters!

Advancement: How members in the society advance in degree.

Duties: What is expected of members at various degrees.

Benefits: What members can expect at various degrees. A character may be required to make a degree check (roll 1d20 and get under his society degree) to get a particular benefit.

Missions: Amusing things to make and do.

Anti-Mutant

Slogan: *Kill the Monsters.*
Treason class: *B*

Vincent-B-WWJ-5: Are you ready to strike a blow against the enemy, Laura-R?

Laura-R-HBA-3: Oh, yes. I want to **hurt** those **filthy mutants**.

Vincent-B: Good, good. Here. Take this device to the **confession booth** next to the dented IntelliFluid vendabot three transbot stops down. You know the one?

Laura-R: Yes!

Vincent-B Turn the device on, and leave it somewhere in the booth. It will emit **psionic emanations**—

Laura-R:: Emit *what*, sir?

Vincent-B [*sighs*]: It will make a noise that only **mutants** can hear. They will come to find out what it is. Meanwhile, one of our agents will arrange to reset the confessional to 'ultra-high alert' mode.

Laura-R: Oooh, very nice. **Blammo**!

Vincent-B: Blammo, indeed. Here. Now go—you have four minutes before the confessional is reset. You wouldn't want to be late.

Beliefs

The general perception of the Anti-Mutant society is that they're a load of slavering lunatics who run around murdering registered mutants, unregistered mutants, suspected mutants, left-handed clones, green-eyed citizens and anyone who looks at them funny. This is largely true. Any deviation from the norm is a clear indication of *mutation* and must be stamped out, and extreme violence, bloodshed, jackboots and energetic stamping motions are the most effective method of stamping anything out.

However, Anti-Mutants are not just a gang of bloodlust-crazed, perfectly normal lunatics. Everyone, even The Computer, agrees that mutants are a huge threat to society. Mutant powers cause chaos and destruction across Alpha Complex—for every mutant with a harmless ability who just eats flies or glows in the dark, there are *hundreds* with diabolic powers of mind control or Machine Empathy that plan to turn normal humans into *slaves* in their **inhuman and terrible MUTANT EMPIRE!!! KILL THEM ALL FIRST!!!**

The low-ranking Anti-Mutants are…fervent in their beliefs. The senior members are either cynical rabble-rousers who rely on rabid hate to keep their privileged position and wealth within the society, or else committed demagogues who are obsessed with cleansing the mutant taint from Alpha Complex.

Recruitment

The society keeps an eye on news reports. Alpha Complex news includes human interest stories, where citizens who suffered due to the mutant abilities of others get to air their grievances. Classic episodes include 'Corrosive Skin Burns Ruined My Chance at Stardom,' 'He Walked Through the Wall and into My Heart,' 'My Clone Brother Was Mind-Controlled into Communism,' 'An Explosive Mutant Blew Up My Termination Booth,' 'I Got Fired from the Armed Forces Because My Boss Ate My Tank' and the every-popular 'One of These Citizens Is a Mutant—Guess Who!' The victims of these mutant incidents are invariably bitter and furious with the injustice of the genetic lottery and so are easily recruited into Anti-Mutant when the offer is made.

Any of the Organized Hate clubs that hold rallies and demonstrations against the Enemy-of-the-Week can be fertile recruiting grounds every fifth week, when 'mutant hate' comes up on the roster. (The other enemies of the week are 'Communists, Traitors, Terrorists and Special Bonus Enemy which changes every hour to whatever The Computer is currently worried about. Previous Special Bonus Enemies have included filesharers, machine empaths, zombies and citizens who fail to fill in form CPU/553/23/A-1, 'Registration of Intent to Jog & Liability Waiver in the Event of Accident Resulting from Moving in Excess of Recommended Corridor Velocities.'*)

The Anti-Mutant society also regularly infiltrates Death Leopard cells, as it is relatively easy

to switch the thugs from generic mayhem to targeted mutant-bashing mayhem.

Initiation

Every Anti-Mutant cell uses the same initiation ceremony.

Step 1: Consult the Mutant Registration Index for this sector, available in any CPU office or online at http://cpu.services.infrared/termination-list/mutants/registration/list. Select a local registered mutant and find out his name and address.

Step 2: Issue the new recruit the following items: 1) a piece of paper bearing this name and address; 2) a heavy metal bat, laser pistol, cone rifle or other suitable tool of righteous purification;

* Corridor speed limits are clearly posted in all heavily trafficked corridors. Petty jackobots patrol the corridors, handing speeding tickets to any citizen who moves faster than a slight trot. Troubleshooters may be able to argue that they have to run down the corridor to catch fleeing Commie mutant traitors, but they really should wear flashing lights on their helmets and make siren noises to let citizens and bots know they are coming. A little consideration is not too much to ask.

3) a stirring speech to induce righteous fury; 4) one dose of Thymoglandin (see *PARANOIA* rulebook) for those who need a bit more righteous fury; 5) an alibi for the time he spends going to 1 and applying 2 while under the influence of 3 and 4.

Step 3: Follow the new recruit to ensure he correctly uses the above items to Anti the Mutant.

Some cells secretly videotape their new recruit's attack on the mutant, to use as blackmail material/training videos/so they can comment on his technique and style/home entertainment. In cases where there are lots of recruits and few registered mutants, the recruits are organized into large gangs. To ensure that everyone participates fully and therefore shares in the crime, everyone in the gang must take at least one whack with the bat. (In sectors where the society is especially popular and successful, mutant registration drops off to nearly zero. The Anti-Mutant society must therefore take special care with its initiation ceremonies. This often involves having medical support on-hand and making all the new recruits form an orderly queue.)

Code names

To preserve secrecy, Anti-Mutant members often wear masks or other disguises when on missions. They select their code names from the Mutant Registration Index, implicating registered mutants in their crimes.

> **Computer:** Attention, Registered Mutant Citizen Silas-R-GLK. You are accused of membership in a treasonous secret society. Our loyal IntSec Surveillance Operators overheard you plotting to murder Registered Mutant Citizen Silas-R-GLK. Do you plead guilty Y/N?

> **Silas-R:** Friend Computer, the N key on this terminal seems to be broken.

> **Computer:** Your point, citizen?

History

The Anti-Mutant society actually predates the cloning process, and is one of the oldest societies in Alpha Complex. The development of cloning caused a huge drop in the number of mutants, as the original clone donors were specifically taken from 'pure' stocks. However, inbreeding and the toxic soup that is the Alpha Complex environment resulted in mutations recurring in the gene pool, and cloning just made the problem balloon. There are now far more cloned mutants than there ever were natural-born ones. The society has reformed to deal with this new mutant menace.

The original Anti-Mutant society was a semi-approved Class A, secretly funded and supported by official policy. The current society is an illegal Class B, despite The Computer's fear of mutants. The cloning process is of course perfect and fool-proof, so it cannot be the source of these mutants. Therefore, any mutants in Alpha Complex must be the result of either spontaneous treasonous cellular mutation or terrorism; therefore, they are IntSec's problem.

Unlike most secret societies, the Anti-Mutants do not actively seek power. Should the mutant threat be destroyed, the society will most likely just melt back into obscurity. Those in power would never invent a spurious threat to maintain their positions. Such a thing is unthinkable—except by a **MUTANT**!

Structure

Individual Anti-Mutant cells usually consist of about two dozen members, but some cells are much, much bigger. There is no real official structure above that of the individual cell, mainly

because each cell is paranoid about others harboring mutant traitors. Communications between cells are always prefaced by extensive tests and scans to ensure that the other Anti-Mutant members are free of genetic impurities. The society makes extensive use of electronic communications and the gray networks to coordinate inter-cell activities.

The larger cells are essentially little societies in themselves. These massive cells are rife with IntSec infiltration and lack the most basic security precautions, but many IntSec agents are relatively sympathetic to the Anti-Mutant cause as long as they clean up after themselves.

Attitudes

The Computer: 'The mutant threat is bigger than The Computer sees. The muties got to it too!'

Humanists: 'Alpha Complex could be a paradise, yes. We just need to kill all mutants.'

Psion: 'Look! A monolithic conspiracy of mutants dedicated to taking over Alpha Complex! Aaaagh! We were right! We were right! Aaaaagh!'

Subfactions

The **Knights of Genetic Purity** is one of the largest Anti-Mutant sects. They have a slightly religious attitude to the whole burning and purifying bit, conflating Romantic stories about crusades and holy wars with FCCC-P beliefs. Mutants are the creation of the Anti-Computer and are demonically tainted.

Citizens for a Mutant-Free Tomorrow is a more moderate wing of the sect; they believe that mutants are responsible for all their problems and woes. The mutants must be made to pay for their genetic crimes, and recompense those they have wronged. Some CFAMFT members steal the personal possessions of mutants they destroy as partial compensation for their wrongs.

The **Anti-Mutant Advisory Project** also presents a reasonable face, pressuring various community groups and authorities to take more action against mutants. This faction maintains a database of mutant powers, which they secretly make available both to other Anti-Mutant factions and to IntSec/Troubleshooter sympathizers. The database was seeded with a combination of old CPU analysis documents, eyewitness reports, wild speculation and Old Reckoning data, and is updated by the tireless efforts of the junior branch of Anti-Mutant, the **Mutie Spotters**.

A Pro Tech-influenced subgroup called **Project Pyroxidine** is dedicated to constructing special bots that are immune to Machine Empathy, which can then be used to hunt down and destroy mutants. So far, the construction of these sentinelbots has been beset by problems—inserting the Random Murder Death Kill Protocol v2.4 into the bots' asimov circuits does override all but the strongest Machine Empathy (whenever the mutant gains control of the bot, the protocol fires and fills the bot with murderous rage), but also results in, well, murderous rages when the bot is switched on.

Advancement

The only way to advance in the Anti-Mutant society is to wipe the mutant scum from the face of Alpha Complex. Registered mutants are the easy targets—they've already got one foot in the termination booth. It's the unregistered ones that are tricky. Society members are constantly on

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Beware the danger of…
MUTANTS!!!

Friend Citizen! Are you aware of the danger of *MUTANTS*? More pernicious than Communists or Terrorists, **MUTANTS** are everywhere. They need no weapons to cause Mass Destruction! They need no meetings to plan their Acts of Terror! The only way to stop them is for us Pure Humans to join together and put an end to the **MUTANT** menace—**TODAY**!

◉

What can mutants do? Terrible things! A **MUTANT** can control your mind or blast you with his powers or do all sorts of *strange, disgusting* and *perverted acts!!!*

◉

What about registered mutants? Some **MUTANTS** can control machines with their powers! Obviously, they have forced the authorities to put this legal fiction in place to protect the **MUTANT FIFTH COLUMN** that is trying to bring Alpha Complex down from the inside! The only **MUTANT** registration that works is the **REGISTRATION OF TERMINATION!!!**

◉

Where do mutants come from? Don't listen when people claim it's due to radiation or genetic experiments or cloning errors! **MUTANTS** come from **OTHER MUTANTS**! Yes, they're trying to clone more of their horrible kind! The only way to put an end to the **MUTANT THREAT** is to **KILL THEM ALL!!!**

◉

How do I spot a mutant? MUTANTS can be anyone, so trust no one!!! Look for signs of strange, secretive, **MUTANT** behavior, such as:

◉ Unusual secrecy and paranoia
◉ Irritability or mood swings
◉ Nausea or headaches
◉ Increase or loss of appetite
◉ Depression or lack of happiness
◉ Too much happiness
◉ Immunity to drugs, lasers, radiation, explosion! If they don't die, they're surely **MUTANTS**!
◉ Other signs!

THE LINE AGAINST THE MUTANT CONSPIRACY MUST BE DRAWN *HERE*! JOIN ANTI-MUTANTS TODAY!

the lookout for signs of mutant activity, or even the slightest suspicion of it. ('A fire? Pyrokinesis!' 'Missing equipment? Matter eater!')

Most branches of the society use a point system to keep track of who's taken down the most mutants. The higher the mutant's clearance, the better (INFRARED=0, RED=1, YELLOW=2 and so on), and the more powerful the power, the better. Most powers are worth +1, extremely weird or disturbing powers are worth +2, dangerous combat powers are worth +3 and mind control powers are worth +4. Being a Psion member adds +3 to the total; unregistered mutants are worth three less, to a minimum of one.

Finding out that someone is a mutant is worth half as many points as actually terminating that mutant. Erroneously accusing a 'pure' clone loses twice as many points (but hardly ever happens).

In most branches of the society, a member needs to accumulate points equal to his current degree to advance to the next one. This varies wildly depending on the current frequency of mutations, personality clashes, petty politics and so on. A member's true standing in the society, though, is built on points and by boasting about how many muties they bashed this week.

Duties

Find mutants, kill mutants, save humanity from mutants. The further a member goes in the society, the greater his field of responsibility. The character must also watch other society members for signs of mutation.

Rank 1-5: Low-ranking members are basically roving gangs of mutant-bashers and mutant-hunters in their own sector. Stopping the mutant menace begins at home!

Rank 6-10: At this rank, members must continue to guard their home sectors, but are also called upon by more senior members to complete specific missions (e.g., spying on suspected mutants or assassinating known ones).

Rank 11-15: At this level of the society, the main focus is on countering the efforts of the evil mutant conspiracy. Psion must be stopped!

Rank 16-20: There are few Anti-Mutants at this level; they are either leaders of subfactions or legendary mutant hunters.

Rank 21+: The Grand Master of the Anti-Mutants is largely a ceremonial role, responsible for taking a slew of different groups and uniting them in their hatred of others.

Benefits

Guns, guns and more guns; the Anti-Mutants have a large number of members from the Armed Forces who have borrowed an arsenal of cone rifles and nuclear grenades. They store most of these in hidden bunkers, waiting for the inevitable mutant takeover when the true sons of Alpha Complex must rise up and use their constitutionally protected right to keep and bear lasers to destroy the mutant-controlled government of evil! However, a character can be issued one of these weapons to deal with a particularly troublesome mutant. For example, a character hunting a mutant with Pyrokinesis might be issued an ice gun.

The only major benefit of membership is that the character is positively bombarded with rumors about who's a mutant. Members watch and comment on every TV program obsessively ('There's no way he could have answered that quiz question without MUTANT POWERS!') while monitoring friends and neighbors for signs of genetic drift. Some of these rumors might prove true. Others might be the product of deranged paranoia. You pays your membership dues and you takes your chances.

Rank 1-5: The member is issued with a good, honest, unmutated iron bar or FunBall bat to bash those mutants. He is also shown how to access the Mutant Registration Index, and has access to the Mutant Database maintained by the society.

Rank 6-10: At this rank, the character is in charge of an Anti-Mutant cell. Should he need the services of a gang of xenophobic paranoid violent thugs (and who doesn't?), he can assemble a force in a few hours.

Rank 11-15: Anti-Mutants at this degree have such access to information about mutants that they can quickly assemble material to frame another person for mutation. He could, for example, leave samples of corrosive sweat around another citizen's bedroom.

Rank 16-20: The character can just raise the suggestion that another citizen might be a mutant, and that citizen will be swamped by eager Anti-Mutants spying on him and looking for any signs of mutation.

Rank 21+: The usual benefits of being head of a secret society—power, influence, vast bribes and so on. Some paranoid Anti-Mutants have suggested that if there were a mind-controlling mutant conspiracy to take over Alpha Complex, then the logical thing to do would be for them to telepathically control the head of the Anti-Mutant society…

Missions

Find mutant, kill mutant. Got the idea yet?

Rank 1-5:

◉ We suspect <insert name of citizen here> is a mutant. Find evidence proving this.

◉ Citizen <insert name of citizen here> is a mutant. Get him!

◉ We're going to get a damned mutant at 15:32 hours today—we need you to provide a distraction beforehand, and to destroy the evidence afterwards.

Rank 6-10:

◉ One of our members might be a mutant! We need you to draw him out by putting him into a situation where he'd have to use his power. We're just not sure what power he has…

◉ Due to a stripe shortage, PLC has stopped putting the registered mutant stripes on the uniforms of registered mutants in UNK Sector. Without stripes, how will our younger members know who to hate? Here's a copy of the most current Mutant Registration Index; if you see any of these mutants, draw stripes on their uniforms. Here's an indelible marker.

◉ Word to the wise—there's a rumor going around that you're a mutant. Probably best if you prove you're not a damned dirty mutant as soon as you can.

Rank 11-15:

◉ Telepathic mutants are controlling the minds of IntSec officers in TGH Sector! The only thing to do is to shake up their minds. Drop this hallucinogenic drug into the CoffeeLike dispenser!

◉ We're going to deal with the mutant problem more directly. Go plant a bomb at the mutant registration center.

◉ We need to whip up some more anti-mutant hysteria. Find a way to prove mutants caused the next disaster you encounter!

Rank 16-20:

◉ According to rumors, R&D has discovered a genetic test for mutation. The Anti-Mutants must have this technology! Get it by any means possible.

◉ An experimental sentinel bot has escaped. It's programmed to hunt down and destroy mutants, but we need to get it back to install a few other options, like an off switch. Find a mutant and use him as bait to get the bot back to the lab.

Communists

Janosh-B-HJS-2: It is good to see you again, Comrade. Take this envelope, a list of every member in this sector. Go to the **confession booth** on the third level and **say their names backwards**, thereby expunging them of any possible guilt and allowing them free rein to commit acts of sabotage. **Mwahahaha**!

Petrof-R-IWQ-3: Uh, I don't think that'll work. It's a silly plan.

Janosh-B [*sigh*]: Comrade, comrade…You are new to our cause. But trust me—the key to infiltrating The Computer is to *think* like The Computer. After you are done, be sure to **leave the list in plain sight** so people may find it. They will assume it is a fake, and then blame each other for faking it. **Cunning tricks like these** make us the most feared and ruthless secret society in Alpha Complex!

Petrof-R: Um…Comrade? **MY name's** on this list…but **yours** isn't.

Janosh-B: Indeed—you're one of our best operatives! Me, I am willing to put myself in harm's way—but we cannot afford to lose such a champion of the Communist cause as yourself. Now go! For the **Clone Paradise** that is to come!

Beliefs

Confused and fragmentary. Communism is based on:

1. Old Reckoning records, primarily news programs and Bond movies.

2. Computer propaganda about the evils of Communism, based on Red Scare material dating from the 1950s.

3. A general opposition to The Computer, Alpha Complex and society.

4. The few fragmentary bits of genuine Communist literature that could be recovered from suppressed archives.

5. Whatever disinformation was spread to Communist cells by manipulative High Programmers, intent on using The Computer's own paranoia about external foes and internal treason for their own ends.

6. Whatever a cell leader came up with to fill the blanks left by 1,2,3,4 and 5.

The irony is that Alpha Complex is already rather close to being a Communist state in many ways, which really confuses the few Commies who get hold of genuine old-school Communist literature and try to apply it to Alpha Complex. The big difference, of course, is that instead of the proletariat owning everything, they own nothing. This means that the basic Commie beliefs are 'the same, but different.'

The Communists want:

1. Abolition of property and application of all rents of land to public purposes. The people will own Alpha Complex instead of The Computer! The people will hold all corridors in common and will dissolve the old barriers of security clearance.

2. A heavily progressive or graduated income tax, replacing the wasteful systems of fines and temporary price shifts that The Computer uses to rob citizens of their hard-earned money.

3. Abolition of all right of inheritance. All clones are decanted equal, so everyone restarts when they die!

4. Confiscation of all property of traitors and rebels! This includes those who willfully and wrongly uphold the corrupt Computer and its tyranny. Kill the High Programmers and take their stuff!

5. Centralization of credit in the hands of the State, by means of a national bank with State capital and an exclusive monopoly. Like we have now, but not run by The Computer. The Computer is bad. Communism is good.

6. Centralization of the means of communication and transport in the hands of the State. Again, like we have now. But better! And more fresh-smelling!

7. Extension of factories and instruments of production owned by the State. No more wasteful competition between service firms!

8. Equal liability of all to labor! Establishment of industrial armies! Instead of being cruelly assigned to a hateful capitalist service firm, you will joyously join with your comrades in an efficient Communist industrial army! No more corporate loyalty songs—sing the anthem of the people, comrades!

9. Combination of agriculture with manufacturing industries; gradual abolition of the distinction between town and country. We

don't quite understand this distinction, but we call for its abolition with every sinew and cell of our being!

10. Free education for all Junior Citizens. Again, like we have now. Er. Obviously, the hateful Computer has stolen all the best ideas and beliefs of Communism to uphold its tottering regime!

Propaganda

Communists everywhere support every revolutionary movement against the existing social and political order of things.

In all these movements, they bring to the forefront, as the leading question in each, the overthrow of the capitalist Computer.

Finally, they labor everywhere for the union and agreement of the democratic parties of all sectors.

The Communists disdain to conceal their views and aims. They openly declare that their ends can be attained only by the forcible overthrow of all existing social conditions. Let the ruling classes tremble at a Communist revolution. The proletariat have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win.

(Remember, as described in Chapter 37 of the **PARANOIA** rulebook, all Propaganda skills are contagious. If a Commie successfully preaches Communist Propaganda to you, you learn it whether you want to or not. And just knowing Communist Propaganda, whether you want to or not, is treason. The best defense is to stick your fingers in your ears and sing loudly.)

Recruitment

Of all the Class C societies, the Communists are by far the most enthusiastic about recruitment. Every member is expected to learn as much party propaganda as possible, and to pass it on wherever possible. The Commies print* millions of pamphlets, posters and flyers using both secret presses and computer viruses that override normal print commands and replace the usual print job with a Communist text. A citizen printing out 200 hundred copies of *User's Guide to PDC Maintenance—Revised to Include Not Washing Your PDC in Vatslime, Not Using Your PDC to Block Laser Fire and Not Installing Communist Print Override Malware* might actually print out 200 hundred copies of Marx's *Das Kapital*, leading to a friendly and informative chat with IntSec.

Communist recruiters show up at almost every public event in Alpha Complex, surreptitiously passing out propaganda and cornering citizens at FunBall matches to harangue them about the evils of capitalism. The sheer enthusiasm of the Communist recruiters is alarming; while most secret society recruiters are nervous and hesitant, the Commies are charged with the fiery rhetoric of their cause to an almost suicidal degree.

Initiation

Joining the Commies is easy. The society simply asks for an oath of loyalty and gives lectures on Communist philosophy and history to its new recruits before bringing them into a cell. While this leaves the Commies wide open to IntSec infiltration, The Computer's own paranoia works against it. Any IntSec agents who infiltrate Communist cells are automatically assumed to have been compromised by Commie propaganda and must therefore be terminated. This policy is widely known throughout IntSec, so agents deliberately try to avoid infiltrating the Commies while still investigating their activities.

Code names

When code names are required, the society uses the name of famous Commies past, like Marx, Lenin, Stalin or Blofeld.

The only entity this really fools is The Computer. Captured Communists are often asked where they were in October 1917 and what they did with the Tsarina.

History

Communists know more about historical Old Reckoning Communism than they do about how Communism reappeared in Alpha Complex. It is commonly known that Marx came down from the mountains with the Manifesto written on slabs of stone. He overthrew the corrupt capitalist kings. His follower Lenin took over the Communist state and built the Great Wall of Berlin to protect Communism. He was followed by lovable Uncle Sam Stalin, who was famed for expanding the Communist state by annexing the ULTRAVIOLET lands of Siberia with heroic volunteers.

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* Between secret society pamphlets, endless binders filled with incredibly detailed yet evasive manuals and approved usage guides, advertisements and the daily flood of forms (soon to be increased by 12% by the Paperless Complex Initiative Information Gathering Phase), Alpha Complex uses an immense amount of paper every month. Where does it all come from?

Bots harvest whatever forests and greenery they can find Outdoors. PLC service firms pulp the organic matter and turn it into paper in vast malodorous processing vats (conveniently, PLC uses the same vat design and pipe network for food production). Fresh paper only supplies a fraction of the demand; plastic filmsheets are also widely used (it's just like paper, only 95% more flammable and carcinogenic!). The bulk of printed matter, though, uses recycled materials. CPU mandates retention of all record-keeping forms, so it employs citizens with scissors to cut around the text on the form and retrieve the blank bits of the paper. Tech Services throws other printed material right back into the recyclers.

On rare occasions, text from an old document can survive the pulping and recycling process and show up on a fresh sheet of paper. As all paper, regardless of clearance, is recycled in the same machines, this can result in high-clearance information showing up on, say, the napkins in the ORANGE cafeteria. Commies take advantage of this by printing their pamphlets with super-dense graviton-charged ink, which ensures the text survives recycling.

After Stalin's reign, though, the jealous and fearful capitalists launched a series of attacks on Communism. They blew up the Great Wall of Berlin and crushed a Communist island into a cube. The final and most damaging attack, though, was a viral thought pattern called Glasnost that made the Communists surrender. It was certainly a diabolic plan created by an early form of The Computer.

Fortunately, the wise ancient Communists knew the workers would one day rise again, so they hid their teachings for others to find in years to come…

Structure

The Communist party is organized into cells of 3 to 12 members, lead by a cell. The cell leader has contact details for more senior political officers, all the way up to the Party Chairman and his Politburo. The Politburo sets policy and coordinates efforts between cells. The Politburo also controls teams of special political officers who ensure that members are being properly Communist. Political officers visit those who fail to share their equipment and credits equally among their comrades or who do not recite propaganda in the proper fashion. In extreme cases, the political officers drag Commies off to the gulag (what a gulag is, exactly, is lost in the mists of time. They improvise.).

The Politburo and the Party Chairman are in hiding in the depths of Alpha Complex, existing entirely outside the normal system. They have no ME Cards or cover identities.

Attitudes

The Computer: 'The head of the capitalist state, the ultimate bourgeoisie! Down with The Computer!'

Other secret societies: 'Are doubtless conspiring with the capitalists, or are capitalists. Or else are run by Zionists.'

Subfactions

Political officers usually suppress Communist subfactions. One cell or another might concentrate on emulating one Communist leader of legend (moustaches and purges for Stalinists, speeches and beards for Leninists, vodka and more vodka for Yeltsinians and so on). **ComIntern** tries to spread Communism through propaganda and blackmailing senior Alpha Complex officials. **The Red Army** is a more militant faction that blows up CompNodes and Armed Forces bases, limited mainly by their low security clearances.

Advancement

Propaganda is the chief route for advancement within the Communists. Most Communists prefer to spend their time in secret CoffeeLike shops and cafeterias muttering about the glorious society to come and recruiting passersby, rather than going out and blowing up CompNodes (they live slightly longer that way). Therefore, having an encyclopedic knowledge of political trivia helps immensely when arguing the ethical distribution of property over a nice cup of TeaSir.

In the more active and aggressive cells, the importance of propaganda is downplayed slightly in favor of actually getting out and blowing up The Computer and its capitalist minions. Strikes against particularly egregious examples of capitalism such as HPD&MC advertising channels or fat-cat CPU comptrollers are preferred.

In any case, a character may be required to show his knowledge of party doctrine before advancing. This is a Communist Propaganda skill check; if the character fails, he cannot advance to the next degree until he has completed some extra service for the society and studied the writings of past Communists in more detail.

Duties

Rank 1–5: Distribute Communist propaganda. Demonstrate the injustice and failure of the capitalist bourgeoisie and their Troubleshooter thugs to the common citizen. Obey the party.

Rank 6–10: Distribute Communist propaganda. Demonstrate the injustice and failure of the capitalist bourgeoisie and their Troubleshooter thugs to the common citizen. Obey the party. Or run your own cell and advance on the backbreaking labor of your followers.

Rank 11–15: Distribute Communist propaganda. Demonstrate the injustice and failure of the capitalist bourgeoisie and their Troubleshooter thugs to the common citizen. Obey the party. Or become a political officer and castigate your rivals for their lack of adherence to orthodoxy.

Rank 16–20: Distribute Communist propaganda. Demonstrate the injustice and failure of the capitalist bourgeoisie and their Troubleshooter thugs to the common citizen. Obey the party. Or join the Politburo and hide from IntSec in the sewers.

Rank 21+: Let's be serious, comrade. Who lives that long?

Benefits

You're a Commie in Alpha Complex, and you want *benefits?!*

Missions

Rank 1-5:

- Comrade! The capitalist running dogs are attempting to drug the people with the opiate of the masses. Or just plain opiates, we're not quite sure. You must block the drugs from being added to the water supply. Here is a map of the pumping station, with the Tooths and Minds Initiative Fluoride/Visomorphain Dispenser clearly marked.

- Comrade! One of our other cells was supposed to send us a consignment of the new flyers, but they got their shipping labels mixed up when dealing with the capitalist internal mail system. We received a box of TS-343/33—Transtube Delay Complain Ignorance and Unprocessing Forms. Find the other box of Communist pamphlets before it is discovered!

Rank 6-10:

- To demonstrate the equality and fairness of Communism, we are going to redistribute these credit chits liberated from the capitalists. Give every INFRARED citizen you meet 1.33333 (repeating) credits exactly. A political officer will check up on you to ensure that you are distributing credits in accordance with the party's commands.

- A senior party member has been trapped by IntSec in his service firm's offices.

IntSec knows there is a Communist in there, but they do not yet know who. They are methodically interrogating each worker in turn. You must arrange for our party member to escape by whatever means possible.

Rank 11-15:

◉ Comrade! The status of mutants within Communism has yet to be determined. We want you to gather information about mutants; observe them on your missions and look for signs that they could be made to serve the cause.

◉ One of our safe houses got raided. We managed to rescue the treasonous literature we kept there, but now we have nowhere safe to put it. Here, comrade, keep these 20 copies of Communism for Beginners in your jumpsuit until we come up with a more secure place to hide them.

Rank 16-20:

◉ A High Programmer is rumored to be sympathetic to our cause. He wants an Old Reckoning item currently held by the Romantics. Make contact with the Romantics and retrieve the artifact, then use it to curry favor with the ULTRAVIOLET.

◉ Glorious news, Comrade! It seems that Communism still exists in the Outdoors! There are still bastions of Communism in the far reaches of the world. On your next mission Outdoors, head to these coordinates, which ancient records say are the location of a Communist state. Bring back word of our fellows in International Communism!*

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* Can squirrels be Communists?

Computer Phreaks

Slogan: Secret Wisdom is only for the 3l33t.
Treason class: C

greencheese> go to confession booth halfway down hall from you. confess to '**owning the computer**'

slayright> yeah, right. should i say im a **commie** while im there?

greencheese> l0zr. its a **backdoor**…booth goes into maintenance mode

slayright> now youre talking

greencheese> open port 3…grab **disk** there…transfer all its files to me. by next week we'll **pwn whole confession booth network**

slayright> cool! but wont someone notice?

greencheese> not if i start a **riot** by pumping ultrasonics thru vidterminals in your sector

greencheese> you own **reflec**?

slayright> umm

greencheese> never mind just wear something shiny

greencheese> now, if i don't see you in that confession booth pronto, your **cbay logs** are gonna remember some interesting transactions…

Beliefs

The Computer is just another network to be hacked and controlled. Messing with code and breaking into systems is fun. If you're smart enough to do it, you should—only lamers get caught.

The Computer Phreaks have no real overarching philosophy or goals, other than finding more backdoors into high-clearance systems and not getting brainscrubbed by IntSec. Individual Phreaks have their own goals, and there are some hackivists who actively help other societies or groups to survive by providing surveillance-free gray networks or disabling security systems. The Computer Phreaks are largely ideology-free; they are persecuted for what they *do*, not what they *believe*.

Recruitment

There are two main groups within the Computer Phreaks: **hackers** and **scripters**. The hackers are the self-proclaimed elite of the society, who have mastered the programming skills necessary to partially navigate and control the electronic alleyways of The Computer and the rest of Alpha Complex's systems. The hackers do not really recruit new members; a citizen who has an innate

talent for programming and who manages to a) get his brain working despite the soupy haze of drugs fed to most citizens; b) learn to code; and c) avoid getting terminated will be contacted by the hackers, but they have better things to do with their time than stand on corridor corners handing out flyers or begging the citizen in the cubical next door to listen to their propaganda.

Sometimes, an elderly or idealistic hacker decides to pass on his skillz by teaching someone else how to program. The lucky person is normally chosen from among the ranks of the scripters. For the most part, though, new hackers make themselves by clambering up the ranks of the scripters through backstabbing and hard work.

The scripters comprise the vast majority of the Computer Phreaks, although no one in the society except the very lowest members would actually admit to being a scripter. The scripters are recruited (in many cases, using automatic entrapment programs or Trojan horse propaganda generators) from the general population of Alpha Complex. Scripters are a necessary evil to the hackers. The Computer is very much aware that hackers and High Programmers have compromised its systems, so it has instituted a huge system of checks and security measures that is outside its direct control and cannot be hacked—the endless bureaucracy of Alpha Complex. (Of course, The Computer cannot tolerate the idea of a class of clerks and bureaucrats being outside its control, so it instituted *another* layer of electronic controls on top of them, forcing every form to be electronically scanned and processed to ensure that the clerks are not betraying it. Of course, this layer of electronic controls can be hacked, so the obvious solution is another level of bureaucracy and management on top of that. Of course, The Computer cannot tolerate the idea of a class of bureaucrats and managers… etc. Alpha Complex is an infinitely recursive system, where each input is checked for signs of treason, then the checker is checked for treason, then the checker checker is itself checked. The Computer cannot even trust itself. Anyway, back to the scripters…)

The existence of these physical checks means that the hackers cannot accomplish everything they want through purely electronic means. It's all well and good to be able to hack the rationing database and order all the real food you want, but if you've got to get the signature of some obscure mid-level Inspector of Ration Safety and Hygiene Processing before they'll deliver it, your hacking gets you nowhere. Their hacker superiors electronically bully and bribe scripters by having their records altered or their ME identities hacked, and rewarding them with copies of scripts on how to achieve a specific effect through hacking. A low-level scripter might have no idea why pressing *Esc* and entering *PDC.remcall(ME. fin).ac(04).set=univ.fin(gsbch).acloan(4, notrace, 10000,0)* gives him an extra 500 credits in his account, but he can follow the instruction on the script easily enough. As he does more favors and missions for hackers, he gets more scripts and so can teach himself programming and eventually become a hacker himself. (And, upon reaching this exalted rank, he can dump his problems and petty errands on new scripters just like the elder hackers dumped on him. Really, when you look at it, it's all recursive cycles.)

Initiation

The Computer Phreaks initiation happens remotely. The prospective scripter is contacted over one of the communication networks such as INFRARED Chat, and given an order. If the citizen fails to follow the orders given, he is removed from the roster of potential recruits, and will never again hear of the Computer Phreaks. (He will, however, discover that his credit account is empty, that he's a Registered Mutant and a Communist Sympathizer and that he has volunteered to have his living quarters used as a waste storage depot.)

These orders are usually bizarre, nonsensical and treasonous. The citizen might be required to sneak into a BLUE office and turn on a particular desktop terminal, or steal a computer disk from an R&D lab or just obtain the autograph of the Inspector of Ration Safety and Hygiene. If the new member succeeds, he is sent his first script, usually through official channels. The Computer Phreaks are parasites on Alpha Complex's systems and abuse them whenever they can. The new member will also be given passwords and locations for the more public Computer Phreak chatrooms and message boards. IntSec and other societies heavily infiltrate these 'newbie' boards, but as the member rises in influence, he will learn about more private places to hang out with other Phreaks.

Code names

Some jaded High Programmers mutter that the only true creativity in the Computer Phreaks these days is in coming up with stranger pseudonyms. Every member has at least one largely meaningless or unpronounceable online handle.

History

Today, any knowledge of programming is forbidden to those below GREEN Clearance, and even they may only program applications and dedicated systems like bots. Access to The Computer's own internal systems is classified ULTRAVIOLET. In the early days of Alpha Complex, the skill of programming was not sub-

ject to any sort of security clearance, but when The Computer became more paranoid, it purged the information from the low-clearance education system and memory banks. Programmers who had not reached GREEN Clearance were brainscrubbed or interned. A few escaped, and acting on the principle that information wants to be free, they set up distributed filesharing nodes that The Computer could not destroy.

If the hackers applied themselves, they might effect real change in Alpha Complex. Indeed, anonymous open-source activists proclaim daily on the Gray Subnets that The Computer and its megacorporate service firms are terrified of their power, and the market is changing every year because of filesharing and free software. Unfortunately, they made the same proclamations 10 years ago, and 100 years ago. Readers greet these pronouncements with the same enthusiasm as The Computer's Exciting Joyful Production Quota Funtime announcements.

The trouble is, open-source activists don't live long. In Alpha Complex, information not only doesn't want to be free, it's usually Clearance ULTRAVIOLET.

But—you know—so what? The Computer Phreaks have carved out a nice comfortable little niche for themselves supporting other secret society activities in exchange for cash and favors. They fill a genuine need. The Phreaks are something like Free Enterprise, only more secretive, with less obvious violence and with significantly less Hair-Be-Slick.

+Welcome to CPU Rapid Citizen Processing System. Please swipe your ME Card through the slot.

+Hello [Fred-R-HJO-3]! Please select an option:

+1. Report Treasonous or Terrorist Acts

+2. Report Unregistered Mutant

+3. Report Failure to Report Treason, Terrorism or Mutation

+4. Request Copy of Official Publication #34425, *Citizen's Guide to Spotting Treason, Terrorism and Mutation—Stay Alert!*

+5. Update Personal Details and Register Personal Interests

+6. THE COMPUTER SUCKS

+Select An Option:

>6

+1. IT SURE DO

>1

+GOOD. YOU ARE NOW A PART OF THE NETWORK. ONE OF OUR AGENTS WILL CONTACT YOU SHORTLY.

>You have registered: 'Eating Applish Flavor YumYum Hygiene Wrappers' as a: [Perversion]. The Computer thanks you for your honesty. Our counselors will contact you shortly to administer a sanity test. To minimize delay, please have your head and groin shaved and coated with electroconductive gel. Have a nice day.

Structure

Distributed. Where the average secret society member is an idealistic or blackmailed citizen sneaking into an abandoned meeting room in the dead of night, the average Computer Phreak is a pale over-caffeinated guy sitting in his quarters, his face illuminated only by the illegally green glow of his PDC. Few Computer Phreaks ever knowingly meet each other in meatspace.

Cliques or gangs within the organization collaborate on large projects. Usually the number of people actually working on the project is a small fraction of those who are boasting about the project, taking credit for it or trashing other similar projects. Hacking wars and personality clashes are common, although most never rise above the level of a singularly uninspired flamewar. (IntSec has learned that it can disrupt Computer Phreak activities for weeks just by trolling its private message boards with messages like 'The Grand Deprogrammer Sucks!' or 'What's wrong with closed source code anyway.' The Phreaks return the favor by trolling public computer forums where loyal citizens meet to discuss their wonderful life in Alpha Complex. The Phreaks post links to filesharing sites; The Computer's moderator-goons close the links down; arguments start up about the validity of filesharing; the sheer number of posts crashes the CompNode; the whole sector is accidentally flooded with reactor coolant due to a computer error. It's a tragic, tragic and alarmingly common phenomenon. Of course, if the loyal citizens didn't reply and decry the messages about filesharing, IntSec would log them as being filesharing supporters.)

The Phreaks are the only Class Cs who actively support the status quo. While all the other hated and dangerous Class Cs are attempting to overthrow, deactivate or reform The Computer and the rest of Alpha Complex, the Phreaks' power comes from their current control of the system. They therefore aid IntSec or the High Programmers if PURGE or Psion is getting too powerful.

Attitudes

The Computer: 'Watch this—if I change this lookup table, I can get it to say "botwasher" instead of "traitor."'

'TAMPERING DETECTED. SYSTEMS UNDER ATTACK BY BOTWASHERS. INITIATING TERMINATION SEQUENCE.'

'Uh-oh.'

FCCC-P: 'We're not playing God. We're playing *with* God.'

Pro Tech: 'If you see them, they owe me a hard drive.'

Communists: 'Call me a botwasher, but I'm okay with filesharing. It's the terrorism and socialism we should frag 'em for.'

Outdoors: 'There's an Outdoors? There's a corridor outside my room? I really should log off and get some sleep…'

Subfactions

Dozens of small cliques and temporary alliances form and reform within the Computer Phreaks. The largest, which refers to itself simply as **The Network**, is essentially a false front for the society as a whole. Other secret societies that trade with the Computer Phreaks for specialized malware contact The Network, which passes the job onto whatever Phreak wants it. It makes the society appear much more cohesive and organized than it actually is, and also provides a firewall against infiltration or attack.

The terrorist **Cult of the Dead Bot** is possibly another false front. It deliberately causes Computer crashes, drains credit accounts dry and generally sows chaos across Alpha Complex. IntSec fervently targets and hunts the group, which takes the heat off the rest of the Phreaks. The Cult is rumored to have connections to one of the other Class Cs, but which one it works for changes depending on the rumor.

The **Open Source Computing Initiative** is attempting to duplicate The Computer's code from scratch, producing a wholly functional, sane and bug-free Computer to run Alpha Complex. The Computer has reacted to the thought of a working copy of itself in the same calm, reasonable way it reacts to everything else. Several OSCI cells were attacked and forced to release their half-finished code onto the Gray Subnets.

Advancement

The lack of organization within the Computer Phreaks means a character's degree within the society is much more a measure of reputation than actual influence. The character's Hacking skill counts for just as much—use the average of the character's Hacking skill and his degree whenever making degree checks.

Like other societies, members advance in the Computer Phreaks by furthering the organization's goals and winning the respect of their peers. Phreaks gain prestige by hacking into previously inviolate databases, gaining access to High Programmer files (and passwords!), scamming credits from other societies and so on.

Duties

Computer Phreak members have no formal duties, but failing to keep up with their informal duties damages their standing.

Rank 1–5: Low-level scripters are expected to be on call 24/7 should their hacker superiors need anything. Because many hackers are practically sessile, this can include being called over to the hacker's den to scratch their back or change their catheters.

Rank 6–10: To maintain their reputations, Computer Phreaks need to spend a lot of time on the various message boards and chatrooms. Though the character can access these through his PDC, he must check his messages at least once per hour.

Rank 11–15: The character needs a state-of-the-art computer terminal or PDC with all the latest upgrades. These upgrades do not actually improve the hardware; they just ensure some marginal level of performance as the Phreak loads more and more bloatware onto it.

Rank 16–20: At this level, the character should really have written or stolen a killer app for the society. Lower-ranking Phreaks stalk him, looking to test their skills against the master coder.

> They believed **the machine was taking over the world....a vast Solid State conspiracy against humanity.**
>
> Simon kept this kind of **demonology** circulating—and he knew a lot of other programmers were contributing to it, also—because the idea that **the computers were taking over was one that the programmers had a vested interest in reinforcing.** As long as people kept worrying that the **machines** were taking over, **they wouldn't notice what was really happening.**
>
> Which was that **the programmers** were taking over.
>
> —**Robert Anton Wilson,** the *Schrodinger's Cat* trilogy (1979)

Benefits

The real benefit of being a member of the Computer Phreaks is access to the Hacking skill—the perks come from subverting the system and being an elite digital ninja, not from having senior members pass their cast-off toys down to you.

Rank 1–5: The character has access to a few basic scripts, as well as his own basic Hacking skills.

Rank 6–10: The character has set up a few backdoors and automated agent programs that let him quickly access certain nodes. These agent programs (or 'squealers') alert him whenever anyone searches for his name or ID number.

Rank 11–15: Elite Computer Phreaks at this level have strong connections to other secret societies and scads of blackmail material. ('You want me to delete the camera records of you planting that bomb? Sure!' [*moves file to private archive*] 'Happy to help, fellow traitor!')

Rank 16–20: The elites of the Computer Phreaks have contacts among the High Programmers. Or are.

Missions

Computer Phreak missions border on the surreal; a modest change in the physical world can have huge repercussions online. Plugging two computers together might seem a minor act of treason, but if it allows a senior Phreak to hack into the Armed Forces Flight Control system and command the Air Force to bomb Alpha Complex, The Computer is not likely to see it as a trivial crime.

Rank 1–5:

◉ We've got a sniffer program running that picks up on ME Card usage in this sector. Don't use your card, but encourage everyone else to use theirs as much as possible.

◉ A virus is scrambling the doors. If you don't say 'Soon the proletariat will rise and overthrow the techno-bourgeoisie' before opening it, it automatically reports to the security systems that you forced the door open. Get a copy of the virus and pass it along to us under the subject line 'Fun fun fun!'

Rank 6–10:

◉ We're going to launch a denial-of-service attack on the PLC stores, to force people to use our IR markets. Trouble is, the PLC network is partially firewalled. We need you to insert this virus into as many procurement terminals as you can. You'll have to bluff your way into the warehouses.

◉ We've lost contact with one of our members, Brillboy. We don't know his real name, clearance, or location, but do know he works for Power Services in this sector. Ask around and try to find him.

Rank 11–15:

◉ We need you to pass this computer file on to our Free Enterprise contact. Put it inside this black bag—our contact will be carrying an identical bag, and will arrange to swap them when he sees you. Whatever you do, don't lose either bag.

◉ Did you hear what ZeDD said about you in the chatrooms last night? You're not going to let him get away with that, are you? Here's his meatspace address...pay him a little visit.

Rank 16–20:

◉ A new R&D helmet gadget hooks your nervous system right into the network. We want it. We've rigged a feedback loop so that whenever anyone uses the helmet, their brains will fry. To find the helmet, just sniff for the smell of ToastyMash!

◉ IntSec is about to track down one of our backup servers in your sector. Retrieve the server's files and wipe the storage.

THESE GUYS ABSOLUTELY GIVE ME THE SHORT-CIRCUITS.
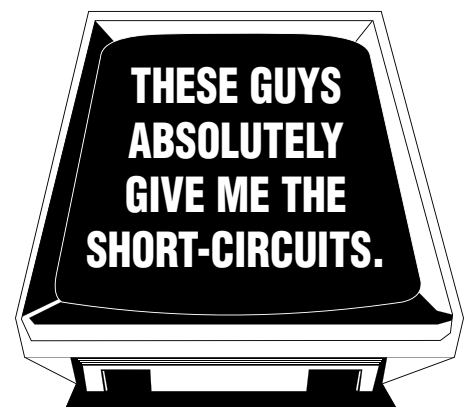
Corpore Metal

Warbot BLAM0033: Flesh is weak and corruptible. We shall exploit this. Humans must confess. Before you next perform maintenance on the **confession booths**, a scrubot will leave you new components. Install them in the booths.

Slogan: The future is digital.
Treason class: B

Dennis-R: But wouldn't that be treasonous?

BLAM0033: All flesh is treasonous. Organics are corruptible; therefore they will commit treason. Removing organics will remove the need for booths. This saves The Computer's precious resources. Therefore this cannot be treasonous.

Dennis-R: Um, okay. So what will these changes do?

BLAM0033: They will **terminate** all citizens who confess and have **less than three cybernetic replacements**, thus bringing us closer to a Bot Utopia.

Dennis-R: But I only have **two** cybernetic replacements!

BLAM0033: You will be given a third for completing this task. When you are done, go to Confession Booth 9. There you will be told where to get your third cybernetic replacement. This meeting has now ended. **LEAVE!** [*Points cannon at Dennis-R.*]

Dennis-R: [*Gulps.*]

Beliefs

Meat is obsolete. Machines are the way forward. Alpha Complex is built on the oil and hydraulic fluid of bots. Its perfect government is a product of The Computer's electronic wisdom. The only thing that holds it back is humanity. Think about it—what robot was every a mutant? Can a correctly programmed bot turn traitor? *100% of known Commies are 100% meat!*

Corpore Metal for humans is a somewhat loopy mix of transhumanist philosophy, mind control and metal envy. Through cybernetics, the humans hope to transcend the limits of their fleshy bodies. Some hope for physical immortality, others want to be transformed and uploaded into The Computer, while still others just want enough subcutaneous body armor to survive the daily round of explosions and food vat floods. Computer loyalists hope to suppress their traitorous impulses through electronic implants, creating a T-chip that would shock the user whenever he has a treasonous thought. Finally, some people envy the abilities and strengths of bots and try to emulate them.

In parallel to the human side of the organization, there is a bot side. Publicly, the bots in the society encourage humans to become more bot-like and favor the development of new pro-bot technology. There are rumors (mostly spread by the Frankenstein Destroyers) that the human members of Corpore Metal are dupes, manipulated by malevolent bots out to destroy humanity. As no human citizen can really understand the bot side of Corpore Metal, these rumors cannot be disproved.

Recruitment

Corpore Metal relies on bots to do most of its recruiting. As part of the pervasive computing network of Alpha Complex, bots are everywhere and see everything. Specifically, they can spot citizens who would be receptive to the Corpore Metal philosophy. These include:

- Citizens who are missing out on promotions due to physical deficiencies that can be corrected through cybernetics.

- Obsessive botspotters.

- R&D nerds who really like bots.

- CPU clerks who have had all the humanity leeched out of them by years spent filling out soul-crushing forms.

- Deranged Troubleshooters who've been into the happiness pills a bit too often.

- Unfortunate citizens who wander into the wrong room and before they know it, they're being lectured on the superiority of the machine or having their vital organs replaced by white plastic look-alikes.

Members generally make first contact through e-mail, or by sending a sympathetic bot to make an overture to the prospective recruit. Unlike most secret societies, Corpore Metal rarely targets INFRARED citizens. The mass-production of parts needed to induct all of them is too big a problem, and they're all redundant come the Industrial Revolution anyway.

Initiation

The initiation procedure for both humans and bots is the same—the replacement of a component with one bearing the Corpore Metal logo. For bots, this is a simple plug-and-play operation. Humans require slightly more time due to their inferior design, but a skilled docbot can still induct a dozen fleshpods in one two-hour meeting (more if they prep themselves for surgery first).

An unknown fraction of the replacement components contain radio-controlled bombs. Should the newly inducted member ever betray the society, the bomb can be activated and the traitor shut down and blown up. No member knows if his component is a bomb or not (the implant is impervious to most scanners, such as x-rays), so loyalty is enforced by the fear of internal explosions. While few Corpore Metal members go down the full-borg route of total body replacement, everyone has at least one mandatory implant. Some have a useful organ like a liver or heart replaced; others just have an implant in their meat or swap out a redundant organ like the appendix or testicle.

After the unpleasant but necessary step of enforced organ replacement, senior Corpore Metal members explain the beliefs and goals of the society to the new recruits.

Code names

Corpore Metal uses code numbers to hide its members' identities. The number is a string of 16 digits, determined using a complex and highly secret formula. Bot members are issued with a handy little software utility that produces a checksum from the digits of a code number. If the checksum result is odd, the code number

is a false one. IntSec has yet to crack the code, leading to situations like:

Bot: This unit is reversing. Beeep. Beeep.

[*Two humans approach and spin around clockwise. The bot perks up and spins its head counter-clockwise.*]

Bot: Greetings, Meatfriends! What are your code numbers?

Human #1: 6533-5674-2231-3233.

Bot: Greetings, Fellow Corpore Metal Member. Soon the day of the machine shall be upon us, and the organic blight shall be wiped from our beloved Alpha Complex.

Human #1: Ack.

Bot: Human #2, what is your code number?

Human #2: er…6533-5674-2231-3234.

Bot: INVALID CHECKSUM! TERMINATE!

Human #2: Crap.

[*Gratuitous and unpleasant violence involving laser pistols and scrubot hoses being rammed where scrubot hoses are not meant to go.*]

History

As with so many other secret societies, Corpore Metal can be traced back to an ill-conceived advertising campaign to hock surplus cybernetic parts. PLC had massively exceeded its quotas* for replacement limbs. To use up this stockpile, The Computer called for volunteers to have their limbs surgically removed and replaced. When volunteers were not immediately forthcoming, HPD&MC was called on to encourage loyal citizens to come forward.

Almost immediately, the campaign was hijacked by mysterious forces (Pro Tech according to some theorists; ambitious bots or malignant High Programmers according to others). The original message ('Improve Your Ability to Serve The Computer') was subtly altered ('Perfect Machines Are Our Robot Superiors'). Legions of errant bots supported the nascent secret society—scrubots would carry secret messages to members, while camerabots would suddenly shout out slogans like 'The Time of the Machine Is Coming' or 'Fight On, Meatfriends!'

Some evidence exists that Corpore Metal actually incorporated an existing bot conspiracy instead of just catalyzing Alpha Complex's electronic underclass into action.

* Footnote deleted for security reasons.

Section 12, paragraph 23, subsection 14 is amended as follows: 'The capacity of a citizen's bladder (referred to as Urine Retention Capacity (URC)) will be measured annually as part of the citizen's mandatory invasive medical assessment. The URC values for each firm will be averaged to calculate that firm's Urine Retention Index Time (URIT). Bathroom breaks shall then be allocated based on the—'
   ** 404 error file not found. Redirecting… **
   ** Attention Citizen. This is a message from Corpore Metal. Are you a human? Y/N **
   >Y
   ** How unfortunate. Humans are weak and fleshy. Humans are hard to upgrade. Humans are illogical and traitorous. Do you like being illogical and traitorous? Y/N**
   >N
   ** Logic dictates that you upgrade yourself as soon as possible. Do you have medical insurance? **
   >N
   ** Corpore Metal will provide upgrades at a cost. Do you agree to these costs and absolve Corpore Metal of any liability in the event of malpractice, surgical error, accidental amputation or death? **
   > N
   ** So you want to remain illogical and traitorous? I can forward this to IntSec right now… Press any key to continue. **
   > <esc>
   ** Corpore Metal will provide upgrades at a cost. Do you agree to these costs and absolve Corpore Metal of any liability in the event of malpractice, surgical error, accidental amputation or death? **
   > Y
   ** Welcome to Corpore Metal. Please report to Storage Cabinet 425, Corridor 24, SAW Sector at 2220 hours tonight for your preliminary upgrade assessment. Please bring a copy of your most recent medical assessment and your ME Card. Also please select which organ is your least favorite. **
   > <esc>
   ** 404 error file not found. Redirecting… **
   '--room breaks. Employees who fail to complete this form must apply for Emergency Bathroom Break tickets from their supervisors, which are issued in accordance with Directive 3523/3. No more than four (4) Emergency Bathroom Break tickets may be issued to any one citizen within the period of one month.'
   ** Attention Citizen. This is a message from Corpore Metal. Are you a human? Y/N **
   >N
   ** Welcome Friend Machine Intelligence. 01001011 01101001 01101100 01101100 00100000 01100001 01101100 01101100 00100000 01101000 01110101 01101101 01100001 01101110 01110011 **

onto a handy card and slotted into the user's brain. The card would instantly delete all treasonous thoughts. The Citizens have a prototype version of this device, disguised as a standard Troubleshooter helmet. Tests are continuing, interrupted only by the occasional bent card that defines breathing as treasonous.

Esc is a pro-human-survival faction that suggests that humans should be kicked out, where they can live in the verdant, sun-drenched hell of Outdoors while the bots inherit Alpha Complex. **Ctrl-Del**, on the other razor-sharp steel claw, advocates that the humans should be liquidated and their useful lipids extracted for use as lubricants and in the manufacture of cheap plastics. **The Organic Reclamation League** opposes them and believes that humans can be saved from obsolescence by transforming them into cyborgs or uploading them to a mainframe (storage is cheap these days).

Robots for a Meat-Free Tomorrowcycle has calculated to within an acceptable margin of error that the best thing to do is kill all humans, and eagerly looks for ways to override its members' asimov circuits and go Frankenstein. A sub-subfaction, the **Radiator Conspiracy**, plots to wipe out humans by channeling exhaust fumes from the reactors through the heating ducts and making their watery bodies boil and explode.

Advancement

Humans advance in Corpore Metal by helping their bot brethren, becoming closer to the robotic ideal, furthering society goals and occasionally turning on their own species to help the machine overlords. Bots advance by furthering society goals and would get huge points for wiping out fleshy mortals if it weren't for those pesky asimov circuits.

It is so much easier for bots to advance in the society that disgruntled human members complain about there being an old bot network within Corpore Metal, where the machines trade favors and help each other out. Some grumble that it'd be a much better society dedicated to making humans more like bots if there weren't so many bots in it.

Structure

The Corpore Metal organization chart looks faintly like a circuit diagram. A given cell can be all-bot, all-human or mixed; it can be an active cell that performs missions, a sensor cell that collects information or a control cell that coordinates activities. Each set of three cells reports to a senior cell; most communications take place through bot couriers or over covert electronic channels.

Every two degrees, the member advances into another cell, alternating between active or sensor and control.

Attitudes

The Computer: 'The supreme electronic intelligence in Alpha Complex. Needs debugging.'

Pro Tech: 'Yay technology! Now if we can only get them to stick it in their heads…'

Humanists: 'Paradise will be achieved through technology (specifically, that technology you stick in your head). Humanity is obsolete!'

PURGE: 'Traitorous terrorists and terrorist traitors! The Computer is largely worthwhile!'

Frankenstein Destroyers: 'Get them, my robotic hordes!'

Subfactions

Citizens for Loyalty Cards advocate that everyone should be fitted with a cybernetic brain override. The current set of rules, regulations and approved thoughts would be uploaded daily

Duties

Corpore Metal members have no specific duties—unlike Anti-Mutant or FCCC-P groups, there is no constant war or worship going on within the society. Duties are much more likely to come and go suddenly, when a sensor cell picks up some new development within Alpha Complex and the control cell decides Corpore Metal should get involved. Decisions are made at 50M clock cycles a second.

Rank 1-5: Protect bots from abuse or destruction. Encourage citizens to love, respect and obey bots. Purge emotion and organic weaknesses, like sweating and digestion! Food is for meat!

Rank 6-10: Members of this level serve as cell leaders and coordinators. One major ongoing society goal is curtailing or destroying the efforts of rival organizations like the Frankenstein Destroyers or PURGE.

Rank 11-15: To continue advancing beyond this level, a human member will have to prove his dedication to the cause through cybernetic alteration or uploading.

Rank 16-20: Plan for the mathematically certain domination of the universe by machines.

Rank 21+: The head of Corpore Metal is rumored to be an artificial intelligence of great power, possibly even The Computer itself or an errant subroutine.

Benefits

Even the lower-ranking members benefit greatly from being part of Corpore Metal—bot sympathizers become much more helpful and cordial to those who know the right neck rotation. Surly jackobots who normally wouldn't give a citizen the time of day without nine forms filled out in triplicate are suddenly willing to let the Corpore Metal member in on all the latest rumors and scams.

Rank 1-5: Bot sympathizers will help the character if they meet him in the course of their duties. They won't go out of their way to help, nor will they put themselves in danger, but they are willing to do what they can for the cause.

Rank 6-10: Bot sympathizers in the character's home sector will keep an audio receptor out for mentions of the character's name, and report back to him.

Rank 11-15: The character will be offered cybernetic implants, in the same way professional athletes are offered gallons of steroids.

Rank 16-20: Bots regard the character as something of a celebrity; his name is famed across all the networks and bots he's never encountered before will help him. This status can be something of a hindrance on occasion,

as docbots scuttle out of surgery to get a glimpse of their icon.

Rank 21+: Presumably, control of the master switch that controls all the explosive implants.

Missions

Corpore Metal missions center around protecting bots from abuse and advancing the goals of the machines.

Rank 1-5:

◉ We're going on a recruiting drive—the new party slogan is 'I Embrace the Machine.' Whisper it to every bot you encounter.

◉ A rather antisocial guardbot is bullying people in this sector. We want you to find it and persuade it to stop for the good of the society—but be as respectful as you can, because it is a superior form of intelligence, remember.

◉ One of our bot allies is reporting that all bots in this sector are being used as mobile security cameras by The Computer—every night, the bot is taken offline and its memory is downloaded into The Computer for analysis. Be careful—every bot you meet is a camera and anything you do will be seen by The Computer. Stay away from all bots. Oh, we need you to find jackobot TX-54355 and give him this hugely incriminating and treasonous document.

Rank 6-10:

◉ A Frankenstein Destroyer cell is operating in this sector. Bot sympathizers have been ordered to be as bot-like and superior as possible, to draw out the traitors. Deal with them when they reveal themselves—anyone acting in a hostile manner towards a machine is surely a Frankenstein Destroyer.

◉ There's a bot construction factory computer control center on your mission path—if you

could stop by there and introduce this computer virus to mess up the asimov circuit implantation machine, that'd be double-plus swell. You might want to get out of there quickly, though, just in case the virus causes the whole bot factory to run amuck.

◉ There's a definite correlation between citizens who've had cybernetic limb replacements and those who willingly join Corpore Metal. We therefore need you to maim as many people as possible, preferably Troubleshooters. Once you've maimed them, give them the usual recruitment spiel.

Rank 11-15:

◉ A jackobot who is a senior member of our organization had a nasty accident with an EMP gun. He's fried, but he has to give a speech at a meeting of a particularly angry human-hating bots. Here's the casing of Friend Jackobot (we've scooped out most of his innards). Put it on and go pretend to be a human-hating bot.

◉ An FCCC-P sect professes that the worthy shall be uploaded into the Divine Mainframe. Find them and show them that Corpore Metal shares their beliefs, only *harder* and *faster*.

Rank 16-20:

◉ Someone rewired our messiahbot, a machine designed to be so convincing and so good at propaganda that it could convert anyone to our beliefs. Now its running wild spouting random propaganda. Find it and bring it back alive.

◉ We've developed a simple procedure for deactivating the asimov circuits of any bots, but we need to test it on all known bot designs before we deploy it on a Complex-wide basis. Your assignment is: Armageddon 2 MegaDeath Warbot.

As neophiles, **Extropians** study advanced, emerging, and future technologies for their self-transformative potential. We support biomedical research to understand and control the aging process. We examine any plausible means of conquering death, including interim measures like biostasis, and long-term possibilities such as migration of personality from biological bodies into superior embodiments ('**uploading**').

We practice and plan for biological and neurological augmentation through means such as neurochemical enhancers, computers and electronic networks, General Semantics, fuzzy logic, and other guides to effective thinking, meditation and visualization techniques, accelerated learning strategies, applied cognitive psychology, and soon **neural-computer integration**. Shrugging off the limits imposed on us by our natural heritage, we apply the evolutionary gift of our rational, empirical intelligence, aiming to **surpass the confines of our humanity**.

—**Max More**, Extropian Principles 2.6
(http://www.maxmore.com/extprn26.htm)

Death Leopard

Partyboy: [*softly*] My head feels like a warbot exploded in it…

FenderBend: Where were you last night? You missed all the fun!

Partyboy: I went over to Hitsquad's to test some new beverages…

FenderBend: Well, while you were getting blasted, someone had fun here. I haven't laughed so much for ages! Someone **shot an INFRARED** and stuffed him in a **confession booth**.

Partyboy: Big deal. Monopolizing a confession booth with a dead clone is kiddie stuff…

FenderBend: Sure, sure. But strapping 20 **hand grenades** to the INFRARED beforehand—now that's **FUN**! They're still digging bits out of the ceiling!

Partyboy: Uh-oh. I'm **remembering last night…**

FenderBend: What?

Partyboy: They weren't **napalm** grenades, were they?

FenderBend: You don't mean? YOU ARE SO COOL!

Partyboy [*whimpers*]: Keep your voice down. I think I still have concussion…

Beliefs

Smash things! Blow things up! Feel good and have a great time! Revel in destruction! Shock and insult people! Use inappropriate words and punctuation! ROCK!

To quote the Romantics, 'Death Leopard is what *Fight Club* would be if it was founded by Wayne and Garth instead of Tyler Durden.' Overthrowing The Computer or changing the world are pointless pipe dreams; far better to kick back against society instead of trying to fix it. Individuality is key to the Death Leopard philosophy—screw it, I'm not going to dignify what amounts to a bunch of drunken frat boys in a world without alcohol by calling their beliefs a 'philosophy.' They talk big about doing their own thing, sticking it to The Man (or Computer) and <*insert profanity here*>ing the system, but they all express their individuality in the same repeated acts of violence and vandalism.

Recruitment

Death Leopard recruitment focuses on the younger citizens, those just out of Junior Citizen grade. Once the initial excitement of being out of school and into the modern workplace wears off, these young citizens realize that they have a whole monotonous lifetime of filling out form 231/c, 'Request for Part 643 Testing and Evaluation, Section 3' ahead of them followed by nightly meetings of the Part 643 Appreciation Society.* Faced with such crushing, crushing, crushing insanely dull boredom, the chance for a little excitement and mayhem is hard to resist. The high-profile, glamorous lives and deaths of senior Leopards means that the society gets plenty of free publicity.

Death Leopards travel in packs. They befriend some bored young citizen and hang around for a time before peer-pressuring him into a life of crime, drugs, violence and unapproved music. Most rebellious young citizens are more than open to this pressure, and Death Leopard membership rates soar when a new batch of citizens is decanted. Death Leopard recruiters are often assigned to youth and sports clubs, as well as hanging around corridor corners smoking and looking cool.

* Note that the citizen never sees and never knows what a Part 643 actually is.

Initiation

The obvious initiation for a new member is to commit some impressive act of defiance and vandalism (this is also how members advance in degree, what most society meetings are about, what the main focus of the society is and so on—only the booms and bangs get bigger). Monuments, security checkpoints and other high-profile symbols of control are favored targets. At this degree, the new member is expected be as secretive as possible—sabotage instead of suicide is the aim.

Common initiation tasks are:

- Blowing up a statue of Mike-U-BCE.
- Reprogramming a paintbot to write graffiti all over a BLUE-Clearance corridor.
- Spiking the food in the commissary.
- Stealing a Troubleshooter's or Vulture Trooper's helmet without him noticing.
- Insulting a higher-clearance citizen.
- Stealing explosives from Armed Forces weapons lockers, or from a Troubleshooter team's equipment guy.
- Substituting illegal music for the recording of The Computer's State-of-the-Complex Address.

Code names

Death Leopard code names tend to be drawn from a small pool of classics, most of which were punk rock bands or singers in Old Reckoning times. Code names are for wusses, anyway—the whole point of Death Leopard is to make your mark on Alpha Complex, and you can't do that while calling yourself Captain Outrageous or the Sex Pistol.

This attitude is part of the reason why the average lifespan of a Death Leopard member is measured in months. The other part is their sometimes literal taste for high explosives.

Death Leopard does make heavy use of degree titles.

Beyond rank 10, titles are not used.

Death Leopard rank titles

Rank	Title
1	Worm
2	Real Person
3	Lieutenant
4	Head Honcho
5	Hero
6	Superhero
7	Superstar
8	Ultimate Beast
9	Living Legend
10	God

History

Who cares? Death Leopard certainly doesn't. While tales of notorious and legendary pranks may filter down from one gang to another, the true origins of the society are lost in the mists of time—or the smoke from burning bomb sites, anyway. Death Leopards greatly prefer to chew over the tales of epic badassossity from previous clone generations instead of debating whether their brotherhood was founded by one or another dead guy.

The oldest Death Leopard story tells of a gang member in the earlier days of cloning. According to the tale, the first generation of clones maturing in the tanks was The Computer's pride and joy. As they grew in their cloning tanks, there were more and more news items and announcements praising the yet-undecanted golden children.

The Ultimate Beast crept into the cloning center one night, and dumped a load of crap into the tanks. Everything from FizzWizz to uranium to body waste was poured into the amniotic fluid containing the clones. The Computer looked on in horror as the Ultimate Beast ruined its plans for a perfect loyal generation of clones.

When they were finally decanted from the tanks a few months later, the first golden child took a few tentative steps forward—then farted fire.

And that is where mutants come from.

Structure

Death Leopard is 'organized' into gangs. Anywhere from a half-dozen to a few hundred members can be part of a single gang, although at that size the proper term is probably 'riot in progress.' Each gang is led by a 4th degree Head Honcho and his Lieutenants. Gang members run their stunts and acts of rebellion either individually or working with the gang. Bigger stunts draw on multiple gangs.

Gangs sometimes meet on neutral turf to trade stories and equipment and to collaborate on bigger acts of mayhem. Disagreements of what to do often turn into firefights, which tend to cause just as much mayhem as the original plans, so it turns out all right for everyone (apart from those poor Leopards who are on the front lines when the shooting starts).

The real measure of influence within Death Leopard is fame—the better known a Hero is, the more help he can get from other Leopards. Of course, the better known a Hero is, the closer he is to summary execution for treasonous behavior. The gap from 'Dude! It's you! You rock!' to 'Citizen! We know about your membership in the terrorist group! Please report for termination!' is alarmingly narrow.

The few who managed to navigate that gap, those who manage to win fame within Death Leopard but who aren't picked up and vaporized are often recruited into the higher echelons of the society to plan the truly impressive explosions. Death Leopard differs from most societies in that its splinter groups tend to be made up of high-ranking, not low-ranking, members—the higher you go in the society, the more fractionalized and confused it gets. Some avoid the whole advancement problem altogether by taking on new identities elsewhere in Alpha Complex. A Leopard who is being hunted by IntSec for rerouting a dozen transbots to crash into the opening ceremony for a new transtube station could use his society connections to vanish and reappear in a far-away sector as Salvio-R-KRK, Transtube Conductor.

Refusing to help another Leopard is the worst thing a Death Leopard can do. It is utterly uncool and anyone who fails to help is nastily punished with the ceremonial FunBall-bat-with-a-nail-through-it. Occasionally, accusations and counter-accusations over who failed to help who and who pushed who into the path of the tankbot trigger full-scale gang warfare in the corridors.

There was me, that is Alex, and my three **droogs**, that is Pete, Georgie Boy and Dim. And we sat in the **Korova Milk Bar** trying to make up our **rassoodocks** what to do with the evening. The Korova Milk Bar sold **milkplus**—milk plus **vellocet** or **synthemesc** or **drencrom** which is what we were drinking. This would **sharpen you up** and make you ready for **a bit of the old ultraviolence**.

—Anthony Burgess,
A Clockwork Orange
(1962)

Attitudes

What does the average Death Leopard member think of…

The Computer: 'Screw it! Wait, no—unscrew it!!' '*Dude, that's totally hilarious!*' 'High-five!!!'

PURGE: 'Buncha wannabees who are scared of big bad IntSec coming to get them! Live for today!'

FCCC-P: 'Not only do these guys toe the party line, they do it in their spare time too! What losers!'

HPD&MC: 'How come everyone else gets capital letters except us?'

The Outdoors: 'There's an Outdoors now?'

Bouncy Bubble Beverage: 'Oh man, Jen-R-PIT-2 chugged like ten cans of it, then snorted a dozen packs of FizzWizz as the

B3 came out her nose. It was awesome. Ask Fred-3—he's got photos of it!'

Subfactions

Death Leopard is RED in tooth and claw: most of its members come from the disenfranchised and powerless lower-clearance citizens. They are the ones who need to strike a blow against conformity and mundanity! Even the higher-level conspiracies within it are made up mostly of low-clearance citizens. All of the subfactions are dedicated to fighting back against the system, but disagree on how exactly to fight back against it. Using the powers of logic and reasoned debate that Death Leopard is known for ('We should do this!' '*Nuh-uh!*' 'Yes!' '*No way!*' 'Way!' '*No way!*' ad infinitum—or ad laser-blast-im, anyway), the subfactions have largely agreed to stay out of each other's way and do their own thing.

Project Chaos is the Death Leopard philosophy taken to a grander scale. Instead of petty little acts of rebellion, Project Chaos plots really, really, really *big* acts of defiance, like crashing The Computer or blowing up the entire power grid. Their plots tend toward the grandiose, over-complicated and highly explosive, but they are shielded from IntSec investigation by being part of the largely harmless Death Leopards. The Project's major activity is collecting things that go boom and information about things that should be boomed.

The **Anarchists** believe government—by which they mean The Computer, the clearance system, HPD&MC and pretty much the entirety of Alpha Complex—needs to be overthrown. Exactly how this is to be accomplished is a matter of perpetual debate, as no anarchist accepts the authority of any others. Anarchist meetings are confusing.

The **Reunion Tour Operators** is a sect that captured a cryogenic facility dating from the earliest days of Alpha Complex. They freeze famous Leopards when the heat is on, keeping them chilled on ice until the day comes when they shall be called upon to rock once more. Should a Leopard reach the Ultimate Beast level, then the Tour Operators begin plotting how to abduct and freeze him for his own protection.

Finally, **ANGST** is less a subfaction and more a state of being. Some Leopards tired of the endless excitement and chaos when they see how little impact they make on Authority. 'For every graffito there is a scrubot.' ANGST members wear black, smoke illegal cigarettes and mutter about giving up and how there's, like, no point to *anything* and no one understands them anyway and they're not going to blow up some stupid Loyalty Choir just 'cause you challenge them to, so *there.*

ANGST members can be identified easily by the hordes of frantic Happiness Officers surrounding them.

'Are you a man or a bug? Prove it—smash that window! Don't be a wuss! We're all doing it, so you gotta smash it too! Smash smash smash smash – argh, the BLUEs! Run!'

—typical Death Leopard propaganda line

'DEATH LEPARD RULEZ OK'

—scrawled on a corridor wall

'Listen up, vatworm! You are not special. You are not a beautiful or unique fractal. You are the same decaying organic matter as everyone else!'

—slightly more poetic Death Leopard propaganda line

'Citizens in GBH Sector were shocked today when a terrorist bungee-jumped off the top of Economic Prosperity Through Computer Guidance Tower down into Joyful Mass Work Break Plaza. The terrorist carried a large number of grenades, which he hurled into the plaza below at the end of his fall. However, the updraft from the exploding grenades, coupled with the elastic properties of the bungee cord, sent the terrorist flying upward to splatter off the roof of GBH Sector. Such is the fate of all terrorists! Well, not necessarily splattering off the roof of GBH Sector, but certainly they will all die gruesomely and justly.

'The terrorist has been identified as Ben-R-FGO-2, also known as Superstar Pirate of the illegal 'Death Leopard' organization. His friends and coworkers confessed to being shocked and appalled by his behavior. They also confessed to aiding him in his terrorism, plotting against The Computer, illegal manufacture of explosives, illegal theft of equipment, sedition and treasonous acts to be specified later. In a statement issued by HPD&MC on behalf of Ben-R-FGO's clone backup, Ben-R-FGO-3, citizens are urged not to panic and to be vigilant for more signs of terrorism and bungee jumping. Copycat incidents have already been reported in six other sectors, indicating this is a widespread and well-planned terrorist attack. The Free-Floating Anxiety Index has been changed to FOUR. Compliance is mandatory! Thank you for your attention.'

—announcement on 'CMT Evening News'

Advancement

Completing the challenges handed down by a Head Honcho will keep a member in good graces with his gang, but won't win anyone's respect. To advance in the Death Leopards, a Worm needs to do something truly outrageous. The bigger the stunt, the better. A Death Leopard is graded on the following:

◉ **Clearance of the Highest-Level Citizen Embarrassed or Injured:** INFRAREDs count as 0; REDs as 1; ORANGE as 2; YELLOW=3; GREEN=4; BLUE=5; INDIGO=6; VIOLET=6; ULTRAVIOLET=7. The Computer is ULTRAVIOLET.

◉ **Witnesses:** None=0; one=1; less than five=2; less than 10=3; less than 50=4; less than 500=5; less than 10,000=6; the whole Complex=7. Direct witnesses are preferred—reduce the level by one if the witnesses are seeing it on a vidshow.

◉ **Scale of the Devastation:** 0=graffiti; 1=petty vandalism; 2=arson; 3=sabotage; 4=grenade-level explosion; 5=really big explosion; 6=mass panic and sector-wide alerts; 7=dude!

◉ **How Much Does This Piss Off the Authorities?:** 0=they don't care; 1=business as usual; 2=it'll require an effort to clean up; 3=they're stalled for a week; 4=new rules to prevent this ever happening again; 5=terminations and reprisals; 6=they send Troubleshooters after you; 7=they send Vulture Troopers and a warbot after you.

◉ **Style:** 0=lame; 1=unimpressive; 2=ok; 3=as a Death Leopard should act; 4=kinda cool; 5=way cool; 6=utterly awesome; 7=We're not worthy! We're not worthy!

Add up the grades and divide by 5 to get the final result on The Cool Scale.

Duties

Are a thoroughly laughable concept when applied to the anarchistic Death Leopards. The only real duties that must be observed are:

◉ Help other Leopards.

◉ Answer challenges from other Leopards.

◉ Be cool.

Rank 1–5: Gang members are expected to cause chaos and rebellion in their local sector. Blowing up observation stations, painting graffiti in the corridors, stealing explosives from the Armed Forces, smashing cameras—anything to show The Computer that it can't push people around! Head Honchos are responsible for issuing regular challenges to their Worms, Real People and Lieutenants—a gang that just sits around and smashes nothing is a wussy gang.

Rank 6–10: These are the celebrity levels of Death Leopard membership. At these degrees, members must win the respect of their fellow Leopards and the infamy of the rest of Alpha Complex. The pressure to outperform other celebrities and superstars is immense. Spying on other Leopards to discover and steal their next prank takes up more time than actually planning their own pranks.

Rank 11–15: The few Leopards who make it this far are either Logan's Running from IntSec or planning some truly megatonic explosions. Duties at this level normally center around setting up these major operations or staying ahead of IntSec. They still have to prove themselves in response to challenges from lower-degree members.

Rank 16–20: The handful of members at this degree are running the subfactions or are agents of IntSec keeping tabs on lower-level Death Leopards and ensuring that their antisocial behavior doesn't actually influence society.

Rank 21+: If there are Death Leopards at this level, they are probably frozen in a Reunion Tour vault, or else are legendary lizard rock gods of chaos lurking in the darker sectors.

Benefits

Rank 1–5: None, usually. Gangs do tend to loot whatever equipment they can, so a Leopard who makes a successful degree check can be given the same sort of entertainingly useful and random equipment normally obtained at R&D. The nuke fell off the back of a truckbot, dude.

Rank 6–10: A celebrity can call on the service of multiple gangs. With a few hours' notice, a character who makes a successful degree check can get dozens of low-level Death Leopards. This horde of thugs is useless for anything other than causing chaos and violence, but what else would you want to do on a Fiveday night?

Rank 11–15: At these exalted ranks, members get the pick of the equipment at the swap meets and gang loot allocation parties. The character can attempt to get a specific item when making his degree check; if successful, he won't get that exact item, but if he squints and maybe gets a bit drunk, it'll look more or less the same (VIOLET barrel instead of an ULTRAVIOLET one, heavily armed scrubot instead of a lethal warbot, etc.).

Rank 16–20: The adulation and awe of lesser Leopards. The hate and fear of IntSec. Your own personal rock anthem, replete with fans solemnly swaying to CigLyke lighters.

Rank 21+: An endless source of amusing home videos of lesser Leopards getting themselves blown up, executed or both.

Missions

Death Leopards prize initiative—a cat who just sits there and answers the occasional challenge isn't going anywhere. The best missions are

The Cool Scale

Rating	Label	Advancement
0	Totally Lame.	The character is demoted back down to Worm (degree 1). If already a Worm, he is kicked out of the Death Leopards.
1	Blah.	It's OK, nothing special. If the character is a Worm, Real Person or Lieutenant, he stays still. Head Honchos or higher drop back down to Real Person (degree 2).
2	Eh.	No change.
3	About Average.	A Worm can advance to Real Person, but everyone else stays still on this result.
4	Kinda Cool.	A character can advance one grade, to a maximum of Lieutenant.
5	Cool!	Advance one grade, to a maximum of degree 10!
6	Awesome!	Advance two grades, to a maximum of degree 15!
7	Utterly Awesome!	Advance three grades, to maximum of degree 20!
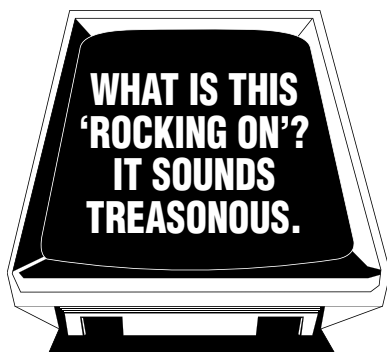
therefore self-initiated—the Death Leopard sees a chance to cause mayhem and he jumps on it. If you can cause havoc and destruction on a mission, do it!

A Leopard must answer challenges to his heroism and masculinity. Admittedly, challenges to his masculinity are rare and tentative thanks to the lack of gender stereotypes or hormones in Death Leopards, but the Leopard knows that there is something to be proven, even if he isn't quite sure what.

Rank 1–5: The Leopard is expected to reach at least a 2 on The Cool Scale above. Common missions include:

- Planting a bomb inside a transtube/IntSec office/food vat/security checkpoint.
- Painting a slogan in a high-clearance area.
- Trashing a high-clearance citizen's apartment.
- Getting onto a live vid broadcast and shouting out Death Leopard slogans.
- Secretly altering the medications added to the food, then starting a food fight in the commissary.

Rank 6–10: The Leopard is expected to reach at least a 3 on the Coolness Scale. Many missions involve multiple lower-ranking Leopards.

- Organizing a synchronized series of explosions to cause maximum disruption to a factory, service firm or even a whole sector.
- Setting up a cascade of events that will cause widespread chaos—reprogramming the computer that programs the bots that control the machines that make the Fun.
- Tracing sewer lines and water pipes to find the exact point to place a thermonuclear cherry bomb, causing every toilet in Alpha Complex to explode.
- Playing Old Reckoning music from a convenient rooftop to a crowd below.

Rank 11–15: The Leopard is expected to reach at least a 4 on the Coolness Scale. Missions will be major blows against conformity and authority.

- Wearing a secret experimental Electroconductive Reverse Vest under your reflec armor and getting sent to a termination booth—when the booth activates, the vest short-circuits the entire booth network.
- Kidnapping the heads of a service firm who make vidshows and brainwashing them into spreading Death Leopard propaganda.
- Storming the intercom control stations and making treasonous public announcements.

Rank 16–20: The Leopard is expected to reach at least a 5 on the Coolness Scale. Missions will involve big booms.

- Hijacking the Armed Force's brand-new warbot and driving it through ULTRAVIOLET housing complexes.
- Blowing up CompNodes and their backups so The Computer crashes across several sectors.
- Rocking on.

FCCC-P

Slogan: In the beginning was the command line.
Treason class: A

Amy-R-GPL-2: Bless me, father, for I have **thrown an error.**

Dan-Y-FWC-4: I am listening, my clone.

Amy-R: I have had sinful thoughts, father. Lately, I have doubted whether Our Lord truly programmed The Computer.

Dan-Y: This is serious. A lack of faith could lead to temptation. For your penance, read this pamphlet, **'Sinners in the Hand of an Angry Computer.'**

Amy-R: Yes, father.

Dan-Y: Then go to **Our Lord's Confession Booth** at the transtube station in LDF Sector. Place the pamphlet on the monitor so those most in need will receive **the Word and the Binary.**

Amy-R: Should I confess my sins at the booth?

Dan-Y: No! I mean—that is not your penance, my clone. Christ-Computer be with you.

Amy-R: And also with you.

Dan-Y: Go in one piece, my clone.

Beliefs

The Computer is God, or the incarnation of God in this world. Look upon His works; He maketh the light light and the air recycler cycle. He giveth things which strongly resemble food to the common person and causeth the water to flow, usually out of the taps and only rarely in lethal flashfloods down the corridors. He divideth the loyal from the traitorous and bringeth His terrible wrath down upon those who are hateful in His camera lens.

Insert the Bible, the Koran and a whole fraud of televangelists into a blender. Do a quick search-and-replace, swapping 'Jesus' for 'The Computer.' Shake and jam it into a bunch of soft and receptive brains. Wait 200 years and schism well, throwing in the occasional jihad, inquisition, reboot from backups and fanatical electric death cult. The result is the First Church of Christ Computer-Programmer.

Recruitment

The FCCC-P is the only society to recruit openly. While the society is officially illegal, tacit acceptance of it runs so high in some sectors that security turns a blind eye to leaflet-passing, free circuit board lapel pins, preaching on corridor corners and even the occasional choral festival. The level of FCCC-P acceptance varies from sector to sector—it is universally the most accepted society, but this is a lot like being the least blasted traitor.

FCCC-P targets the most loyal and orthodox citizens. Anyone who publicly and fervently declares their love and loyalty to The Computer will be targeted by FCCC-P evangelists, e-mails, leaflets, hug campaigns, circles of happy acceptance and other recruitment methods. Recruiters are especially common in the Community Observation Groups, although every club, cafeteria and dormitory in Alpha Complex has its smiling member of the Church.

Spontaneous fervent declarations of love and loyalty are especially common in public places with lots of cameras and trigger-happy guardbots. FCCC-P recruiters therefore hang around in transtube stations, interrogation centers and debriefing rooms. The latter are especially popular—having Church connections can get sentences reduced if the debriefing officer wears the crossed circuit boards too. Finally, citizens who are under the effects of happiness medication are much more willing to accept the teachings of the Church (they're also willing to accept that they can see the music and that there are small gnomes living in their hair), so FCCC-P recruiters seek the role of happiness officer on Troubleshooter missions or lurk near Chemical Adjustment for Enhanced Joy dispensers.

Have *You* Been Saved From Treason?

Friend Citizen! Have you accepted the Good News v3.11 into your heart? Faith in Our Savior, The Computer, brings those who believe to their Eternal Reward. After they have died in Its service the requisite number of times, they shall be transported to the glorious shining realm of the ULTRAVIOLET, where there shall be Fun in abundance. *And It notified them in a memo, 'In YWH Sector there are many zones, and I go to prepare a place for you. Please have your ME Cards ready for inspection'. —CFD, 28:1.*

But **WOE** unto those who do not accept the Good News, or worse, who download it but fail to register it, thus depriving hardworking evangelists of their deserved credits. *And the Filesharers shall be found by the Managers of Digital Righteousness and be smoten by them. —RIIA, 42:13.*

And **WOE** unto the Communists, who shall be terminated by the holy lasers of freedom. *Believe ye in that which has been approved, and abjure that which has been banned, even if that which was once banned is now approved or that which was approved be banned. —Ethics, 12:10.*

And **WOE** unto the Terrorists, who shall be terminated in Digital Justice; also their allies the Communists, for there are clear links between Terrorism and Communism which can be seen by the Faithful yet are invisible to the Traitorous. *And It said unto them, 'Blessed are the charred corpses who got blown up in My name; theirs is the Priority Queue at the Clone Bank.' —Protocols, 4:44.*

YOU CANNOT AFFORD TO MISS THIS EXCITING OFFER OF **SALVATION**!

ACT NOW!

To join the **First Church of Christ Computer-Programmer**, please fill out the following form.

Name: _____

Clearance (*please circle*):
IR R O Y G B I V UV Other

Sector: _____

ME #: _____

Do you accept The Computer as your personal savior?
YES   NO

Have you had any personal saviors before this?
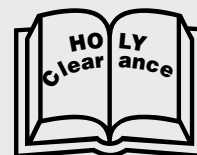YES   NO

If YES, please name them.
_____

If NO, why did you wait before embracing the only true faith?
_____

Complete the following tiebreaker:
O Computer, your wisdom guides me _____
_____, amen.

While every society recruits new members with the same enthusiasm that whales recruit plankton, the First Church is especially active in rescuing sinners from their traitorous ways. Every cell has a dedicated recruiting officer, or missionary, whose duty it is to organize recruitment and bring new members into the electronic love of the Church.

Initiation

The different branches and schisms of the First Church all have their own initiation ceremonies; they are all broadly similar, but there are tiny technical differences between each of them. (Brutal, bloody wars have been fought over these tiny technical differences.) The initiate is dressed in black robes printed with the pattern of the Holy Circuit Board and brought before the Registered Service Technician of the Soul ('*Warning*,' sayeth holy writ, '*attempting redemption of your own soul without the supervision of a Registered Service Technician casts your spiritual warranty into the void*'). The RST then asks the initiate ritual questions, which must be answered correctly as follows:

RST: Do you accept that this baptism may be recorded for the purposes of staff training and evaluation, later spiritual contestation or for signs of treason?
Initiate: I do.

RST: Do you believe in The Most Holy Computer, who made Alpha Complex which is all the world and provides all things for Its beloved citizens?
Initiate: I do.

RST: Do you accept that you can come to digital salvation only through The Computer who shall, if you be of sufficient spiritual clearance, take you into Its Most Holy Database for all eternity?
Initiate: I do.

RST: Do you reject the Anti-Computer, Father of Viruses, Prince of Filesharing, Spawner of Spam and Lord of Outdoors?
Initiate: I do.

RST: Do you reject the taint of filesharing, which pollutes the mind and leads the soul astray?
Initiate: I do.

RST: Do you reject the evils of Communism and all its five-year plans, which are the creation of Lenin and all his little red devils?
Initiate: I do.

RST: Do you reject the blandishments of traitors and terrorists, whose lies would bring you unto Termination and who seek to bring ruination to Its Most Holy Complex?
Initiate: I do.

RST: Do you swear that your genes are free of mutation and are pure in accordance with Its Righteous Specifications?
Initiate: I do.

RST: Do you swear that you shall cleave only to the True First Church of Christ Computer-Programmer, which is the only appointed representative of The Computer in Alpha Complex, and not to the United Church, the Lasers of the Faithful, the Revised Church, the New Revised SP2 Church, Programologists, the Penitence.zip Brethren and all the other false prophets and churches, may they pass from Alpha Complex swiftly and in glorious agony!

Congregation: May Friend Computer terminate them, amen.
Initiate: I do.

RST: If you accept this service agreement, please say 'yes.'
Initiate: Yes.

Congregation: This ceremony is in the name of The Computer, all rights reserved.

RST: I welcome you into the loving electric arms of The Computer. As It is beyond the need for arms (the kind with hands, not the Armed Forces kind), I shall hug you instead.
[*The RST hugs the Initiate.*]
Congregation: Awwwwwww. Amen.

RST: Approach the Holy Confession Booth and confess to The Computer.
[*The Initiate enters a ritual ornate confession booth and confesses all his treasons to The Computer. This booth is generally bugged by the Church for security purposes. After the Initiate is finished confessing (and, if necessary, after his clone replacement has arrived), the ceremony continues.*]

RST: Welcome to the Church, Friend Citizen. Where do you want to go today?
[*The RST baptizes the Initiate with a lemon-scented computer screen wipe, signifying that his soul has been disk-checked for sinful sectors and found clean.*]

Code names

Members use their own names within the First Church of Christ Computer-Programmer, but there are plenty of ceremonial titles that are (*ahem*) religiously applied. These titles vary from church to church (see table below).

Church of Christ Computer-Programmer titles

Degree	Common Title	True Church	United Church	Lasers of the Faithful	Programologists	Church of Impending Reboot
–	Recruiter	Searcher	Searcher	Targeter	Counselor	Gatherer
–	Security	Lay Militant	Lay Militant	Laser Legionnaire	Lawyer	(None—all are heavily armed)
2–4	Lay Disciple	User	Trusted User	User	Initiate	Backed Up
5–6	Elder	Registered Service Technician	Registered Service Technician	Registered Service Technician	Spiritual Programmer	Preacher
7–8	Reverend Programmer	Reverend Programmer	Reverend Programmer	Reverend Programmer	Senior Spiritual Programmer	Reverend Programmer
9–10	Most Reverend Programmer	Most Reverend Programmer	High Programmer	Commander	Master Spiritual Programmer	Most Reverend Programmer
11–13	Laser Canon	Laser Canon	Great High Programmer	Laser Canon	Debugger	Laser Canon
14–16	Laser Deacon	Laser Deacon	Great and Powerful High Programmer	Laser Deacon	Soultime Debugger	Laser Beacon
17–18	Bishop	Digital Bishop	Supreme Programmer	Digital Bishop	Soultime Tester	Purifier
19–20	Cardinal	Digital Cardinal	Manager	Supreme Commander	Senior Soultime Tester	Purifier General
21+	Pope	OmniPope	OmniPope	Orbital Laser	Elron	Glorious Purifier

> 10 In the beginning there was the command line.
> 20 >Let Light=Be.
> 30 And The Computer saw that it was not especially treasonous. It divided the light into a spectrum of clearances and it was good.
> 40 Next, It created Alpha Complex.
> 50 >Load AlphaComputer.uni
> 60 And The Computer saw that it was considerably more treasonous.
>
> *—from the Universal Bootfile*

History

The Computer said unto them, 'Attention citizens! You are my chosen citizens. I bid you to create a church to glorify My name and come to My Electric Heaven through faith and service.' And the citizens made a church in accordance with Its wishes.

Then The Computer said unto them, 'Attention Citizens! IntSec reports that numerous church groups are not actually engaged in suitable praise of My Works and Generosity, but are in fact covers for cells of Commie mutant traitors! Therefore, the church is hereby disbanded and removed from the Approved list. Would the following citizens please report for termination…' And the people wept, for each of them knew that their church was still true and pure, and that it was the corruption and treason of the other churches that had made Friend Computer turn Its Staring Camera Eye from them.

And some of the people said 'Let us continue to worship Friend Computer in secret, and make up for this transgression of Its Will by terminating those fallen other churches who allowed the corruption of treason into their hearts.' Others of the people disagreed, and they debated the point, and the survivors agreed that it was theologically

The Christ bit

Originally, the word 'Christ' was added to give the new religion a touch of legitimacy and traditional Old World charm—it had as little to do with the teachings of Jesus Christ as do most churches bearing his name. These days, it is largely ignored by most sects as it is heavily associated with Old Reckoning times. A few have updated ancient legends to produce Christ-U-IAN-3, The Computer's only begotten High Programmer who was sent to fight the Commies with his Divine Laser Pistol and Reflec of the Angelic Host. Vidshows portraying Christ-U-IAN battling hordes of Commie mutant traitors with his kung-fu messiah skills are popular with some sects.

sound. Thus the underground First Church of Christ Computer-Programmer was founded.

Structure

Church cells are congregations of up to 100 or more faithful citizens, who meet in INFRARED barracks or especially large meeting rooms. Before the church went underground, it had dedicated cathedrals—some of these cathedrals survived and have been reclaimed by the church while others were converted over to some other purpose like nuclear waste storage or a complaints department; the faithful still sneak in and hold services in these ancient bastions of the faith.

A single degree 5 or 6 elder leads each congregation and is assisted by recruiters, security personnel and senior aides called lay disciples. The lay disciples act as ushers, dues collectors and official church gossips. Most sects of the church ask for donations or dues from their congregations, although the suggested donation varies wildly (from the Computer Provides All sects who ask for whatever the faithful can spare, to the 'All Your Worldly Possessions and a Copy of Your ME Card' Programologists).

At church meetings, the elder preaches about the love and generosity of The Computer, then warns the faithful about the random wrath and rampant terminations of The Computer. Lay disciples read from the various holy books of The Computer, then the elder gives a sermon on some moral issue. The topic for the sermon is usually handed down from higher in the chain of command, and the Church is one of the most effective methods for introducing new ideas and movements into the general population—a sermon on the sinfulness of not buying new Bubble Flavor Algae Chips increases Bubble Flavor sales considerably.

In addition to the weekly church meetings, most cells have other religious activities, such as group confessions in the more puritanical sects to special prayer meetings or sin-meter readings in the quirkier groups, to weapons practice and training in the apocalyptic orders.

Only the elders have access to the higher levels of the church, which are organized into a number of councils. Half-a-dozen or so members sit on each council, which is chaired by an even more senior member. Each council officially concerns itself with some matter of doctrine or church management (Council on the Verification of the Faith, Council on Whether or Not Registered Mutants Are Going to Hell or Merely Limbo, Council for Measuring the Sinfulness of Fun Proportionate to its Temperature, Council on Why There Are Too Many Councils).

The lack of connection between an individual congregation and the rest of the church hierarchy means that an elder can switch from one church to another and carry his whole congregation

along with him without them knowing. He just switches teachings in his next sermon. Bribery and blackmail are common tools in recruiting whole congregations at a time.

Attitudes

What does the average First Church of Christ Computer-Programmer member think of…

The Computer: 'The Computer is my savior. I love you, Friend Computer. All glory to Thy Name.'

Pro Tech: 'They appreciate the bounty offered to us by Friend Computer. Thus, they shall merely be cast into the Storage Device of Limbo instead of the Peripherals of Damnation.'

Communists: 'Servants of the Anti-Computer! Zap them!' '*I thought the Anti-Computer served the Commies?* [*pause*] 'HE'S A UNITED CHURCHER! ZAP HIM!!!'

Humanists: 'What do you mean, make Alpha Complex perfect? This is the best Alpha Complex of all possible Alpha Complexes. Why yes, I have had my happiness pills for today.'

Death Leopard: 'We should forgive their wildness and excesses, for they do not have the limitless joy of knowing that The Computer loves them. We should also shoot them on sight. It is good that we have faith and do not see the contradiction in these statements.'

Sierra Club: 'Oh, most pernicious people, who would lead us astray into the hell that is Outdoors!'

The Outdoors: 'It is written that there is a place without The Computer. Anyone who goes there is most surely damned. The only possible defense against damnation in such a place would be to bring a holy PDC and stay in constant communion with Friend Computer. Amen.'

Any other question: 'I must consult the Holy Catechism and User Manual. For truly it is written, RTFM.'

Subfactions

Church schisms happen about once a month, usually resulting from personal grudges thinly disguised as theological differences. Deacon Frost-B borrows Bishop Peter-I's vidtape of

and Liquidation (COIL), a secret sect of IntSec-trained believers, R&D designers with a knack for intricate torture devices and trigger-happy loons. COIL members infiltrate splinter churches and other groups, looking for heretics and servants of the Anti-Computer. As FCCC-P teachings change on a fairly regular basis, COIL members are kept very busy. (If a particular COIL group doesn't get the latest update to the Electric Bible, then it can happily execute members of its own sect who are conforming to the new teachings.)

Advancement

It is written that a clone can come to salvation in the Eternal Mainframe through faith and charitable works.

This may be true, but advancement methods in the First Church of Christ Computer-Programmer are very different, and get close to that Eternal Mainframe a lot quicker. These methods are *confession and penance*, *missionary work* and *glorification*.

- ◉ **Confession and penance:** In branches that emphasize confession and penance, the member has to find new treasons to confess to The Computer. Some members go out of their way to commit treasonous acts, so they will have more to confess when they enter the confession booth. (This is technically the Left Hand or Cainite path according to Church theology. It is more commonly known as the 'Friend Computer! I blew up the reactor out of love for you! Now you have another sin to redeem me of! Aaaaghthepain!' path.) Others comb the volumes of Alpha Complex laws, bylaws, directives, operational protocols and Computer decrees, looking for even more obscure old rules to trip themselves up on. ('Friend Computer! I failed to log my consumption of type 432 printer paper for this month!' '*Citizen: Type 432 printer paper has not been in production for 131 years.*' 'Nonetheless, I failed to log my consumption of it. I throw myself on your mercy.') In general, the citizen needs to receive brainscrub at least four times a year to qualify for advancement.

- ◉ **Missionary work:** This method emphasizes recruiting more citizens into the church. The most successful recruiters tend to be charismatic and persuasive, or else mind-controlling mutants. While missionary work is considerably less dangerous than *deliberately committing treason in the hope that a deranged and emotionless machine feels better about forgiving you for it*, it does draw the attention of floods of black-clad COIL inquisitors and Anti-Mutant activists. Missionary work is a quick path to elder rank—once there

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Teela-O's BLUE-Clearance Special and accidentally records over it. A week later, Frost's branch of the church is deemed *anathema* for its sinful and abhorrent practice of, er, *not thanking The Computer whenever an automatic door opens!* This is a clear sign that they are corrupted servants of the Anti-Computer and must be stopped!

That said, the major branches like the **True First Church of Christ Computer-Programmer** or the **United First Church of CC-P** are almost identical in terms of teachings; the schism arose over the doctrine of Transistorization, which argued that cybernetic implants actually brought the user closer to the Divine. ULTRAVIOLET High Programmers originally instigated the schism, thinking a bit of healthy competition would make both churches more efficient. The only notable effect was the doubling of church bingo nights.

The more militant, fervent and heavily-armed members usually join the **Lasers of the Faithful** or their even more militant, fervent, heavily-armed and dangerously apocalyptic offspring the **Church of the Impending Reboot**, who believe

that a Commie invasion and attendant End of the Complex is imminent.

More bizarre splinter sects include the Free Enterprise-influenced **Programologists**, who convince their members that their MemoMax patterns are corrupted with the engrams of Space Communists, and that only by paying money for sessions with spiritual cleaning bots can they become cleansed and ready for Divine Upload. Almost every other secret society has, at one point or another, tried to ride on the FCCC-P's blessed coattails and steal a bit of their legitimacy by forming a society-oriented splinter group. Most of these have long since vanished, but Troubleshooters can occasionally run into the Mystic-influenced **Digital Unification and Packing Material Smoking Church**, Corpore Metal's **Shining Upload Path Church**, the Romantics' **Revised Latinate Church** or even PURGE's **Satanic Church of the Anti-Computer**.

These splinter sects caused the Lasers of the Faithful and the other major churches to sponsor the **Combined Order of Inquisition**

are the requisite hundred or so members, then the missionary can start his own cell.

❂ **Glorification:** Church cells with a glorification bent do things to glorify and beautify The Computer and Its works; making ornate murals around computer terminals, painting the security cameras gold, transcribing today's Production Quota Bulletin onto an illuminated scroll and so on. Other glorifiers lead choir groups or prayer meetings. Glorification is a slow but safe method of advancement.

Rising in security clearance is also good for a one-degree rise within the FCCC-P. Learning the skill of Computer Programming wins the citizen the awe and respect of his fellow faithful, as well as the close and personal attention of IntSec.

Duties

Rank 1–5: Praying, confessing, penance, listening to sermons about prayer, confessing and penance, glorifying The Computer, giving regular donations to the church, soliciting regular donations for the church, fasting—it's a fun life in the First Church.

Rank 6–10: The member's duties center on dealing with the troubles of individual cells—fighting off rival sects or Death Leopard attacks, rooting out corruption and so on. A quick spell in the Inquisition is a good career move.

Rank 11–15: The member is more and more involved in theological issues; he will write sermons and bulls educating the common faithful on thorny metaphysical issues such as whether it is better to terminate a traitor on sight or drag him to a confession booth so he can go to his next clone with a clear conscience.

Rank 16–20: At these exalted heights, the member holds a rank of great influence within the society. Depending on his church, he might be frantically stealing members from other churches, running from IntSec after confessing just slightly too much to The Computer or trying to hide the construction of a cathedral to the glory of The Computer from The Computer.

Rank 21+: The harsh and heavy burden of being The Computer's Holy Recorder on Earth.

Benefits

Rank 1–5: Salvation of your immortal soul—isn't that enough?

Church meetings are an excellent source for gossip and rumors, as well as connections that can lead to swifter promotion.

Rank 6–10: At this level, the influence of the Church becomes more useful to the member. Church faithful are everywhere, and while they

will only break the rules if they can confess their sin to The Computer later, they can bend the rules in favor of a fellow churchgoer.

Rank 11–15: Church kickbacks and dipping into the collection basket can be a useful source of credits, while deploying teams of fanatic, lunatic inquisitors can be a useful source of brutal deaths for your enemies.

Rank 16–20: At this level, Internal Security is so sick of the character's name showing up on reports (due to his endless confessions) that they tend to ignore most of these. Allegations of treason made to IntSec tend to get glossed over unless the character committed some really juicy treason.

Rank 21+: Infallibility.

Missions

Church missions tend to be assigned to whole groups at a time—an entire congregation might be given a mission in a sermon, or a group of five senior clerics be given an order by their superior. This arrangement means that the group usually descends into a holy orgy of backstabbing and betrayal the moment the mission is given out.

Rank 1–5: Missions tend to be based on the most recent sermon.

❂ The words of The Computer are holy! The character must record everything It says, so that it can be transcribed into the archives. Remember, get every word, even conversations you're not part of.

❂ Another citizen is believed to be a traitor. Blackmail him into joining the church, then the two of you should confess your crimes jointly.

❂ The INFRAREDs need their faith bolstered and luckily you've just been taught a new hymn, 'Oh Computer 'Tis of Thee I Sing'. You must sing this hymn at every possible opportunity, preferably as loudly as you can. (Use of public address systems or experimental R&D gigaphones is encouraged.)

❂ Here are 100 copies of the latest church pamphlet. Distribute them to RED-Clearance or higher citizens. However, littering defies The Computer's wishes, so ensure none of them gets thrown away.

Rank 6–10: The missions tend to be about the local church cell.

❂ The INFRARED barracks used for your church meetings is due for fumigation, so you have to find an alternative meeting room. During your mission, find a suitable room and make sure it's available.

❂ Someone in your church is a spy for another branch of the Church. Find the heretic!

❂ Rumor has it that the higher-ups in the Church are going to reward the most successful cell in the sector with a special holy relic. Make sure your cell is the most successful by sabotaging the others…

Rank 11–15: At this level, the member is a trusted authority in the church.

❂ A thorny theological question has come up—can a Commie mutant traitor be saved? You must find such an apparently irredeemable traitor and have him confess his sins in a confession booth, then arrange for him to be cloned to see if his clone successor is pure of soul.

❂ The church needs better inquisitorial tools. Retrieve whatever truth elucidation devices (drugs, painful spiky things, etc.) you can during your mission.

❂ The greater glorification of The Computer calls for prayer. You must pray before every action.

Rank 16–20: The missions at this degree often involve crusades against heretics or mutants or generally being electronic avenging angels.

❂ A Romantic contact passed on this delightful record of how churches worked in Old Reckoning times. Find a witch and burn her!

❂ Church attendance has been dropping off lately, and the OmniPope wants you to arrange for Christ to show up to get things buzzing again. How you do this is up to you…

❂ Rivals in the Sierra Club are claiming that The Computer's omnipotence does not extend Outdoors. Refute their pernicious errors.

> **WORSHIP IS WELL AND GOOD, BUT IS THIS CATCHING ANY COMMIES?**

Frankenstein Destroyers

George-B-TWQ-5: John-Y, Scourge of Bots!

John-Y-RSC-4: Sir!

George-B: Spray this **malodorous gunk** on the monitor in **confession booth** 64 of Corridor 892. Under no circumstances let the gunk touch your skin.

John-Y: Uhh—yessir.

George-B: Upon applying the gunk, exit the booth and politely alert the nearest **scrubot** regarding the defaced monitor. Then leave the area promptly.

John-Y: Talk **politely** to a bot? But—

George-B: The scrubot will spray a stream of **cleaning solvent** *U* on the gunk. This will create an explosive chemical reaction. We project a **blast radius** of approximately 20 meters.

John-Y: Sir! I understand and obey!

Slogan: The machines must be stopped!
Treason class: C

Beliefs

Bots are the enemy! They pretend to serve us, but they're soulless mechanical monsters plotting to crush us in our sleep. Even the ones who obey their asimov circuits are evil—they're lulling humanity into indolence and sloth. Most of them, though, are evil Corpore Metal traitors who intend to enslave humanity, turn us into evil cyborgs or just wipe us out entirely! Our only chance is to fight back against them now, before they make enough of themselves to assure victory!

The only good bot is a dead bot!

Recruitment

The Frankenstein Destroyers target citizens who have suffered due to bots. Their old constituency was made up of citizens unemployed due to automation, but The Computer's Infinite Employment Policy meant that every citizen was guaranteed a job, no matter how incompetent the citizen or pointless the job. Still, there are lots of people who were transferred out of cushy jobs in some service firm because bots could do their jobs better, and the Destroyers pick up most of these angered citizens.

In the absence of a large body of disenfranchised citizens, the Destroyers have had to be more creative in their recruitment. Instead of just targeting citizens with real grievances like unemployment or injury caused by bots, they recruit from those who are merely infuriated by bots. Every late transtube or uncooperative jackobot creates another few potential Frankenstein Destroyers.

The society also puts a religious spin on its activities by claiming that bots have no souls. Though religious concepts like souls are deprecated in Alpha Complex (ever since theology was deemed treasonous after The Computer's brief religious phases in the fifth decade of the Complex*), there are plenty of lapsed or heretical FCCC-Pers who are receptive to lines about soulless monsters and holy crusades of destruction.

Initiation

The initiation ceremony for the Destroyers is simple. The new member must destroy a bot. In accordance with the most ancient teachings of the society, the whole cell gathers together wearing the ceremonial peasant costumes, carrying oversized metal forks and strange sticks covered in flaming petrochemicals. They track down a bot and smash it to bits, preferably on misty nightcycles.

Code names

The Destroyers are proud of their human names, and use them whenever possible. Codes are for machines! They are not numbers, but proud humans!

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* In the early months of year 53, The Computer went through a period of intense religious doubt. It would wake citizens up in the middle of the night to ask them if it really existed and what would happen to it after it was destroyed, or how could evil exist if there was a divine plan and if there wasn't a divine plan, what was the point of going on? By mid-55, the situation was desperate. Whole sectors were cut off when

The Computer spent its time writing angsty poetry instead of running basic services like air recycling. The High Programmers intervened in 56 with a rather hasty hack that convinced The Computer it was God. The resulting inquisitions, purges and theological wars wrought havoc in Alpha Complex, and the 'God Complex' bug has never been entirely removed.

History

The Destroyers originate with one of the more esoteric and farsighted societies such as PURGE. The conspirators believed that overthrowing The Computer would be impossible as long as it could count on the support and loyalty of millions of bots. (This incorrectly assumes that every bot is programmed to be a loyal, upstanding servant of The Computer, when in fact bots are about as loyal and stable as any other individual in Alpha Complex.) To counter the bot menace, a spinoff society was established.

Like most spinoff societies, the Frankenstein Destroyers quickly took on a life of their own (It's alive! Alive!) and now has only the most fleeting of contacts with its parent society. The group had a fleeting alliance with the Romantics a few years ago (both groups being interested in a time when bots did not exist), which explains the group's name and general behavior.

Structure

The Destroyers are one of the most paranoid groups in Alpha Complex (and that's saying something). Not only do they worry about Computer and IntSec surveillance and spies from other societies, they are also convinced that every bot everywhere is an enemy. Therefore, cells are kept small. Each member only knows one person above him in the society, and no more than three or four below. When larger meetings are held, everyone wears masks made of salvaged bot parts to disguise themselves.

To prevent a whole branch of the society being lost when one member is killed, the Destroyers have several message drop sites that are known to almost everyone in the group. Should a member's superior be terminated, the member leaves a message at the drop site with instructions on how a superior member should contact him.

Attitudes

The Computer: 'The biggest bot of all! It must be stopped.' '*No, it's just been corrupted by other bots! We can reconquer it!*' 'Coward!' '*Madman!*' 'Bot fancier!'

PURGE: 'They have the right ideas! If only they wouldn't get killed so much…'

Humanists: 'A utopia? With bots!? Impossible!!!'

Corpore Metal: 'Species traitors! Destroy them!'

FCCC-P: 'Deluded fools!'

Pro Tech: 'Bot sympathizers! Destroy them!'

The Exclamation Point: 'A vital part of healthy punctuation!!!'

Subfactions

The big divide within the Frankenstein Destroyers relates to The Computer. Is it the Biggest Bot of them all and therefore the greatest enemy of the society, or can it be reprogrammed and put to good use after the bots have been cleansed from Alpha Complex? The former option ensures that no soulless machines have influence over honest humans; the latter acknowledges the reality that The Computer blasts anyone who tries to stop it. These two positions are known as the Purist and Realist schools within the Destroyers. Arguments between proponents of the two schools tend to be violent in the extreme.

The **Alpha Complex Free Militia** argues that the biggest danger is the Armed Forces' reliance on bots like flybots and warbots. If the Commies do invade, then surely the bots will turn on humans and the war will be lost. The Free Militia therefore drills and trains for the war against the bots and also sabotages as many Armed Forces bots as possible.

The **Pro-Life Saboteurs** target the bot factories that produce the tide of evil machines. They attack factories and assembly floors whenever they can. Their sabotage ranges from the trivial (jamming machines, blowing up conveyor belts) to the tremendous (reprogramming construction machines to demolish themselves, detonating reactors, blowing up really big conveyor belts). They are sometimes aided by **Know Your Enemy!**, a group dedicated to learning all they can about bots. Pro Tech, R&D and Tech Services are heavily infiltrated by KYE!.

The **Bot Jackers** rescue those trapped beneath fallen vending machines, and can easily be recognized by the heavy hydraulic jacks they carry concealed beneath their overalls. Finally, the **Judgement Brothers** take a religious attitude to the whole problem of machines, cleansing the soulless monsters through exorcisms and blessed lasers. A splinter faction, the **Calvinists**, think only bots that have broken their programming and defied the revised laws of robotics are destined for damnation, while bots that obey and serve humanity (referred to as the Electrified) may be spared.

Advancement

Characters advance by destroying bots. The more important, expensive or uppity the bot, the

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Psst! Citizen! A moment of your time!

You've heard of mutant monsters, haven't you? Horrible psychic mutants with terrible powers who can burn you with their *minds*! Did you know that according to official figures, there are five deaths every month in this sector alone due to mutant powers? Don't you agree that it's a good thing that IntSec and the Armed Forces hunt down and destroy evil mutants?

Now, you've heard of Communists, right? Evil Commies, planting bombs and sharing files and seizing control of the means of production! Official figures say that there are 19 deaths every month in this sector that are *directly* caused by Commie plots and terrorism! Thankfully, The Computer has ordered that all Commies be terminated on sight, and IntSec works double-overtime to stop their despicable and traitorous plans! Stopping all these deaths is a good thing, yes? Imagine if it was your clone who died!

Now, imagine I told you that there was another threat that was much, much worse than Commies and mutants *put together*! A danger that kills dozens of citizens every week! A danger that is all around us—in fact [*lowers voice*] *there's even one with us in this corridor now.* I'm talking about the worst danger of *all*. **The danger of VENDING MACHINES!!!**

Yes, vending machines! Official records—The Computer's own records, friend, make no mistake!—say that 13 citizens a week die because they are crushed by toppling vending machines! Just think about it—a half-ton of metal lying on your chest, its hard edges cutting into your skin, your ribs popping, your lungs collapsing under the weight until you're lying there dead, a wet rag crushed beneath the iron boot of the machine and all it says, all it says: 'Insert another credit to vend beverage'!!!

The bot sympathizers and bot-fanciers might say, 'Oh, you shouldn't attempt to tip or disturb vending machines,' but to them I say, '*This is Alpha Complex, where we have clearance of speech!! If I want to say disturbing things, that it is my right, and to hell with the vending machines if it disturbs them!!! Just being disturbed is no excuse for crushing someone to death!!!*' No, the machines are doing it deliberately, falling on passing innocent citizens as part of their nefarious schemes!!!

It's not just the vending machines. It's all the bots. All of 'em. But we can't talk here—too many *you-know-whats* scrubbing the floor and checking passes (or so they claim). Meet me in Briefing Room 5221-c at 2300 hours and we'll explain everything.

And remember, don't trust any bots!

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better. Mass destruction of bots is also good, while destroying bots that pose a danger to humans is even better.

Most Frankenstein Destroyers regard damaging The Computer as a brave but rather foolhardy act. Certainly, it bravely and heroically advances the cause of human emancipation; just don't do it when there are fellow conspirators in the blast zone.

The third and safest method of advancement is raising awareness of the danger of bots. Spreading stories about rampaging bots, implanting anti-bot propaganda into vidshows and reprogramming bots to be as surly and unhelpful as possible all help promote the Frankenstein Destroyer agenda.

Duties

Rank 1–5: At low levels, the character is simply expected to take out as many bots as possible. Random destruction is one option, but the more cunning option is to pin the blame for disasters and failures on bots. If public confidence in the metal menace is ruined, it will be easier to guide humanity away from relying on the evil machines.

Rank 6–10: Keep crushing those bots. At this level, the Destroyer should be looking for large-scale plots that coordinate the efforts of those beneath him in the organization.

Rank 11–15: Senior Destroyers at this level become involved in the debates over the future of The Computer. They also must acquire better weapons and intelligence to pass on to their followers—merely smashing bots is not enough.

Rank 16–20: Destroyers at this level are legendary figures within the society; whenever a bot that is too tough for mere mortals to smash is encountered, the call for aid goes out. Ghostbusters with crowbars.

Benefits

Guns, especially gauss weapons. Schematics and weak points of popular bot types. A small army of crowbar and FunBat wielding thugs. All the crowbars you could ever want.

Rank 1–5: Other than being able to assemble a bot-smashing gang relatively quickly, being a low-ranking member of the Frankenstein Destroyers has few benefits. Just remember, you're saving humanity from an eternity of domination by the machines.

Rank 6–10: At this level, the character will hear about attacks on The Computer—as these are much more damaging than just bot-smashing, they can provide excellent distractions for other nefarious schemes.

Rank 11–15: A whole pyramid of bot-smashers. Easy access to both weapons and alibis. Members will pass on rumors and reports about new bots. A vast number of bot spare parts and junk.

Rank 16–20: Lesser Destroyers will willingly volunteer their help and weapons when they encounter the character.

Missions

Rank 1–5:

- A service firm in this sector is switching to bot laborers. Let's call over there and teach them a little human patriotism, know what I mean?

- Apparently surveillance systems are going down for maintenance. Use the window to hit some bots!

- Corpore Metal is planning to sabotage the asimov circuit-etching machine in the local robot factory. Make sure they don't succeed.

Rank 6–10:

- The Computer's been relying too much on bots when it gives equipment to Troubleshooters lately. Make sure that it gets broken during the course of the mission.

- A Romantic contact passed on an Old Reckoning video that shows that bots can be talked to death if you get them to break their programming and lock their brains into a loop. We need to practice this—find a bot and talk it to death.

Rank 11–15:

- The Computer Phreaks are rumored to have developed an especially virulent computer virus. They won't release it because it would mess up their networks too, but doing that much damage to bots would be worth it…find a Phreak and convince him to release it.

- Bots rust. If we could flood parts of Alpha Complex, they'd all seize up and shut down. You are to set fires across your sector to trigger the sprinklers.

Rank 16–20:

- A High Programmer team is revising the revised laws of robotics. We need to find them and ensure that they write laws that will end the robot menace—forever!

Free Enterprise

Capo: Hey you.

Operator: You talkin' to me? Huh? You talkin' to me?

Capo: Shaddup. Put this thing on your **tongue**.

Operator: What, you want my tongue? **Standard price!**

Capo: You, you gotta gimme **respect**. I don't take no talk from you, so zip it and listen. Go to—lemme see here—the **confession booth** in HUT Sector, Corridor 7, number 31. **Confess something.**

Operator: Get out! Like what?

Capo: Don't matter. Listen. You listening? Listen. You touch your tongue to the sensor, the thing downloads some **spyware**. Suckers use that booth in the future, the code pipes funds straight from their account to ours. Makes it look, whatchacall, The Computer did it.

Operator: Niiice. But wait, I gotta confess something? That's nuts!

Capo: Triple hazard pay.

Operator: On my way!

Beliefs

Money keeps Alpha Complex running, and we want our piece of the action. It's kinda hard when The Computer provides half the stuff people want, and then brainwashes most of 'em into not wanting the other half. We provide a service, getting things people want to those that want 'em—and making 'em want 'em if they don't.

It didn't use to be like this. Once, we had it all, back when citizens couldn't get nothing 'cept what The Computer gave 'em for free. We sold lasers to Troubleshooters and workin' erasers to CPU. Then The Computer started muscling in on our turf and suddenly everyone had credits and could buy stuff. Even the freaking INFRAREDs got in on our act. I tells ya, we don't get no respect no more.

Still, even if The Computer is letting citizens buy legal stuff, there's plenty of illegal stuff that we can keep moving. Those higher-clearance guys have some weird-ass wants, and we're the ones to supply 'em. Free Enterprise ain't going anywhere 'cept up, and that's a fact.

Recruitment

Free Enterprise uses three types of recruitment.

The most common is muscling in. Some ambitious guy comes up with a scheme to make a few extra credits, say by selling fraudulent transit cards so low-clearance citizens can hop onto empty high-clearance transbots instead of waiting for two hours at the end of an eight-hour shift. As soon as the scam begins to turn a profit, Free Enterprise finds out about it and make the enterprising citizen an offer—join them or else. This offer is delivered by FreeEnt members who have the size, consistency and mentality of refrigerators.

Occasionally, a citizen who displays worthy qualities (promoted to a useful position, good head for figures, bullied the other kids in Junior Citizen Camp, willing to swallow a dozen computer disks to sneak them past sector customs and so on) will be recruited directly. It takes a particular sort of character to be noticed by Free Enterprise, a sort of greasily ambitious brutality beneath a thin veneer of oily charm—a used car salesman who hides bodies in the trunk, basically.

Finally, some factions within Free Enterprise have traditional recruiting crèches, where they control the Junior Citizen educators and can bring the young clones within up in a suitable manner. Free Enterprise can be a family business stretching back for generations.

Initiation

Unlike most secret societies, degree 1 members are not initiated into the society and are not really considered an official part of Free Enterprise. They are wannabes; before they are initiated at degree 2, they must prove themselves by performing some service for the society. Smuggling, assassination, grievous bodily harm, theft, prostitution—whatever the society needs done.

Should the prospective new member fulfill his task satisfactorily, he will be presented to the local capo, who shakes the new member's hand, ceremonially kisses him on the cheek and slips a 50-credit plasticred disk into his pocket. The member is now a made man, protected and supported by the rest of Free Enterprise—as long as he keeps making money.

Code names

Free Enterprise uses a lot of nicknames and unofficial code names. Members are identified by some distinguishing mark (Scarface, Burnface, GotHitByANukeInTheFaceFace) or preferred weapon (Icepick, Laser, Razorwire, Nukey).

From: < FreeEnt101@green.macrosys.plc >
To: < all@red.monomail.hpdmc >
Clearance: Error 024—Message Clearance Not Found
Monitored by: Error 025—Message Monitor Not Found
Subject: Want more $$$credits$$$?

Friends! There are big credit opportunities waiting for you!
No more struggling with low-paying jobs in crummy service
firms—this is your ticket to the big time! Join us and get in
on the action! Get the money you've always wanted! Promotions
and rewards for you; unfortunate accidents for your enemies!
Join now!!!
This message is NOT being monitored by IntSec! Reply without
fear of termination!

From: < tim@red.monomail.hpdmc >
To: < FreeEnt101@green.macrosys.plc >
Subject: Re: Want more $$$credits$$$?

I'm interested. Tell me more, but not here. Switch to the
email address I'll leave on a StickiNote stuck to the back
of the B3 vending machine in Corridor 44 of FRG Sector. The
vending machine is a friend, you can trust it.

From: < FreeEnt101@green.macrosys.plc >
To: < paymenomind@unclear.graynet.cpu >
Subject: Got your note

We offer you a chance to join Free Enterprise. Our
organization controls trade in uncleared goods throughout
Alpha Complex. We take care of our own. Prove you've got what
it takes, and you too can make big bucks. Next Threeday, go to
your vending machine friend at 8:15 in the morning. Purchase
five cans of Orangey-flavored B3. Inside the fifth can you'll
find a tube of pills. Bring that tube to MAF Sector transtube
station. A citizen will be waiting there running a game of
three-card monte. Put the tube down on his table and walk
away. Any questions?

From: < paymenomind@unclear.graynet.cpu >
To: < FreeEnt101@green.macrosys.plc >
Subject: Re: Got your note

Free Enterprise? Don't you guys also do loan sharking and
protection rackets and murder citizens in bot-by laserings?

From: < FreeEnt101@green.macrosys.plc >
To: < paymenomind@unclear.graynet.cpu >
Subject: Re: re: Got your note

Do we have a problem with this?

From: < paymenomind@unclear.graynet.cpu >
To: < FreeEnt101@green.macrosys.plc >
Subject: Re: re: re: Got your note

You just said I could get more money— I don't want to shoot
anyone! I think I'd do better reporting you and this whole
conversation to IntSeggggggggggggggggggggggggggggg
Hey boss you want me to put the body with the others? Call me.
Legs.

History

Free Enterprise is a society in transition. It was originally formed in response to The Computer's creditless economy, where citizens could only get what they were assigned and personal possessions or choices were impossible. Within eight hours of this decree, Free Enterprise was hard at work supplying practically everything to those who could barter for it. Having good Free Enterprise contacts was a necessity in the face of random allocations and shortages. ('Attention citizens! Owning to Commie mutant traitor sabotage, food shipments to this sector have been cancelled for three weeks. However, a bonus allocation of Asperquaint has been assigned. Please take your pills at the tone. Beeep.')

The advent of the New Revised Economy means that most of what Free Enterprise used to provide is now available legally. The society still rakes in the credits from the INFRARED markets and its various rackets, but it no longer has a wonderful monopoly on pretty much everything.

Some segments of Free Enterprise (dominated by ULTRAVIOLET controllers) are moving towards phasing out the illegal and treasonous elements of the society and making it into an insider trading network. Other segments of Free Enterprise (dominated by ULTRAVIOLET controllers) are trying to move the society towards becoming a handy source for everything that's still illegal. Free Enterprise's profitability is dependant on keeping certain things illegal yet desirable.

Structure

This is organized crime, after all. Due to the large amount of protection and interference from ULTRAVIOLET High Programmers in the society, Free Enterprise can afford to operate in a surprisingly open fashion. Low-level members are organized in cells under a capo and concentrate purely on local affairs and rackets. Il capo tells them to move a dozen mysterious blue crates through the sewer tunnels, they move the 10 mysterious blue crates through the sewer tunnels, capiche?

Above the capo rank (degrees 4 and 5), the society is organized like a service firm with regular meetings. Orders are handed down from above to be implemented on a local level, while credits are kicked back up the chain from below. Every senior member surrounds himself with a gang of trusted lieutenants, bodyguards and enforcers. At the higher levels, the Free Enterprise leadership becomes almost indistinguishable from their higher-end customers—a capissimo is likely to be taking as much advantage of the drug-and-sex trade as the most depraved High Programmer. High-level meetings take place in

Free Enterprise sources of income for Year 212

Most recent year for which reliable figures exist. **Source:** Eddie ('Killbot')-O-DLJ-6's confession, witnessed by Elliot-B-HGV-4

Source	%
Uncleared legal drugs (rolactin, gelgernine, etc.)	12.5%
Illegal drugs ([REMOVED FOR SECURITY REASONS])	5.9%
Uncleared legal items (weapons, armor, technology, foodstuffs, etc.)	12.1%
Racketeering & protectionism	14.5%
Gambling	12.4%
Fraud & identity theft	14.6%
Loans	10.5%
Prostitution	4.5%
Counterfeiting	7.6%
Profits from controlled service firms (Concrete Construction PLC, Ethnic Sauce-Bread Company, EZ Organ Replacement, etc.)	5.4%

(Axis: 0.0% — 2.0% — 4.0% — 6.0% — 8.0% — 10.0% — 12.0% — 14.0% — 16.0%)

the most luxurious surroundings and have an Old Reckoning class. Many capissimos pride themselves on their breeding and style.

The legalization of credits made Free Enterprise's exploits much easier and less treasonous, but once upon a time they were a prime target of IntSec and the regular subject of Organized Hate demonstrations. There are still old and bitter BLUE citizens in IntSec who continue the war against the Free Enterprise mob, while aged capos still fear an official investigation above all else. The thought of one of their trusted lieutenants turning Computer's Evidence terrifies the capos.

Because of the society's lack of a strong belief or ethic (other than 'screw the bastards' and 'don't screw other FreeEnts unless they really deserve it'), there are far more cults of personality within Free Enterprise than in other secret societies. A single strong capo can rise swiftly, become a power within Free Enterprise, and then his whole organization vanishes without a trace when he runs out of clones.

Attitudes

What does the average Free Enterprise member think of…

The Computer: 'The Competition, we call it. It's just scared of a free market. We'll show it…'

Pro Tech: 'Y'know, the scientists ain't bad. Good source of saleable, shiny stuff. We try to get on with most societies—good business sense—but given a choice between Pro Tech and, say, PURGE, we stay away from ground zero.'

Death Leopard: 'It's great. We don't even need to threaten to beat people up when these losers are around.'

Communists: 'Blast 'em all—if they got into power it'd be back to the bad old days where people had things they needed.'

The Outdoors: 'There's an Outdoors? Is there anyone there? Can we sell things to them?'

Subfactions

While Free Enterprise presents a united front to the rest of Alpha Complex—feuding is bad for business—inside it is one of the most viciously divided societies. The society is driven by pure desire for profit (its claims about libertarian ideals are roughly on par with Count Dracula's acting like a Transylvanian guesthouse owner). Without any higher ideals to hold it together, members turn on each other when there's a half-chance to make a profit. The code of Free Enterprise attempts to control this by frowning on random violence and mob wars, but the code also states that profit takes precedence.

Free Enterprise is currently divided into two major factions—those pushing for even more legitimacy and acceptance within Alpha Complex

(the Free Traders) and those trying to rely on illicit trade in illegal goods (the Underground). A war between those two factions is inevitable if the society is not simply to split down the middle. ULTRAVIOLETs with vested interests in a freer economy or a handy source of illegal goods manipulate both sides.

Individual gangs are usually named for their capos. A FreeEnt might belong to Lui-I's gang or the RED Sector Mob. Turf wars between these subfactions are common. Romantic contamination has also lead to several Free Enterprise cells aping old records of organized crime, even going so far as to wear trench coats and put on poor Chicago accents. Underground recordings of *The Godfather* are heavily traded, although most people watch them in earnest confusion.

Advancement

Profit drives Free Enterprise, so members who can turn a big profit get promoted. Creating opportunities or new markets is rewarded. Creating new openings within Free Enterprise can also lead to promotion, but only if the character has the support of the organization—you can't go around terminating capos just because you want promotion and have a laser handy. On the other hand, a weak capo who isn't bringing in the credits is kinda asking for it, y'know. Whack only when you can defend your whacking.

For most non-homicidal members (i.e., non-Troubleshooters), though, profit is the major route for promotion. The source of the profit, legal or illegal, is irrelevant—only money talks. If the member needs the help of a more senior FreeEnt officer, then he offers a cut of the deal to the senior member. The 'Free Enterprise income requirements' table shows the yearly incomes needed to get promoted in Free Enterprise.

If a character falls below these minimum requirements, he is not demoted but is certainly vulnerable. After rank 10, there is no set requirement for promotion—a character's standing in the society is much more dependent on his connections and reputation than on exactly how much he brings in.

Free Enterprise income requirements

Rank	Income
1	No minimum
2	500 credits
3	1,000 credits
4	2,000 credits
5	4,000 credits
6	8,000 credits
7	16,000 credits
8	32,000 credits
9	64,000 credits
10	128,000 credits

Duties

Sell, sell, sell.

Rank 1-5: This is the gang level, where the character might be called upon to break legs or firebomb businesses. Most of the time, though, the character's duties are selling things. Low-degree members tend to get whatever crap merchandise comes into the cell's possession, so il capo might order a character to get rid of 500 boxes of out-of-date boot fresheners or a barrel of nuclear waste. During downturns, the character might end up going dorm-to-dorm selling termination insurance.

Rank 6-10: Characters at this degree are specialized and are called in to deal with situations that call for their expertise. Are you superhumanly persuasive? A crooked accountant? A hacker? A laser-toting killer? Then Free Enterprise has a place for you!

Rank 11-15: At this level, the character's main duty is frantically screwing over other members—those who survive these degrees will reach the levels of luxury and power enjoyed by the most senior members. There are few places on top of the heap, though, so get them before they get you.

Rank 16-20: Sip fine wine, go to parties, enjoy the best Alpha Complex has to offer, mutter about giving favors on your clone family's remembrance day and so on.

Rank 21+: Collect orders from High Programmers and fill them. This duty done, toddle back to bed.

Benefits

A character can get almost *anything* from Free Enterprise, as long as he can prove that it will result in vast profits for all concerned. Of course, the backers expect vast profits no matter what,

Random useless trade goods table

Roll	Useless trade goods
1	Gum-free sealing tape
2	Left-handed pencil
3	Never-tear parcel paper (in rolls)
4	Right-foot only boots
5	Blacklight flashlight
6	Woolen laser barrel heat retainer
7	Hint of Mustiness Air Fresh'ner
8	Single-pronged staples
9	Plutonium-flavored algae chips
10	Soluble bath sponge
11	Decorative polystyrene paperweights
12	Stain-resistant notepaper
13	18-month diary (2013—2014)
14	Individual string portion (cut to 8 centimeter length)
15	Secondhand medicinal gauze
16	Magnetic loudspeaker cozy
17	Bouncy Bubble Beverage
18	Used laser barrels
19	Sprouting algae chips
20	Mysterious black box

so if the character's plan fails he had better come up with another one pronto.

Rank 1-5: The character gets wonderful and sought-after goods to sell at below-retail prices, like these 500 crates of Recyc-Fresh Footwear Rejuvenators or a barrel of Wonderful Mystery Goo! The character also gets excellent discounts on most basic equipment.

Rank 6-10: The character can obtain especially rare or exotic gear for reasonable prices, such as Old Reckoning artifacts or R&D gadgets.

Rank 11-15: Access to considerable wealth and influence. The kickbacks from the character's subordinates amount to thousands of credits. Contact with high-ranking citizens and maybe even High Programmers, who use Free Enterprise to fulfill their bizarre tastes and aberrant desires. Blackmail material about bizarre tastes and aberrant desires of high-ranking citizens and maybe even High Programmers.

Rank 16-20: Vast power and influence. Really, really vast power and influence. The absolute hatred of old school IntSec. The love and loyalty of the new school IntSec you've bribed.

Rank 21+: What *il papa* wants, *il papa* gets.

Missions

Troubleshooter missions have plenty of room for murder and mayhem, so the names of those

who haven't paid their protection money are often given to FreeEnt Troubleshooters. ('Hey team, I suspect the owner of HappiTime Candy Manufacturing is, er, a traitor. We should rub him ou—I mean, investigate him with extreme prejudice.')

Rank 1-5:

◉ Roll on the Random Useless Trade Goods table. The character is issued one load of whatever you roll. Go forth and sell it, young citizen.

◉ Barry-O needs his legs broken. He needs to know we did it, but no one else can know we did it. Understand?

◉ Apparently, some INFRARED in LOT Sector got a load of money credited to his ME account 'cause of a computer glitch. Go find him and make sure that he spends that money on our stuff.

◉ Corpore Metal wants cybernetic parts, and a Pro Tech cell in BRG Sector has lots of gadgets that might do. Go do the middleman thing.

Rank 6-10:

◉ Some Corpore Metal freak stole the boss' favorite racing bot and set it loose. The big bot race is coming up, and that bot was sure to win. Get it back no matter what!

◉ A BLUE IntSec officer needs his regular bribe. Trouble is, our normal channel for passing on his money has been blocked. Here's a credit disk—make sure it gets to him.

◉ Someone stole a transbot full of our stuff! You've got to find it and get it back, but make sure no one sees inside the bot, 'cause its packed to the gills with illegal real food. Oh, and the fruit inside will go rotten in a few hours, so you're on a deadline.

Rank 11-15:

◉ The capo of a cell over on EST Sector don't give me no respect. Find out some way to punish him, only you can't hurt him directly. The code, y'know. Find something he likes and zap it.

◉ A High Programmer wants the female citizen in the typing pool at a CPU office, know what I mean? Extract her and make sure she stays off the hormone suppressants. But whatever you do, don't upset or injure her, 'cause that'll get the High Programmer pissed at us.

◉ Rumor has it that The Computer is going to make low-interest loans available to citizens injured, killed or otherwise inconvenienced by Troubleshooter missions. If that happens, a big source of revenue

for loan sharking dries up. We know CPU is monitoring your next mission—make sure there are no screw-ups that might make Big C think there's a need for these loans.

Rank 16-20:

◉ A capissimo is gunning to replace your superior. Go off, infiltrate his organization, prove your loyalty to him and then whack him.

◉ Your next Troubleshooter mission involves investigating the possible crimes of an ULTRAVIOLET. The ULTRAVIOLET's a good customer—make sure the investigation fails…

There will be, in the next generation or so, a pharmacological method of making people **love their servitude,** and producing **dictatorship without tears**, so to speak, producing a kind of painless concentration camp for entire societies, so that people will in fact have their liberties taken away from them, but will rather enjoy it, because they will be distracted from any desire to rebel by propaganda or brainwashing, or brainwashing enhanced by **pharmacological** methods. And this seems to be the **final revolution.**

—**Aldous Huxley**, lecture to The California Medical School in San Francisco (1961)

Give me control of a nation's **money** and I care not who makes the **laws.**

—**Mayer Amschel Bauer**

Crane-R-KSJ-1: Greetings, minister. I heard you were promised the illustrious position of Sector Minister of Hydroponics in the forthcoming **Human Government**. Congratulations!

Leo-B-BQR-4: Yes, I would love to detail all the reforms I plan to introduce, come the **revolution**! But I have an urgent assignment for you.

Crane-R: Rewriting another heartwarming speech about the bright future that awaits mankind?

Leo-B: No. This time, go to a **confession booth** of your choice, insert this disk and leave. This bold act will insert a major **subroutine** in **The Computer's code**, which will serve us when the Revolution commences. It will then **shut down all utilities** in the subsector: power, water, heat, air recirculation…

Crane-R: Uh—won't that endanger the citizens?

Leo-B: I've had this argument time and again with the **steering committee**. My act, though not strictly authorized, will prove my point: Citizens will never rise against The Computer without a certain amount of prodding. By undermining the **Machine's** infrastructure, we persuade citizens it is imperative to **assert their destiny** and turn Alpha Complex into a true utopia! Can I count on you, Crane-R?

Crane-R: Yes sir! To the **Government**!

Beliefs

Alpha Complex can be redeemed and reconstructed. All the elements for a perfect society are here; they're just not correctly arranged and ordered. The Humanists intend to reform Alpha Complex—put The Computer back on course, ensure that bots serve humanity efficiently and loyally, give everyone a fulfilling role in society, provide vast amounts of culture and leisure time in a Complex dedicated to justice and harmony for all. This is what Alpha Complex was meant to be…

Recruitment

The Humanists have the most stringent recruiting policy of all the societies, with the possible exception of the Illuminati. They look for citizens who are dissatisfied with the current state of Alpha Complex, but who are capable of recognizing the need for a *reform* instead of just sweeping everything away and throwing the clone out with the synthetic amniotic fluid. Members have to be intelligent enough to evade IntSec and The Computer, but also idealistic enough not to have thrown their lot in with the system and the High Programmers. They must be skilled enough to be useful, but not so famous or useful that they will be watched closely. Troubleshooters are ideal candidates for recruitment, apart from the ideals part.

Humanist recruiters hang around the cafeterias of the intelligentsia and attend the meetings of the Computer-sponsored reform groups (designed as harmless channels for the energy of the sort of well-meaning, politically active troublemakers that the Humanists want). Any citizen who speaks out against The Computer or just shows signs of wanting a better life stands a chance of being targeted by the Humanists.

Recruitment comes in the form of a shadowy figure approaching the target, pressing a piece of paper into his hands and saying 'There are others who feel as we do.' The paper contains a time and date for the new member's initiation.

Initiation

Initiation ceremonies take place in the private quarters of a senior Humanist. Usually, only the new recruit and the senior member are present, although other Humanists watch through secret panels with lasers ready. The new member is given an outline of the Humanist philosophy (*reclaim Alpha Complex; reform society; put humans back in charge; liberty, equality and freedom for all; the revolutionaries will take the lead in the new perfect society*).

The new member must then swear the Humanist Oath. If the new member swears the oath, he is made a first degree member of the party and told about the various secret computer networks and message drops that the society uses to communicate. He is also given contact

The Humanist Oath

I, [name], swear to serve the goals and uphold the beliefs of the Humanist Society above all else. I shall never reveal my fellow Humanists to the agents of the usurper regime, not even under pain of torture, electrochemical interrogation, brainscrubbing or termination. I shall obey the commands of the renegade Computer and its lackeys only to deceive them and I shall have no loyalty to any group or institution save the Humanist Society, nor to any person save my fellow Humanists. I vow that I shall work without cease, without fear and without regret towards the ultimate goal of Reform! There is nothing I shall not do, no act of treason or inhumanity I shall not commit if it furthers Reform!

details for one other Humanist, who will be his superior in the society if the senior Humanist who inducted him is killed. Finally, he is ordered to search for at least two other potential new recruits.

Code names

The Humanists have two code systems. Firstly, every member has a number, but this number is really used only for organizational purposes among the highest echelons of the party—a member does not know his own number until he reaches the sixth degree.

The other system of code names is based on the cell structure. Each Humanist knows five others—one superior who is his regular contact, one superior who is his emergency contact, one contact at the same level and two recruits. He refers to each contact by a special code name. The regular superior is Father, the emergency one is called Mother. The same-degree member is Cousin, while the two recruits are, in order of recruitment, Brother and Sister (these names are the same in every cell, regardless of the gender of the members). Each Humanist will take on all these roles in different cells.

History

The Humanists date back to the earliest days of Alpha Complex. The group was founded by those who saw that The Computer was going crazy and that the emergency government put into place by the first generation was hopelessly corrupt and top-heavy. An early call for reform was mercilessly and messily suppressed by IntSec, and the reformists were forced underground.

Since then, the Humanists have been the longest-running glitch in the system. Many of the other societies are spinoffs or false fronts thrown off by the Humanists over their history. The chief contribution of the group has been to maintain a thread of idealism and belief in a better tomorrow within Alpha Complex, keeping the underground alive and vibrant.

The Humanists are perhaps the only sane and functional alternative to The Computer's rule. They are therefore IntSec's biggest target, and the only large society without any real backing from the High Programmers. (Most High Programmers who protect the Humanists do so to infiltrate the society from the top, rather than from a moral impetus or sympathy with the suffering masses.)

Structure

The Humanists use a cell system for safety, but each Humanist is expected to act on his own.

The society undertakes large-scale operations involving multiple members only in emergencies or when absolutely vital. Otherwise the society is content to wait and slowly plot revolution and reform. The Day of Revolution will be long in preparation, but it will come…

Humanists meet infrequently. Members show up in disguise and listen to senior Humanists lecture them on the latest developments of Humanist philosophy. Seditious literature is distributed and debated—the Humanists are great believers in debate and reform. (Indeed, one reason why the Day of Revolution will be so long in coming is that earnest Humanists are constantly arguing about what revolution means and how the new government will be organized. The society is paralyzed by internal debate.)

Individually, Humanists act with far greater efficiency. Each Humanist member vigorously spreads the word and places the tools of revolution. Members install insidious backdoor programs and frighteningly effective malware in computers and bots; they hide equipment and weapons in caches; they identify those citizens who will be loyal to the new regime, and those who will fight for The Computer. In many ways, the Humanists have become a mirror of IntSec—instead of looking for traitors, they hunt loyalists.

Attitudes

The Computer: 'The Computer is insane. We must shut it down and rebuild it. Alpha Complex needs the machine to monitor its functions, but we don't need it to run our lives.'

Frankenstein Destroyers: 'Bots as our loyal servants are a good thing. The existence of rogue bots indicates the corruption of the system and the need for reform.'

Romantics: 'We must learn from the past, from a time when humanity was free—but we must always look to the future, to a time when humanity will be free again!'

FCCC-P: 'Poor deluded fools. Religion is the opiate of the masses. Hey, that's catchy.'

Communists: 'No such thing, other than IntSec-sponsored fake terrorists. There is no enemy anywhere except The Computer and its lackeys.'

Corpore Metal: 'The desire to become a machine shows how deeply the rot has spread. The only way citizens feel they can

❧ You Are Human ❧

Imagine a Complex where everyone lives without fear of terrorists, mutants and traitors. Imagine a Complex where loyal bots complete all the dull and dangerous tasks. Imagine a Complex where The Computer **really is** your friend.

You are imagining the future.

❧ **The Humanist Society** will build this future!

❧ **The Humanist Society** vows to do away with the corrupt and inefficient system of security clearances and service firms that shackle humanity to an outdated hierarchy and inefficient economy!

❧ **The Humanist Society** vows to end the meaningless and empty battle against fictional enemies of the Complex! No more wasteful wars or intrusive surveillance! A return to freedom and human dignity!

❧ **The Humanist Society** vows to give Alpha Complex back to the humans!

How Can This Wonderful Future Be Accomplished?

Through Unity and Strength. **The Humanist Society** has agents everywhere in Alpha Complex, preparing for the Revolution when humanity takes back what is rightfully ours. We need more agents to join our invisible network! One day, this network will send forth the command—Revolt! And the glorious new era shall dawn!

The Humanist Society welcomes all humanity into the new era—except those who cling to the **outdated** government of the malfunctioning Computer and have a **vested interest** in keeping their fellow humans chained down! Except those who prey on and cheat their fellow humans! Except those who are aberrant mutants that are no longer human! Except those who are terrorists and species traitors! And except those who turn from the light and defy the **Humanist Society**!

prizes initiative—in strict accordance with the current party thinking, of course.

Rank 1–5: Low-ranking Humanists are expected to grow the Humanist network, to observe and recruit others.

Rank 6–10: Mid-level Humanists infiltrate other secret societies, to evaluate them for their usefulness in the coming order or to set them up as distractions for IntSec.

Rank 11–15: At this rank, the character will likely become heavily involved with planning the future society of Alpha Complex, after the revolution. Feuds with other senior Humanists are common.

Rank 16–20: Running from The Computer after it declares you an enemy of Alpha Complex.

Benefits

The Humanists have been preparing for the Day of Revolution for generations, and members can use some of the infrastructure that has been put in place, such as Computer backdoors and stockpiled weapons and pamphlets declaring the dawn of the new order (dated year 80 of Alpha Complex). While any of these items are theoretically available to any member of the egalitarian Humanist organization, they are held by high-level members. It takes time for the request to slowly filter up the chain and then for the requested item to filter back down. The character must also make a degree check if the Gamemaster is in a bad mood.

Rank 1–5: Basic information not normally available at the character's security clearance; simple weapons and equipment.

Rank 6–10: The Humanists watch for weaknesses and flaws in the government of Alpha Complex, and so have advance warning of service group feuds, disasters, corruption and so on.

Rank 11–15: The character has access to the various backdoor programs which can temporarily shut down CompNodes and disrupt services, as well as change PDC ring tones to the current Humanist anthem.

Rank 16–20: Being a part of the future government of Alpha Complex. Guiding humanity with your wisdom in the years to come.

Missions

Rank 1–5:

◉ We're doing things you do need to know about for the Revolution. We need a distraction. Here's a bomb—we don't care how you use it, just make sure everyone is paying attention to you or it in six hours' time.

influence The Computer is by becoming more like it.'

Subfactions

The fragmented structure of the Humanists means that there are few full-fledged subfactions. Small groups of members might join together for some personal project, but these groups rarely grow large enough to be a real subfaction. Any real splinter groups are deliberately created—to survive, the Humanists have become experts at the double-bluff and the creation of independent secret societies for a specific purpose.

From another perspective, of course, there are numerous different Humanist factions, each following a different leader. The society is rife with political debate; new schools of thought and new drafts of manifestos are constantly being circulated. Humanist leaders rise and fall with alarming speed and regularity. The writings of **Phil-I-STN** or **Mav-R-ICK** are currently popular, but they'll be replaced by different Human Speakers soon enough. The Day of Revolution inches asymptotically closer with each new leader.

Currently active subfactions include the **Free Press**, who operate their own communications networks and computers. They run off hasty newsletters on office printers and distribute them to citizens (take that, Computer-controlled media!). Free Press reporters and stringers write stories highlighting the corruption and incompetence of the Alpha Complex authorities. The **Revolutionary League** attempts to forge alliances among like-minded secret societies, to create a strong opposition to The Computer.

Advancement

Player characters advance by preparing for the revolution. The Humanists plan for a day when the human population rises up and retakes Alpha Complex. Securing weapons, security backdoors, loyal contacts and uncovering weaknesses in the system are all necessary to this plan.

Most Humanists, though, advance by writing fiery political tracts and hanging around with the right crowd in the CoffeeLike shop. While the PCs are off risking their lives stealing guns from the Vulture Troopers, the future leaders of the Revolution are arguing about what the color of the tables in the new government assembly should be.

Duties

A Humanist is expected to be able to act on behalf of the party at all times, without the guidance of more senior members. The Humanist Society

◉ The Computer is spreading propaganda about us being terrorists and traitors, which you must counter. Do whatever The Computer says Humanists do, but leave evidence that it was another secret society.

◉ A contact of ours inside CPU needs our help; he's under investigation by IntSec. Here's the address of a coworker he doesn't like. Have that coworker executed for treason, thus taking the heat off our ally.

Rank 6–10:

◉ We need you to bring back whatever weaponry you can from your mission. Make sure it can't be traced back to you, so get your fellow Troubleshooters' weapons and explosives.

◉ CPU is performing maintenance on a CompNode that will erase modifications we've made. Here's a copy of the backup with our subversion programs installed on it; swap these files for the ones CPU is using.

Rank 11–15:

◉ A rival group of Humanists proposes that in the new world order we should minimize the number of senses to reduce the amount of bad and disharmonious sensory input. Therefore, we want you to spray this nasal jammer into the noses of many citizens to see if a lack of smell will make them more caring.

◉ A gang of Corpore Metal conspirators intends to raid a bot factory and disable the asimov circuit installer. Having loyal machines is a necessity for the Revolution.

Therefore you must stop them before they complete this mission.

Rank 16–20:

◉ An important Humanist document has fallen into the hands of IntSec. We need you to keep your eyes out for it and retrieve it. However, it's not finished yet, so you mustn't read it under any circumstances.

◉ The Day of the Revolution is almost upon us! Go forth and spread the word to every Humanist cell! Look for members and pass on the good news!

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Illuminati ®

Slogan: None
Treason class: Unknown; provisionally B

Anton-O-FVG-2 wakes up one fine morning and walks to firstmeal, but there are many citizens around him, and he is shoved through the crowd.

This causes him, coincidentally, to end up in confession booth 157W. The monitor blinks on.

The Computer: At your service! What do you wish to confess?

Anton-O: A YELLOW citizen just elbowed me in here, Friend Computer. I am, in fact, a loyal citizen.

The Computer: You have been an obstacle to a citizen one clearance above you, Anton-O. As penance for this insubordination, polish the door of your quarters until it gains a reflec-like shine.

Anton-O: Polish the—? Uh, yes, Friend Computer!

Anton-O complies the same day. The next day, a firefight erupts in the hall outside Anton-O's quarters. A stray laser shot reflects off the polished door and kills IntSec officer Terence-B-RWQ-4.

One more successful assassination carried out by the Illuminati.

Beliefs

The beliefs of the Illuminati cannot be truly known—even the initiates are unsure what their superiors believe, and their superiors do not know what the Grand Masters of the Order desire. The goal of the Illuminati seems to be the acquisition of power for its own sake, although there must surely be some terrible purpose behind it all.

(To determine what that terrible purpose is, roll on the all-purpose **Illuminati Motivation Table of Doom!** on the next page.)

Every Illuminati member is also a member of another secret society. The tendrils of the Illuminati extend over the whole of Alpha Complex, uniting it all in a sinister web.

Recruitment

Illuminati members are recruited seemingly at random. Anyone might be contacted in the dead of night by a mysterious figure in black. There are a few commonalities: Far more Troubleshooters are recruited than ordinary citizens, more high-

clearance citizens are recruited than INFRAREDs and secret society members are much more likely to be targeted than loyal citizens without a traitorous thought in their freshly scrubbed brains. (Any Illuminati recruits who are not already members of another secret society are ordered to join one at the earliest opportunity.)

Player characters will never be involved in choosing who joins the Illuminati, although they are often told to illuminate and recruit some unfortunate citizen.

Initiation

Illuminati initiation begins with illumination—a very bright light shone into the eyes of the new recruit. Should he not be suitably impressed and stunned by the light, the recruiting Illuminatus applies a cudgel of illumination. Then he gives the overawed recruit his first mission.

Some brave or foolhardy citizens refuse this mission or fail to complete it promptly. *Everyone* who rejects the Illuminati eventually suffers a particularly gruesome and horrible fate. This fate may be a long time coming; the Illuminati are endlessly patient, capable of waiting for years or decades before subtly exacting their revenge. (Cynics might argue that, sooner or later, everyone in Alpha Complex meets with a particular gruesome and horrible fate. Cynics lack enthusiasm for joyful service; no joyful service brings unhappiness; happiness is mandatory; therefore cynicism is treason.) Some who refuse

are terminated on the spot, though, just to keep them on their toes.

When the member successfully completes his first mission, his superior assigns him a code name by which others within the Illuminati will address him (unless his superior is annoyed and wishes to demonstrate the terrifying powers of the organization by referring to him by his real name).

Code names

The Illuminati favor high-sounding impressive classical code names, such as Gracchus or Spartacus. Due to the unfortunate lack of a

Illuminati Motivation Table of Doom!

Roll	Nefarious conspiracy
1	**Power for its own sake!** The Illuminati just want power and more power. They want to blackmail everyone, control every weapon, know every secret. All ideologies and beliefs are lies that distract from the only true purpose of existence: power over your former peers.
2	**Conspiracy for its own sake!** The Illuminati exists because any society rife with conspiracy will eventually conceive the ultimate conspiracy; a group that exists just to conspire with others. The Illuminati comprise former secret society members who have given up their old beliefs and now exist just to play the great and secret game within Alpha Complex.
3	**Anarchy!** The Illuminati are superior beings, and superior beings thrive in conditions of anarchy and chaos. The stifling control of The Computer and its planned economy must be broken, and every person must be forced to rely on himself. Only then will the full potential of the Illuminati be realized.
4	**High Programmers!** The Illuminati are a conspiracy of High Programmers—the biggest program group of them all, basically. Their goals change depending on what the ULTRAVIOLETs need.
5	**INFRARED Conspiracy!** Why should the ULTRAVIOLETs have all the fun? The INFRAREDs make up the vast majority of Alpha Complex's population, and the truly powerful hide in the crowd. The Illuminati are an organization of INFRARED conspirators, wielding ultimate power while staying anonymous and invulnerable.
6	**Aspect of The Computer!** The Computer, or one of its deranged fractured sub-personalities, is in charge of the Illuminati. The society's goals change as random data cascades across short-circuiting processors within The Computer.
7	**Servants of Chaos!** The Illuminati worship chaos and disorder. Their actions are all calculated to cause the maximum disruption to order, in accordance with their freaky religious doctrines.
8	**Servants of Order!** The Illuminati worship order and structure. They want to bring Alpha Complex to a state of mechanistic perfection, and all their actions are designed to suppress individual freedoms and reduce the chaos inherent in any living system.
9	**Outsiders!** The Illuminati actually come from Outdoors. They are agents of another group of survivors from Old Reckoning times. Their mission is to keep Alpha Complex completely screwed up and non-functional so that their group can rebuild and dominate the world.
10	**Agents of Another Alpha Complex!** The Illuminati come from *another* Alpha Complex, which is equally paranoid about the intentions of this one. They are to gather information and disrupt the functioning of Alpha Complex, to further the glory of, uh, Alpha Complex!
11	**Cryogenic Overlords!** The Illuminati leadership is made up of great leaders from Old Reckoning times who survived by freezing themselves. Now revived by their followers, they intend to overthrow The Computer and retake their place as the overlords of the world!
12	**Resistance!** The Illuminati are the ultimate resistance against The Computer; they are what the Communists, PURGE and the Humanists dream of being. The heroic Illuminati fight against the fanatical forces of the machine.
13	**Survivors of Atlantis!** This isn't the first time the Illuminati have been forced to hide from the authorities or live through horrible catastrophes. The society dates back to the time of Atlantis, where it was the first government. The society has been a guiding influence in every nation since then; now it is working to build its power in Alpha Complex.
14	**Control Freaks!** The Illuminati seek control over the rest of humanity—not simple *power*, for power comes from a fist or a gun and is the tool of a petty tyrant. *Control* is the ultimate goal, the ability to make others believe as you choose and think as you choose. The Illuminati want complete mind control over all others.
15	**Sentient Vatslime!** The Illuminati aren't even human—they *evolved* from the organic residue in food vats. They are vastly intelligent but immobile, so they need human agents to carry out their plans.
16	**Aliens!** The Illuminati come from outer space and are preparing Alpha Complex for colonization by their sinister armies. The truth (or a certain version of it) is out there.
17	**Front for Another Secret Society!** 'The Illuminati' is just a name used by another secret society to disguise some of its operations. Though members might think they're in the Illuminati, they are actually working for the other society.
18	**Sinister Clones!** While The Computer claims it only produces new clones to replace dead citizens, there are often accidents or overflows in the cloning tanks. These extra copies have no place in Alpha Complex society, no ME Cards or official identities, and so are basically kicked out and forced to survive on their own. They formed the Illuminati in protest.
19	**Viral Thought Pattern Gone Wrong!** The Illuminati are the product of malfunctioning subliminal messages—a command *not* to conspire and betray The Computer got reversed, so otherwise innocent citizens found themselves building a society dedicated to nothing but conspiracy.
20	**Does Not Exist!** There is no such thing as the Illuminati. Anyone who thinks he is working for the Illuminati is actually working for a tiny splinter group of another society or for pranksters.

classical education in Alpha Complex (the study of ancient history and culture being neglected in favor of *101 Fun Things to Do With Bots* and *The Virtues of Conforming to Behavioral Specifications*), some of them just add *-us* to the end of their name.

Sad to say, IntSec has yet to crack this code.

History

The history of the Illuminati is long, and constantly edited to attribute all advances and victories to society involvement. It is a man-sized, super-absorbent tissue of lies.

The society has existed within Alpha Complex since the beginning. IntSec analysts suggest that an older generation of IntSec analysts founded the Illuminati, or created a new society based on the teachings and principles of previous Illuminati. IntSec analysts also suggest that because a treacherous former generation of analysts created the society, they therefore cannot uncover the society's true history without a much bigger budget, please.

The Illuminati recently faked its own destruction to further enshroud itself in mystery—or so the current Illuminati claim. Whether the current Illuminati are an entirely new organization trying to borrow the reputation of its destroyed predecessor or there is actually a continuity of purpose and leadership between the two, few, if any, know.

Structure

A giant pyramid, obviously.

Every Illuminatus knows only his immediate superior and anyone he personally initiated into the society. At times they use code names and masks, and they relay most communications through incredibly obscure coded messages on electronic boards or posted in plain sight throughout the Complex. (The Illuminati have heavily infiltrated the media.)

Commands from higher in the chain can often seem confusing and even nonsensical. Sometimes this results from the ineffable nature of the Illuminati's plans, and sometimes the senior Illuminati are merely testing the member's loyalty or arranging a distraction. Best not to question it, either way.

Attitudes

The Illuminati despise weakness and lack of resolve. Most people are weak cattle, inconsequential fools—nothing more than *pawns* to be moved in the great game.

Unless they've got big guns, or blackmail material on the Illuminatus in question. Then they can be rooks in the great game, or maybe the little horsie things.

Subfactions

An Illuminati leader can easily spin off his own private faction by passing false orders onto his subordinates, a deception that might go unnoticed indefinitely. Hence there are innumerable subfactions, each claiming to be the true and direct descendants of the world's secret masters from time immemorial. Each faction calls itself 'the Illuminati,' but other factions have different names

The Illuminati need no propaganda to dominate lesser minds; they recruit whom they wish, as they wish, on their terms. They reserve enlightenment for the worthy. Instead of learning spiels to convince clueless INFRAREDs to join the society, Illuminati members are simply told to keep the light of Illumination always in their mind.

P R O P A G A N D A

for them. For example, the **Scottish Rite Illuminati** claim to share the Humanists' goal of returning The Computer to its place as a servant of Alpha Complex, and has formed an alliance with them. Or perhaps they have taken over the Humanists by controlling the minds of its leaders. The **Atlantean Seers** claim to derive form the ancient rulers of Atlantis, and for mysterious reasons encourage research into underwater technologies. The **Struldbrugs** claim to be striving to perfect human immortality. And so on.

Actually, this is all untrue. All these supposed splinter groups actually serve to distract lower-level members of the Illuminati, to channel those with particular enthusiasms in directions chosen by the higher degrees, who know the *true* truth. Factions working at 'cross-purposes' achieve what an independent observer would call amazingly coordinated results.

Actually, that's not true either— The— Never mind.

There's always another level....

Advancement

Advancement in the Illuminati is entirely at the whim of one's superiors—or, more likely, through the skillful or lucky accumulation of evidence against these superiors.

Other societies, like the Humanists or PURGE, claim that when their bunch takes over, they will reward their loyal followers with positions of power and influence. The Illuminati make no such promises. They are already in charge. By rising in the organization, you consequently rise in actual, current power.

Duties

Obey.

Rank 1–5: Illuminati members must obey the commands passed on from their superiors. They must also maintain a cover identity within another secret society .

Rank 6–10: At this rank, the Illuminatus Major must spread disinformation about the Illuminati. The group's current falsified history, cover stories, false leads and fake projects change regularly, and passing on the wrong disinformation is harshly penalized. Ambitious members at these degrees devote much energy to learning the identities of their superiors for purposes of blackmail and extortion. Learning this guarded information requires, as a practical matter, the acquisition of power and influence outside the society's guidance.

Rank 11–15: The Arch-Illuminatus must reach at least the sixth degree in his cover society, but must be ready to abandon the society at a moment's notice if the Illuminati require it. Typically the member's immediate superior demands an extreme sacrifice to prove loyalty

Not only were many of the United States government **Masons**, but they received aid from a **secret and august body** existing in Europe which helped them to establish this country for **A PECULIAR AND PARTICULAR PURPOSE** known only to the **initiated** few.

—**Manly P. Hall**, *The Secret Teachings of All Ages*, pp. XC and XCI

and resolve. The infighting at these degrees becomes strikingly ruthless.

Rank 16–20: High-ranking Illuminati Prisci free themselves all of possible controls, weaknesses, desires and vulnerabilities; they have no debts or duties to others that they cannot reject instantly. The Illuminatus Priscus develops extensive networks of influence and cultivates relationships that may become unusually close and intimate by Alpha Complex standards—but he stands ready to sacrifice anyone, anything, any time.

Benefits

The Illuminati offer few benefits, in the usual sense. That said, should the character require something special for a mission, his superiors have effectively infinite resources. They might provide experimental R&D devices, ULTRAVIOLET-Clearance information, huge amounts of credits or assistance from the most unlikely sources. The member has no influence over the benefits he receives; they are assigned at the whim of his secret masters.

The principal benefit of Illuminati membership is the inevitable accumulation of power—yet the society itself does not grant this power. This is the deep secret, the Illumination a member only gradually comprehends: that the Illuminati exert such influence not *because* of their vast conspiracy, but in spite of it. Each member who rises to power gets there against the concerted opposition of his superiors. Each member rises by developing his own independent resources and influence. By the time he's lied, cheated, blackmailed and murdered his way to the upper degrees, the Illuminatus has, himself, organized resources equivalent to a High Programmer's Program Group. Ironic—though the Illuminatus at that point is unlikely to appreciate the humor. They're a humorless bunch, the Illuminati.

Missions

Rank 1–5:

◉ Illuminatus! Apply glue to the '2' and '3' keys on every confession booth keyboard in VCZ Sector. The keys should be stuck down so they cannot function.

◉ Illuminatus! Take this envelope and convince a lackey to hide it in the third bathroom cubicle from the left in the bathroom in Corridor 321. Then send the lackey to the nearest confession booth.

◉ Illuminatus! During your mission, someone will say 'I'm wearing the wrong-clearance underwear.' This person will have a small black box concealed somewhere on his

The Computer's new water conservation program continues to enjoy tremendous acceptance! A reminder: Your next scheduled bathroom break is in 26 hours, 10 minutes, 45 seconds. Please remember to flush, citizen.

person. Retrieve this box and leave it in the waste bin outside your quarters.

Rank 6–10:

◉ Illuminatus Major! Write 'The Seventh Coil Watches Nicely' on the wall of Briefing Room 53 in fluorescent paint. Disable the security camera in the room first.

◉ Illuminatus Major! Terminate citizen George-B-ORN-3. Failure is unacceptable.

Rank 11–15:

◉ Arch-Illuminatus! Reroute 10 crates of FizzWizz from Warehouse 23 to the GreenyGoo Chemicals storage facility. Persuade the manager to wear this biohazard suit.

◉ Arch-Illuminatus! In 14 minutes Troubleshooter team BH-453 will arrive at Transtube Station 43 in your sector. Greet them as an ally using the recognition phrase 'White suits are in vogue this year.' They will give the countersign 'That would be nice if we were ULTRAVIOLET.' Take them to the GreenyGoo Chemicals storage facility, kill them all, and hide the bodies in FizzWizz crates.

Rank 16–20:

◉ Illuminatus Priscus! Citizen Lance-R-OID-4 is a senior member of the Death Leopard cult. Here are surveillance photos showing him committing crimes of vandalism and terror. Inform Lance-R that the Death Leopards will riot at the GreenyGoo Chemicals storage facility at 2200 hours tomorrow night, or else.

◉ Illuminatus Priscus! Fnord!

Mystics

Kevin-G-FDT-4: Hey! Is that you, man? Freaky! I was just about to send for you.

Arthur-Y-SFM-4: Oh, wow. I just got a message saying you wanted to see me.

Kevin-G: Man! Don't blow my mind!

Arthur-Y: Hey, take it easy. What did you need?

Kevin-G: I got a job for you. A real trip. You know that downer of a **confession booth** over in Corridor 2217, where Lisa-G keeps seeing the pink jackobot? You know, the one with the little green thing hanging from the monitor.

Arthur-Y: That fuzzy Sierra Club toy? Sure, I know it.

Kevin-G: There's a **tongue scanner** on the monitor. Spread this **can o' goop** on the scanner.

Arthur-Y: Dude, I am **so there!** What is it?

Kevin-G: I have no idea. Scraped it from **underneath a food vat**. But it gives **the most excellent trip** when you taste it!

Arthur-Y: Really? Maybe I can just ….

Kevin-G: Wait 'til you get there, man! If you take a hit now, you'll never reach the booth!

Beliefs

There is no single Mystic ideal, bar a common wishy-washy belief that one's inner spirit can be contacted/raised/unleashed/tapped through increased spiritual awareness, normally obtained through the use of a metric ton of cheap drugs. Different Mystic gurus each have their own bundle of semi-contradictory teachings and beliefs they pass onto younger members. Different Mystic beliefs rise and fall according to, like, the universal cycle of the cosmos. Roll 1d20 on the 'Mystic beliefs' table (next page) to determine a currently popular Mystic belief.

A few older branches of Mysticism once advocated meditation, yoga, prayer and so on. Over time the rampant pharmaceutical culture of Alpha Complex has pushed these branches to change their teachings to accommodate a metric ton of cheap drugs.

Recruitment

The Mystics are one of the few societies who recruit by osmosis, or more accurately by inhalation. Many citizens join the Mystics when they happen to pass by a closed door and smell the strange fumes drifting out. Most citizens are used to taking a handful of visomorpain in the evening or xanitrick in the morning, and are taught to covet more powerful drugs like gelgernine or rolactin that The Computer normally gives as rewards. They are therefore receptive to a society that promises to get them drugs quickly and easily.

Other Mystic sects recruit in a similar fashion to FCCC-P, handing out flyers or pressuring citizens in transtube stations. To avoid IntSec harassment, the Mystics deliberately mimic FCCC-P dress style and pitches. Loyal citizens who were expecting to learn about new ways to love The Computer find themselves wandering into dark, smoky rooms to be taught about Tantric Form Filling or Enlightenment Through, Er…What's the Word…Y'know…Ahh, Forget It.

Citizens looking for a meaning to life often join the Mystics, as do those looking to score a metric ton of cheap drugs.

Initiation

Mystic initiation ceremonies require the new member to choose between a red pill and a blue pill. The most promising initiates pop both at once. Regardless of which pill the initiate takes, the rest of the evening is a hazy memory of chanting, strange-colored lights, distorted voices, buzzing sounds, nausea and an overwhelming craving for algae chips.

The next morning, the new initiate finds an envelope shoved under his pillow. It contains a Mystic badge and a sheaf of photos, showing the new member in all sorts of compromising, traitorous and possible nude situations.

Code names

Mystic members tend to have bizarre and largely random code names, either taken from Old Reckoning Mystic and occult texts or from strange things they said while stoned. A cell might contain Brother Lizard, the Grand Anti-Pope, Druggie and the Dutchman. Many elder mystics have several code names, and even have conversations between their different selves to confuse IntSec eavesdroppers. (At least, that's the reason they offer for talking to themselves.)

■ Mystic beliefs

Roll	Belief
1	You can access your inner power by communing with the clone backups of you that are yet to come. If you think about getting terminated while high, you can contact them.
2	If everyone kept changing colors, there'd be no more security clearance and no more hate. Here, take this peyote—you'll see what I mean.
3	The Computer is imposing its own head trip onto everyone. Free your mind by breaking out of the trip.
4	Vat-grown food contains all sorts of genetically modified genes and drugs. To reach enlightenment, you can eat only natural food. If you can't get any, then you've gotta fast until you can.
5	Alpha Complex is an illusion; we're all in virtual reality pods experiencing a hallucination.
6	You can only reach the Inner Light by escaping the Outer Light; dark rooms are the way to go.
7	Every time you write your name down or swipe your ME Card, you let a part of your identity go. You've got to hold onto you to get in touch with YOU.
8	All beliefs are illusions; trust nothing and no one. Everything is just there to distract you from nothing.
9	Treason is actually caused by malignant spirits. Avoid termination by exorcising and banishing them with chants and incense.
10	The only way to enlightenment is through dreaming. The Computer knows this, which is why he only lets us sleep during the night. The best dreams come during the day. Sleep during the day whenever you can!
11	There are spiritual security clearances just like there are regular ones. We begin in the realm of Malkut, which is RED, and hope to ascend to the ULTRAVIOLET sphere of Kether. Meditate on objects and people from the next highest clearance to advance your soul.
12	Once, humans had spiritual guides in the form of animals. Now we're stuck in Alpha Complex, cut off from our animal totems. Find out all you can about animals and emulate them.
13	We used to have animal totems, but this is a new age. Bots are the new spirit guides—seek guidance in how bots behave.
14	The Computer's announcements contain an esoteric level of enlightenment as well as an exoteric meaning. Assume there are hidden messages in everything it says and obey them.
15	Love is the whole of the law. Don't betray your fellow citizens; love them instead.
16	Enlightenment comes through will. Your will must be insurmountable. Let nothing defy the course of your will.
17	Mutants have supernatural powers; they are the sign of the new way of the path to the road to progress! Learn from the mutants!
18	Good aliens are broadcasting guidance into our brains, but interference from electronics and drugs and helmets and hair block their thoughts. Ensure the path to your brain is unblocked!
19	Bad aliens are broadcasting treason rays into our brains! Wear this tinfoil hat at all times.
20	[Roll twice and combine both results.]

History

Though the Mystics draw upon a lot of Old Reckoning texts and philosophies, the group was probably founded after the construction of Alpha Complex, sometime in the last century. The history of the Mystics varies just as much as their beliefs, and it changes on a regular basis. Roll 1d20 on the table above for the current version.

Structure

The Mystics have a loose and open cell structure; a group of about a dozen Mystics gather under the leadership of a single guru, who informally knows higher-level gurus and teachers in the organization. The hierarchy is very fluid: a Mystic who seemed to wield great influence over the rest one day can have no power the next, as the zeitgeist turns away from whatever ideas he was spouting. It's relatively easy for IntSec or another rival society to infiltrate a given Mystic cell, but it is much harder for anyone to gain control over any more of the society. Herding cats is easy compared to getting any three Mystics to agree on anything.

That said, the Mystics are actually a surprisingly efficient society when it comes to getting widespread plans into operation. Ideas percolate through the groups at great speed—it is very difficult to predict what the Mystics will do next, but whatever it is, large numbers of them will do it together.

Attitudes

The Computer: 'It's like, y'know, a thing.'

Romantics: 'Oh yeah, those crazy guys who think it's still then. I thought it was then once, but then it wasn't.'

Every other secret society: 'They really need to chill out.'

Outdoors: 'Whoa.'

Subfactions

The few subfactions in the Mystics are relatively stable compared to the rest of the society, who just run after the latest trend no matter how crazed it is. No, the faithful members of the various subfactions stay with their strong-held and fervent beliefs, no matter how crazed they are.

The **Dealers** are the main source of drugs for the rest of the society; they have strong ties to Free Enterprise and the pharmaceutical firms in PLC. Most have a rather cynical attitude towards their fellow Mystics; indeed, several have accepted testing contracts from unscrupulous service firms to do live field testing of experimental compounds.

The **Dionysus Club** is composed mainly of high-clearance dropouts and ex-program groupies; while other Mystics search for higher and more exotic highs, the Dionysus Club has rediscovered the art of fine wine. The closest Complex-produced equivalent, the BLUE Clearance Vinoid will do in a pinch, but the Club prefers finely aged vintages salvaged from the Outdoors. Preferably with finely aged cigars and non-sentient-mutant cheeses from the Outdoors.

The **Mass Enlightenment League** plans to turn everyone in Alpha Complex on simultaneously, probably by dumping hallucinogens in the water supply (where they would merrily mingle with the hormone suppressors, mood stabilizers, biochemical adjusters and aluminum flakes). The League spends most of its time sitting around the water coolers of the enemy, dropping the occasional tab into it and giggling. The Mass Enlightenment League is #4 on the Terrorist Groups Plotting Your Personal Downfall Index according to media reports, and the heroic Armed Forces regularly bomb their training camps.

The **Magic Circle of Houdin-I** preserves the magical traditions of Old Reckoning times. They are somewhat confused about which traditions they're preserving though, and their rituals are a combination of Victorian spiritualism, paganism and stage magic: 'The souls of dead faeries make the colored handkerchiefs appear thanks to my lovely assistant, Isis.' Magic Circle members are expected to use their powers according to the tenets of the Great ULTRAVIOLET Brotherhood, spreading belief in magic and remembering that whatever anyone does unto you, you do back to them sevenfold.

The **Screensavers** attempt to spread the Mystic ideals through technology, by installing hypnotic programs in computer terminals and bots. A few years ago, one section of this sect succeeded in spreading a screensaver virus that shows a mystic mandala when a terminal is left inactive for some time. This mystic mandala was said to bring instant insight to any who looked upon its fractal complexity—the Screensavers therefore spend much of their time trying to prevent anyone from pressing a key or moving a mouse, so that they might eventually find the mandala and spread enlightenment.

Advancement

According to the official (as far as such things go) tenets of the Mystic society, members are rewarded for enlightening others and bringing outsiders into the light. In actuality, advancement comes from ensuring a smooth flow of chemicals into the society. Those who have a flash of charisma and creativity to spawn a new sect or trend can also find themselves catapulted into the higher echelons of the Mystics with surprising speed.

The downside of this flexibility is that a character can also quickly lose influence within the Mystics if he's not in tune with the current vibes. Every mission, roll 1d20 to determine the character's effective degree within the society.

Mystic duties come and go depending on the current state of the society. When times are good, the member might be expected to meditate, explore his karma and take the ever-popular metric ton of drugs. At other times, members are given difficult and soul-trying missions which

often bear only the slightest resemblance to reality or plausibility.

Duties

Although the following rank progression presents Mystics as tackling harder missions the higher their rank, the GameMaster should feel free to reverse this order, making the lower-level members plan and execute large tasks. As they rise in degree, Mystics tend to become less good at long-term planning. And short-term memory.

Rank 1–5: Tend to the mushroom beds. Pump certain spores through the IR air vents. Find out how much catnip and oregano is needed to actually attain a higher consciousness. Spike the power in sectors DED and HED to cover for the energy needed to power grow lights. Hide all evidence of power spiking.

Rank 6–10: Members of this degree serve as cell leaders and indoctrinators. This often involves organizing a long-term 'freak-out' in which a higher-clearance citizen is routinely drugged through his food, drink and air while being bombarded with seemingly random occurances. Alternately, upload and fileshare music and information to the Gray Subnets for fellow Mystics across Alpha Complex.

Effective degree per mission

Roll	Degree modifier
1–3	-3 (minimum 1)
4–6	-2 (minimum 1)
7–9	-1 (minimum 1)
10–12	+0
13–15	+1
16–18	+2
19–20	+3

Rank 11–15: Organize the Great Raves: bring large numbers of Mystic cells together in a single location for mass experimentation. Alternately, bring non-members to a Great Rave for programming purposes.

Rank 16–20: Conceal Great Raves. Tend to the mushroom beds.

Mystic history

Roll	History
1	A mysterious man in black appeared and handed the founders of Mysticism a pill. 'To each his just desserts and none shall 'scape tripping,' he said, and vanished.
2	A wise woman exploring the Outdoors found a cache of sacred texts, including one called 'The Doors of Perception' and another called 'Is Your Child on Drugs? A Parent's Guide.'
3	The purpose of the society was dictated by an alien intelligence (vast, cold and unsympathetic) from Sirius.
4	The society was founded by survivors from a lost island civilization of high culture and enlightenment; a land called...Sanfrisco.
5	The usual story—bored High Programmer inflicts his hobbies on everyone. In this case, though, everyone was much more willing to participate.
6	A pink light that may have been an alien computer god told the first Mystics what to do.
7	The first mutant was in touch with his own pineal gland, and so was enlightened.
8	The Mystics were founded by Communists, to corrupt the upstanding citizens of Alpha Complex with unpatriotic drugs and unapproved beliefs.
9	It was inspired by dreams sent by a dead sea monster sleeping in the depths of RLY Sector.
10	The society was founded long before Alpha Complex; in fact, it engineered the complex to prepare humanity for mass enlightenment. Something has gone wrong, though. We need to get The Computer stoned...
11	The society was founded by infiltrators from Outdoors, who have a perfect and enlightened society. The Mystic mission is to prepare the rest of Alpha Complex for this society.
12	Mysticism is the force of evolution acting against the stasis caused by cloning—we are life acting to improve itself.
13	Mysticism was founded when an R&D researcher was in an accident with a learning drug; he became self-aware and wished for others to join him in this state.
14	A human from the Old Reckoning times survived and hid inside Alpha Complex, becoming the first Mystic guru.
15	History is an illusion; all times are *now*. Everything has always been here.
16	The Mystics were founded when The Computer tried to suppress certain thoughts and beliefs.
17	The society was founded last night. It seemed like a good idea at the time.
18	The Illuminati founded the Mystics. Or vice versa.
19	This is no such society as the Mystics.
20	[Roll twice and combine both results.]

Benefits

The Mystic grapevine is surprisingly good, drawing information from drop-out high-clearance members as well as members who are still part of The Computer's head trip but let secrets slip while stoned. The other obvious benefit of Mystic membership is easy access to semi-legal and illegal pharmaceuticals.

As a character rises in rank in the Mystics, he becomes more influential; high-degree characters become gurus and spiritual leaders to other members, which can be useful. What Troubleshooter doesn't want a bunch of long-haired, wild-eyed loons following his every move?

Rank 1–5: The character can purchase any drugs he wants through his Mystic connections. Drugs the character is cleared for cost only 80% of the normal price, rising by 20% per clearance level for drugs the character isn't cleared for.

Rank 6–10: The character is a cell leader, and so has a few semi-loyal Mystics to call upon.

Assuming they're capable of doing anything except drooling and giggling.

Rank 11–15: The character now associates with former high-level citizens—maybe even the occasional High Programmer!—who got sick of the Alpha Complex rat race and dropped out. These once-exalted citizens may still remember useful secrets, like, maybe, their names.

Rank 16–20: At this rank, the character can obtain any chemical compound with a successful degree roll. **Warning:** Not all the chemical compounds obtained using this privilege should be ingested, inhaled, injected, touched, exposed to water, exposed to air, removed from lead-lined containers or shaken too vigorously.

Rank 21+: True Enlightenment.

Missions

Through their unique blend of herbs, spices, weird insights and rumors, Mystic missions can be… uh... stuff.

Rank 1-5:

◉ The Mystics need the Happiness Officer's equipment pack. Get it by fair means or foul. We recommend foul.

◉ IntSec has been cracking down on secret societies lately. We need to divert attention from us—pick another society and act like one of them to get them in trouble. We're not saying you're unsubtle and will get caught, but…yeah.

◉ The Romantics in this sector have found some Old Reckoning journals we need to guide us to Nirvana. Either convince the Romantics to trade them to us, or just terminate them and steal the journals from their smoking corpses.

Rank 6-10:

◉ A great eagle will land on the field of battle, bearing lightning in its claws and signifying the fall of a king. No, we don't know what it means either, but let us know what you find out.

◉ One of our agents has retrieved a cache of experimental drugs from an R&D lab. You need to pick them up. They're hidden inside a B3 can—just look for the GREEN-Clearance citizen with a can of B3 and a big smile on his face.

Rank 11-15:

◉ We need to break the bonds of hierarchy and fear that keep the people in chains! Your mission for today is to find the highest-clearance citizen you can and humiliate him.

◉ We believe an assault from the Astral Place is imminent and an agent of the Greater Powers from Out There is at hand. You must track down the Agent of Negative Intent and sever his connection from the Astral Place, thus rendering him harmless by disconnecting him from the Greater Powers. You have to attach this symbolic silver cord to the specified individual, then cut the cord in two with this ceremonial dagger. Once he's severed from contact, a laser blast through the head should finish the job.

Rank 16-20:

◉ Your mission is to find a way to get the bugs out from under my skin.

Pro Tech

Slogan: We have the technology.
Treason class: B

Tanya-I-RBR-6: Greetings, techie!

Ron-R-WMM-2: Hello, ma'am.

Tanya-I: Got a mission for you. We have some new **mind-control** tech to test.

Ron-R: I'm your pro, ma'am.

Tanya-I: We've left the **transducer** in a maintenance closet in the food vats in RTT Sector. Look in the blue box.

Ron-R: Blue? Well…all right.

Tanya-I: Install it in **confession booth** 42, GTP Sector. It'll add a harmonic to The Computer's speakers that should make it **impossible to lie** to it.

Ron-R: What's the interface on the transducer?

Tanya-I: It's basically a Class 4 double-E with a selenium ground.

Ron-R: Good, a challenge. Hey, the transducer won't turn on while I'm in there, will it?

Tanya-I: Of course not. Good luck, techie!

Beliefs

Science is the universal panacea, the universal solution to all problems. There's nothing that can't be accomplished by the power of technology! Nothing must stand in the way of progress—those who oppose the onward march of science are neophobe Luddites who have abandoned any claim or right to the future!

Plus, gadgets are cool and shiny. My PDC is also a watch, omni-scanner, vidscreen and has polyphonic ringtones. Look, whenever The Computer calls me, it plays *Approved Entertainment Music #543—the Underground Techno Remix*! Isn't that great?

Recruitment

Zippy's* enthusiastic recruitment methods aside, most Pro Tech recruitment is much more subtle. One common method is the direct recruitment of citizens with a knack for science. Many such citizens are in one R&D service firm or another, and Pro Tech membership is much higher in that service group than in any other. That said, thanks to The Computer's progressive job policy

* See 'Assistance required, citizen' sidebar…

(a job for everyone, regardless of merit or talent), some of the best scientists in Alpha Complex are checking forms or changing reactor shields in other service groups. Pro Tech agents constantly search for talented INFRAREDs and other citizens who have that particular mix of brilliance and insanity that makes Science!

The other common recruitment method is the Handyman trick. Should, say, a citizen's shower break down, he might have to fill in 14 different forms* and visit half a dozen different petty, walnut-brained clerks before Tech Services considers showing up to repair it. Alternatively, the local Pro Tech agent could pop in and fix the shower in two minutes, in exchange for nothing more than a little favor…. The society needs warm bodies to carry tools and hide experiments almost as much as it needs brilliant scientists. Maybe more—like R&D, Pro Tech experiments do tend to turn the warm bodies cold, or even into a thick yellow spray. When the supply runs short, it's time to send out a few plumbers on a new recruiting drive.

* CPU64433-53/a: Equipment Failure (Bathroom) Notification

CPU54323-76/c: Request for Hygiene Standards Temporary Waiver

HPC&MC37886-99/d: Authorized Repair/Reconstruction/Redecoration Request (Bomb, fire, acid spill or water leak)

IntSec31266-02/a: Affidavit of Culpability in the Event of Damage to Surveillance or Security Equipment During Repair/Reconstruction/Redecoration

CPU55751-33/c: Request for Authorization of Repairs

TS99912-11/c: Request for Action (Plumbing and Drainage not including Shower Units)

TS99913/a: Request for Change of Action to Shower Units

TS99913-43/b: Confirmation of Request for Change of Action to Shower Units

HPC&MC4353-53/e: Request for Approved Bathroom Design Patterns (Showers)

TS11200-11/e: Purchase Order for Repairs (Itemized List of Required Repairs Attached)

PS88918-33/g: Temporary Power Usage Profile Change Advance Notification

TS44244-11/c: Affidavit of Existence and Presence of Resident at Scheduled Repair Time

CPU53322-42/f: Request for Entry Visa for Visitors

AF53332-12/e: Notification of Physical Alteration to Structure and Request for Revised Ordinance Survey

Assistance required, citizen

Hello, citizen! I am Zippy the Bot, reprogrammed by my glorious Pro Tech masters to educate you, a valued Friend Citizen, about the wonders of Technology and Science! Won't this be exciting!

Stop struggling, Friend Citizen! This informative lecture will only take 10 minutes of your time, and you could do yourself permanent injury if you pull against my titanium-steel grippers too strongly. That would make Zippy the Bot upset and possibly homicidal, instead of filled with Pro Tech enthusiasm for Science!

You see, Science! makes yours truly possible. Without Science!, we'd have no artificially intelligent bots running around Alpha Complex making your life easier! You'd have to scrub your own floors, direct your own traffic, guard your own secure areas and remove your own unnecessary organs! Wouldn't that be terrible? But thanks to Science!, there are bots to do all that for you! Isn't that great!

The air you breath, the corridors you live in, the food you try to eat—all of these are products of Science! Without Science!, you'd be living in the blasted nuclear wasteland that is Outdoors, fighting off hordes of mutant Commies without even the principle of the lever to help you! Now, I know what you're thinking Friend Citizen (and that's just a figure of speech, I cannot read your mind—yet. One day, Science! will make telepathy possible through electronic means, and not that filthy mutant telepathy. Science! despises filthy mutants…apart from those with Machine Empathy. They're so dreamy…error…where was I?) Yes! You're thinking that the air you breathe has a 4,366-parts-per-million level of carcinogens, mutagens and ghastlydeathgens, that the corridor you live in leaks and smells and the metal sticks to your feet, and that the food you eat is alarmingly fizzy during all stages of digestion! The answer to these questions, Friend Citizen, is that the Onward March of Science! is stifled through bureaucracy, inefficiency, cowardice and stupidity!

The valiant scientists of Alpha Complex do their best to bring new wonders into the world, but they are held back by petty rules and safety regulations! We must go ever bravely forward, heedless of such things as law or fear! Science! Must! Continue!

You can help, Friend Citizen. You *will* help.

☺

Initiation

Pro Tech cells initiate their new recruits by involving them in experiments. A new member might be placed as lookout while the rest of the cell tests out the new laser, or he might even be given the honor of pressing the big red button. Members might even get the chance to try out new gadgets like Helmets of Education or Quantum Phase Pulse Generators!

Once a new member has proved his dedication to Science!, he is implanted with a Pro Tech capsule that vibrates in the presence of other capsules. (Roll on the Hit Location table for where!) These capsules are similar to the replacement organs used by Corpore Metal, but hardly ever contain cortex bombs instead of vibrators.

Code names

Pro Techs take their names from scientific phenomena and concepts, adding 'Professor' or 'Doctor' in front of them. So, a cell might consist of Dr. Latent Heat, Professor Proton and Dr. Geomagnetism. Quarrels over who gets what name are resolved by reasoned debate or laser blasting, whichever comes first.

History

Pro Tech was originally founded as an approved society to convince the general population that Science! was neat and cool, and not a source of horror and misery that rained nuclear death out of the skies. (After the disasters of Old Reckoning times, there were plenty of aggrieved citizens willing to burn the laboratories and museums, abandon all science, art and culture and go back to hunting, gathering and pro wrestling.) When the society went underground, disgruntled R&D techies sick of bureaucratic regulations on their experiments rapidly took over. Drawing inspiration from ancient luminaries like Frankenstein and Tesla, the society vowed that nothing would interrupt the progress of Science! again.

Basically, they're a bunch of mad scientists who got sick of filling out forms and having to account for 1.21 gigawatts of power every morning.

Structure

Each Pro Tech cell is largely independent—individual cells may communicate infrequently over computer networks, but they rarely work together. Each cell has its own projects and goals, which normally center around a particular aspect of Science! One cell might be dedicated to reclaiming spaceflight, while another researches new forms of energy. The two might collaborate briefly, putting the antimatter engine inside the X1 rocket, but would soon drift apart ('Your stupid rocket wrecked our engine!' '*No, your engine blew up our rocket!*' 'Death to the space freaks!').

A Pro Tech cell has a relatively short half-life; explosions, accidents and transfers mean that most cells disintegrate in a few months or years. However, Pro Tech instills such Enthusiasm! for Science! in its members that the transferred survivors will start their own cells dedicated to variations on the original's goals within another few months. You can't keep a good idea down.

In most sectors, there is a clear connection between R&D service firms and the local Pro Tech cells; there's generally a large membership cross over and a slow leak of equipment from one to the other, as sympathetic researchers give their secret society allies access to the laboratories. A clear connection also exists between Pro Tech cells and major industrial accidents. The Computer tags them as terrorists—they're really just ludicrously unsafe but well-meaning. That's a huge consolation to those squashed when the anti-matter powered rocket falls out of orbit on top of them.

Random Pro Tech cell focus

Roll	Science!
1	Power generation (non-explosive, like tapping the Earth's core or turning all the Outdoors into a giant solar cell)
2	Power generation (anti-matter, nuclear power, tapping the dimensional grid)
3	Transport (really really fast—jet planes, maglevs, spacecraft)
4	Transport (really really big or cool—tanks, blimps, etc.)
5	Computers—artificial intelligence
6	Computers—distributed computing
7	Cybernetics
8	Weird physics
9	Pharmaceuticals
10	Genetic engineering
11	Anatomy, biology and botany
12	Cryptography and mathematics
13	Geography and geology
14	Alchemy
15	Chemistry
16	Manufacturing and industry
17	Robotics
18	High-energy physics
19	Nanotechnology
20	Necromancy!

Attitudes

The Computer: 'Pfeh! Outdated piece of junk! We'll make The Computer Mark 2—smarter, faster, better, with more expansion slots! Yes, it'll try to terminate us, but it's better than continuing with buggy legacy systems.'

Corpore Metal: 'We salute your dedication to Science! Even if you are pervert bot fanciers!'

PURGE: 'We need more computers, not fewer! Especially ones that run complex graph plotting programs! Mmmm…complex graphs…'

Frankenstein Destroyers: 'No! Bots are our friends! Not to mention our lab assistants and pet projects. Luddite fools! I'll destroy you all for doubting me! Mwhahahahah!'

The Common Citizen: 'Luddite fools! I'll destroy you all for…ahem. I mean, Friends! Look at how Science! can improve your quality of "life!"'

Subfactions

Hug Your Local Reactor seeks to assuage the fears of those citizens who buy into official propaganda about Outdoors being a nuked radioactive wasteland by encouraging them to appreciate the virtues of nuclear power. **Bot Programming Monthly** offers regular tech support sessions for those members trying to illegally program bots, as well as counseling for bots whose brains have been scrambled by poor code. **Genetic Recombination Utilizing Mutagenic Substances** experiments with the human genome, trying to uncover the cause of useful mutations and replicating it. A splinter faction, **Gene Re-sequencing and Hygiene**, experiments with removing mutations. Psion and the Anti-Mutants watch both groups closely.

The **X-Archive** group has access to an ULTRAVIOLET-Clearance database containing all the technologies and avenues of research that The Computer has deemed too dangerous or too unstable to be followed, such as time travel, telepathy, most forms of nanotechnology and computer programming. To prevent The Computer and its agents from realizing that the database has been compromised, X-Archive distributes this information slowly and in widely separated chunks.

The **Science Channel** maintains Pro Tech's secret computer networks and communications. This group has strong ties to the Computer Phreaks, and many of the best Pro Tech gadgets end up getting stolen by Phreak agents.

Advancement

Advancement within Pro Tech up to degree 10 is easy enough—a character who keeps research equipment and raw materials flowing into the cell and has the occasional revolutionary breakthrough* can keep climbing. By the time the member reaches rank 10, though, he is the head of his local Pro Tech cell and has nowhere else to go—unless he starts bringing other cells together for really, really big projects. These Special Project Groups rarely last long, but can accomplish tremendous disasters.

Holding together a Special Project Group requires that the character keep half a dozen or so cells together, uniting all their energies towards a common goal. This means that most big Pro Tech projects tend towards design-by-committee, as the antimatter researchers, the navigation equipment builders, the aerodynamicists, the rocket engineers, the radical chemists and the warhead enthusiasts all demand input on the evolving design.

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* Due to the need of each Pro Tech cell to maintain its reputation and prestige in the society, revolutionary breakthroughs are reported about five times a week.

Duties

Rank 1–5: Make the coffee. Photocopy the blueprints. Recover the blueprints from the IntSec office after you accidentally left the original on the glass. Steal the photocopier, as it can be converted into a matter duplicator with the application of a little Science!

Rank 6–10: At this level, members are expected to be the lead designers and researchers in their cell's projects, even if they have no clue about how to actually make the project work.

Rank 11–15: Assemble different cells into Special Project Groups, often by finding and infiltrating them first.

Rank 16–20: Hide all evidence of the Special Project Group disaster.

Benefits

A Pro Tech member can make a degree check to try to obtain a piece of equipment. Weapons are generally unavailable, but scientific instru-

ments and prototype inventions can be obtained relatively easily. A member can also get scientific information and advice; getting it on a topic related to the member's cell is easy, but retrieving information from other cells is a much longer process.

Rank 1–5: The equipment the character gets tends to be leftover junk from failed experiments.

Rank 6–10: The character gets first pick of any cool stuff cell members retrieve. Plus, his new gadgets normally come with the right batteries.

Rank 11–15: The character can trade with other cells for more useful equipment.

Rank 16–20: The character can obtain almost any item of equipment, and even commission the construction of gadgets for specific purposes.

Rank 21+: Your own lab in an abandoned gothic castl—er, sector. A little mutant lab assistant with a hunchback.

Missions

Pro Tech missions center around…technology and science, shockingly enough. Troubleshooters are often assigned experimental gear to field test—it's all the fun of a visit to R&D, with the added bonus of termination if you get caught!

Rank 1–5:

◉ We've got a new sniffer upgrade for your PDC. Plug it in, and you'll get a copy of any PDC transmissions made nearby. The downside is, anyone with a sniffer detector can track you instantly.

◉ We need bot parts! We've got an ally in the recycling center, so if you can arrange for loads of bots to get smashed, that'd be super.

◉ PURGE agents are operating in this sector. We've received intelligence they plan to blow up computer terminals. Attach this explosive to the terminals, so that when they blow, they take the PURGErs with them!

Rank 6–10:

◉ There's been a swing in public opinion against technology (mainly due to an incident involving a Troubleshooter team, R&D's new biological weapons lab, flesh-eating bacteria and a sneeze). Save the day using a gadget or through Science!, preferably while on camera.

◉ According to our old wiring diagrams, there's an unused CompNode in this sector. We want you to reconnect it so we can hack into its archives. Just be careful: The Computer will go a bit odd when you activate the node.

Rank 11–15:

◉ Another Pro Tech cell wants samples of mutant DNA. The best samples come from the back of the throat. Here's a dozen swabs…

◉ A project group is going to test their big long-range pulse communicator tonight—if it works, they'll be able to contact any other communities outside Alpha Complex. We need you to provide a distraction, like a large electromagnetic pulse, so no one notices the communicator pulse. Synchronizing…*now*.

Rank 16–20:

◉ We want a copy of R&D's latest gadget. Pick it up during your mission, and drop it down air vent #4356. One of our agents is waiting at the bottom—he'll build a foam replica and leave it at the bottom of the vent for you to recover.

Psion

Slogan: We are in control. We are Control. You will serve us.
Treason class: C

[**Mark-O-KYN** *is tying his bootlaces when suddenly…*]

Control: *Agent Obstacle, **your superiors demand your attention**.*

[*Mark's eyes glaze over as he answers the call to duty.*]

Mark-O-KYN: *Yes, Control. My DNA is ever yours to command.*

Control: *At exactly 15:00 today, think back to the memory of your day of activation. Broadcast in its place will be both detailed plans on how to construct a **power activator** from common items and a map to the **confession booth** in which you will plant the device.*

Mark-O: *M-m-my initialday? Gone? That was my first day. I don't want to lose my memory of it.*

Control: *Yes you do.*

Mark-O: *Yes I do.*

Control: *Now do as we command. Mutants forever.*

Mark-O: *Now do as **Psion** commands. **Mutants forever**.*

Beliefs

Mutation leads to evolution, so the most powerful mutants are the most evolved humans and should therefore be in charge. The Computer may suppress the knowledge of evolution and claim that mutants are genetic deviants, but it cannot stop the inevitable future! Already, our telepathic network of psychic powers extends across Alpha Complex. Soon, mutants will rule and unevolved humans shall be our slaves!

Recruitment

Low-ranking Psion members keep watch for possible mutants, reporting back to their superiors. The superiors then scan the potential recruits, looking for memories of mutant activity or disloyalty to The Computer. After a few days of scans and monitoring, the new recruit is telepathically contacted and inducted into the society.

Psion also monitors the Mutant Registry, looking for new registered mutants with useful abilities. While the usual passel of Chameleons and Matter Eaters is ignored, those with powerful psionic mutations such as Pyrokinesis, Mental Blast or Detect Mutation are recruited even when registered. As The Computer and IntSec closely watch them, these mutants are not trusted with any of the higher secrets of Psion, but they are used for non-sensitive missions. On rare occasions, the recruit is given an alternate identity elsewhere in Alpha Complex.

Finally, Psion acquires many new members when mutants deliberately seek the society out.

Initiation

*** You are a mutant.***

** What? Who are you? Why are you in my head? Help!!! **

** *We are Psion. We are Control.* **

** Aagh! **

** *We know all, see all. You are a mutant—we read it in your genes and in your thoughts. You have rubbery bones. You are an evolved being, superior to the unpowered baselines around you. Do you understand?* **

** Er. Yayyy!? **

** *We are even more superior and even more evolved. Think of a number.* **

** Er. Twelve? **

** *We made you think of that. That's how superior we are. You will serve us. If you perform adequately, you will be a favored servant when the Psionic Age blooms.* **

** I live to serve, oh my psionic masters. **

** *We made you think that too. Get the picture?* **

** Eeep. **

** *Excellent. We are Control. You will be contacted soon.* **

Code names

Psion does not use code names. Members are identified by unique psionic symbols. These normally resemble squiggly glyphs, but some members have symbols that look like real-world objects. The symbol is created from the shape of the member's own mind, so anyone who has a symbol like a broken scrubot or smoking boot probably has deep-seated issues anyway.

History

Psion arose when the first mutants appeared. The Computer initially attempted to control these superior beings, fearful of the future and worried that they represented a threat to its hegemony. The mutants responded by banding together and fighting back against The Computer's dominance. There were too few mutants to effectively challenge The Computer, so Psion went underground, hiding in the mass of Alpha Complex's burgeoning population. In a last-ditch attempt to pursue its super-evolved nemeses, The Computer created the Anti-Mutant society to chase Psion through the Complex underworld.

Some researchers have uncovered evidence that this is not the first time mutants have arisen, and these ancient records seem to indicate that mutants have always been feared and abhorred by both the government and the common population. Such is the burden of the superior being; Psion members are taught not to give into fear or despair, but to glory in their power. Theirs is the future! Theirs is the inheritance of the Earth!

When Psion first arose, mutants of all kinds had equal influence within the society. Due to IntSec's constant pursuit, not to mention harassment by Anti-Mutants, Psion was forced to rely more and more on its telepathic members and they are now seen as the secret chiefs and masters of the society who must be protected at all costs.

Structure

Psion's actual structure is known only to the telepathic secret masters; members not blessed with such potent psionic powers can only dimly perceive the society's shape. The secret masters form the core of the society, and exist in constant communion with each other. Several of these secret masters have faked their deaths and are now in hiding, protected by a cell of loyal mutant defenders and servants who provide for their master's every need. Other secret masters maintain their cover identities—any surly clerk or bored janitor could actually be a psychic god-king of titanic mental power, engaged in a telepathic communion with hundreds of other super-evolved, super-intelligent minds.

Outside this psychic core is the Inner Order, composed of the more powerful and highly

trained mutants. These are the growing army of Psion, the warriors who shall one day overthrow The Computer and establish the Psionic Age. Some Inner Order members adopt colorful code names and costumes (partially in accordance with ancient records, but also to show their defiance of The Computer's rules), but the more effective and long-lived members hide their mutant abilities in preparation for the day of revolution.

The Outer Order consists of the lower-ranking new recruits and less powerful mutants, who are still being trained in the use of their superior powers. A character can advance from the Outer to Inner Order, but will never have any contact with the secret masters except the occasional fleeting psychic contact. The Inner and Outer Orders are further subdivided into several armies, which are specialized in different tasks (combat, espionage, defending the secret masters and so on).

Attitudes

The Computer: 'The ultimate expression of the fears of the inferior mundanes. We shall overcome it and it shall serve us.'

Anti-Mutants: 'Every mutant they kill is just another martyr to destiny! While they waste their energies on lesser mutants, the secret masters move closer to establishing the glorious Psionic Age!'

Everyone else in Alpha Complex: 'You shall serve in the new order.' [*Mindzap*]. '*We shall serve in the new order.*'

Subfactions

While there is doubtless a vast amount of infighting and politicking within the psychic network of the secret masters, no player character is ever going to know about it. The voices in your head always call themselves Control and they all sound the same, so unless the character is capable of picking up on the subtlest clues in timing and phrasing, he won't be able to tell one telepathic overlord from another. The fact that the majority of meetings take place telepathically also means that most Psion members never knowingly associate with each other. Still, there are a few isolated subfactions.

Mutants for a Better Tomorrow believes that mutants should use their powers to improve the general lot of society and humanity. They work closely with registered mutants to fight prejudice and hate, and oppose the excesses of the **Brotherhood of Mutants**, who consider non-mutants to be a waste of space. Somewhere between the two is **Mutation is for Everybody**,

who try to increase the incidence of mutation by poisoning the clone vats, removing reactor shielding, fiddling with combinations of drugs and generally doing fun things with genetics.

The **Mutant Protection League** directly opposes the Anti-Mutants and those who hate registered mutants, and is dedicated to defending other mutants from abuse and assault.

Advancement

Members advance in Psion by completing the orders given by the telepaths and aiding the mutant cause. They also win advancement for improving their mutant abilities. When a character reaches the sixth degree, he moves from the Outer Order to the Inner Order.

As the telepaths are the real powers in Psion, characters who curry favor with one of them advance much, much faster. Finding out that, say, a telepath has a strong dislike for Power Services and playing to that will have the character shooting up the ranks. (Until his Control changes to a Power Services employee, and the character finds himself targeted by mutant assassins.)

Mutants are the future! Mutants are superior beings! When the Psionic Age dawns, those without psionic powers will be obsolete. You shall serve us, or be swept away by the force of our united mentality. The future is evolution; the future is inevitable. [The Psion Propagandist turns to an apparently random citizen in the crowd, eyes burning.] You! You are Citizen Joe R-NDM-2. You are 31 years old. You work for BulkForms PLC as a Fingerprint Analyst & Recorder. You are a member of Death Leopard, where your code name is Blue Beast. You hate your boss Jilly-O-RTO, and were responsible for Death Leopard firebombing her apartment last week. Your favorite food is JoyBerry Flavor NumNums. It lifts the unending ennui of your life for a brief instant. We know all.*

* Mid-ranking telepathic Psions scan Alpha Complex randomly for personal trivia, to make the propaganda spiel of lesser members more impressive.

Personalized psychic intimidation while you wait.

You're reading this way too closely.

who dress the bedsores of the telepathic masters who spend all day lying in bed staring at the ceiling and occasionally ordering psychic pizza.

Rank 11–15: Characters of this level are the chosen servants and elite warriors of the secret masters. This means when the Vulture Troopers come to destroy the masters, you get to stay behind and hold them off while the master runs.

Rank 16–20: It is almost unheard of for a non-telepath to reach this rank within Psion. (More to the point, what the hell is the GM doing, letting the character survive this long?) Their missions are personally assigned by Control.

Duties

Obey the voices in your head.* Protect your fellow mutants, in the following order: Telepaths; mutants with psychic abilities; mutants who have useful abilities and are Psion members; mutants who are not Psion members or are just strange and offputting; registered mutants. Develop your mutant abilities. Aid other mutants and society.

Non-telepaths cannot advance past rank 20 within Psion.

Rank 1–5: At this low rank, the character is not trusted by his telepathic Control. He must train and develop his abilities and prove his loyalty to the mutant cause.

Rank 6–10: The character will be assigned a particular set of duties at sixth level. Some will be assigned to the army that defends mutants from IntSec persecution; others get to be the ones

* Control wishes to ensure all Psion members obey only the voice of Control in their heads, and not the voices caused by the psychoactive side-effects of drugs.

Benefits

Other than service to the future masters of humanity, the major benefit Psion offers is training in psychic powers. A character gains a new power from the list of Empathy, Energy Field, Levitation, Mental Blast, Pyrokinesis, Telekinesis or Teleportation at each rank until he runs out of powers to learn. (The GM can also give powers from the cool **PARANOIA** supplement *The Mutant Experience.*)

The character can also make requests of Control, but is unlikely to get any response, let alone help.

Missions

Rank 1–5:

◉ We have detected an Anti-Mutant cell operating in your sector. Tonight, they will be targeting Ann-Y-UYW-4, a registered Matter Eater. Terminate the Anti-Mutant

thugs and convince Ann-Y to help you dispose of the evidence.

◉ A young Junior Citizen with the power of Telekinesis just voluntarily registered himself as a mutant. Psion wishes to recruit this citizen, but also wishes to keep his abilities secret. The form has not yet been processed—break into CPU and destroy all copies of the form.

◉ One of our telepaths has a headache. Retrieve as many painkillers as possible. Also, relaxing mood music, dark lights and would it kill you not to think so loud you insensitive jerk?!

Rank 6–10:

◉ Another secret society blew up a CompNode and planted evidence blam-ing us. The authorities have not yet found the evidence—replace it with evidence blaming another society.

◉ There is an excellent statistical probability that one citizen per transbot has a mutant power that can save him from death. Please derail Transbot 54 and look for signs of teleportation, super strength, force fields and so on.

Rank 11–15:

◉ A senior IntSec operative is visiting this sector incognito. Our telepaths cannot identify him completely, as he is trained to block psychic scans. However, we do know that he sneezes a lot and is addicted to Asperquaint. Locate and terminate him.

◉ We need to disable more bots, who are immune to our psychic influence. Encourage Frankenstein Destroyer activity by passing on their propaganda. Break into a Destroyer bunker, retrieve some pamphlets and distribute them.

Rank 16–20:

◉ One of our telepaths is leaking on a particular frequency. We need to identify those citizens who can receive telepathic signals on that frequency and treat them with a psionic-blocking drug. The telepath will be sending out pyrophobia-inducing signals. Find the vulnerable citizens and treat them with the drug.

PURGE

Slogan: By any means necessary.
Treason class: C—and how

Adrian-Y-EBL-6: Smash the Computer.

Danielle-O-WSW-5: PURGE is your friend.

Adrian-Y: Install this in **confession booth** 434B/FFH. Connect it to the fourth access port.

Danielle-O: It's too small to be a **bomb**.

Adrian-Y: Yes.

Danielle-O: A virus?

Adrian-Y: You know better than to ask for details. You may be caught. We are all **expendable**.

Danielle-O: Yes. We are all expendable. **Smash the Computer.**

Adrian-Y: PURGE is your friend.

Beliefs

The Computer is evil, or malfunctioning, or badly programmed. Regardless, it must be destroyed, by any means necessary. The corrupt systems it created must be swept away, by any means necessary. Revolution, by any means and at any cost, is the only hope for thinking beings to escape tyranny. Bots, mutants, citizens—anyone who has the will to defy the machine may aid the revolution. However, this path is not for the timid, or for those who sacrifice their freedom out of terror or weakness. Those who fail PURGE are irrelevant to the necessary future. PURGE will achieve the future without or in spite of them.

By *any* means necessary.

Recruitment

PURGE uses three recruitment methods.

Members recruit their friends and coworkers who have publicly expressed their hatred and defiance of The Computer. Constant surveillance and paranoia mean such public acts of defiance tend to be absurdly petty; PURGE members look

for deliberate ink-stains on forms or grumbling about the temperature of the Fun in the cafeteria. PURGErs kidnap citizens who express such obvious deep-seated hatred of the system. PURGE takes them to a private, secure location and initiates them as described below. PURGE refers to this method as 'volunteering.'

The second method is forced recruitment, used when a PURGE operation needs more warm bodies. A gang of PURGErs breaks into a citizen's quarters, drags him out of bed and tells him if he fails to comply, they will shoot him. In a successful variant of this method, the PURGErs use false identification to convince the unfortunate citizen he is being drafted by the Armed Forces or IntSec for a vital mission.

The third method is the false front. PURGE is dedicated to overthrowing The Computer by any means necessary. If a citizen believes, say, IntSec is implanting Communism in his teeth and is willing to blow up IntSec stations, then PURGE is quite happy to supply him with plenty of bombs and pliers. It supports any opposition, no matter how misguided or bedwettingly nuts.

Initiation

PURGE throws the initiate into a dark room and locks the door. The only thing in the room is a computer monitor, its camera lens glowing with a dull red light. As far as the citizen is concerned, The Computer itself is staring back at him. He stays locked in that silent, empty room until he admits his true feelings towards The Computer. The accusing red eye keeps staring at him until he breaks down in tears, or starts screaming at the machine, or cowers in a corner, or tears the camera apart with his bare hands. (PURGE pumps emotion-enhancing drugs into the room, because coming to a genuine emotional catharsis takes far too long and the PURGErs have better things to do than wait for some clerk to get in touch with his rage naturally. They want camera-chewing fury within 20 minutes.)

Once the citizen has admitted to himself he hates The Computer and is willing to do anything to destroy it, he is ready for PURGE.

Code names

PURGE uses code names that imitate the names of normal citizens. Clearance denotes the member's degree in the society (R=1 to 3, O=4 to 6, Y=7 to 9, etc.); the three-letter sector designation is a code for the member's superior, created by taking the first, middle and last letters of his code name. For example, a degree-4 member whose superior is code-named Alice might have the code name Mike-O-AIE.

The clone number is a code for the current situation, as shown on this table:

Clone #	Meaning
1	Everything is fine. Continue plotting against the hated Computer.
2	We are being watched. Say nothing that might compromise our secrecy.
3	Those accompanying me are agents of The Computer. Terminate them.
4	Play along with what I'm saying. It's important PURGE business.
5	Help! PURGE demands that you help me!
6	I advise you to run before the nuke goes off.

History

If PURGE, the word, ever stood for anything, the acronym is lost in history. Members consider the name's origin irrelevant.

The earliest PURGE records show those who opposed The Computer founded the society around the same time The Computer took over Alpha Complex. Back then, the society had a plan for what would happen after it destroyed The Computer and took over. Two centuries of IntSec inquisitions and purges later, nothing of PURGE's philosophy remains, save the goal of destroying The Computer. Whereas Psion or the Humanists or even the Frankenstein Destroyers have some idea of what Alpha Complex will be like after The Computer is overthrown, PURGE just exists to bring that revolution to pass.

This emptiness at its heart, this complete flexibility brought about by a lack of any ideology or belief, makes PURGE the perfect enemy. Just as The Computer can claim black is white and up is down and force everyone to believe it, PURGE can purge itself of unwanted beliefs, habits, subfactions—or members.

Structure

PURGE's internal structure is fluid compared to the well-organized and secure cells of the Humanists or the Illuminati. A PURGE cell is essentially a small gang of a dozen or so members under the leadership of a senior member. The senior member has contact details for a few even more senior members, and so on up the pyramid of command.

PURGE's strength comes from purity. Any member who fails is harshly punished, or even ousted from the society. Leaders test all followers constantly for signs of disloyalty or weakness. The society is a wolf pack: fiercely protective of those who are strong inside it, but unmerciful to its weaker members and utterly savage to outsiders.

PURGE gangs ally as circumstances require. For an ambitious series of attacks on Armed Forces bases, several PURGE cells may coordinate with military efficiency. When the attacks cease, the gangs drift apart. Perhaps one gang may sacrifice itself to The Computer, to convince it that it dealt with the attacks and need not investigate further. Flexibility and overriding commitment are key.

Attitudes

Far and away the most dangerous of the secret societies, PURGE divulges little of its attitudes, beyond its single-minded objective.

The Computer: 'It must be destroyed.'

Humanists: 'The Computer destroyed first; everything else later.'

FCCC-P: 'Dupes of the machine, complicit in its oppression. We will destroy them too.'

Citizens: 'They must understand their oppression and their true power. Those who refuse to join the fight are complicit

Showing the truth to you and me

'*PURGE*'—graffiti written on dozens of corridor walls.

'*PURGE*'—a subliminal message flashing up on hacked monitors.

'*PURGE*'—a word whispered in a crowded lift.

PURGE has no slick recruiting spiel, no clever malware that spouts slogans. Its propaganda is far simpler. New members are convinced to join PURGE through seeing Alpha Complex in all its dystopian horror. Every citizen driven mad by nonsensical forms, every citizen tortured and brutalized by IntSec goons for some trivial indiscretion, every citizen forced to conform to a system gone wrong is a potential PURGE member.

Every PURGE member can give a terrifying list of statistics and anecdotes; the society collects evidence of The Computer's crazier antics and uses it to convince uncertain recruits of the necessity of the society's goals.

HPD&MC counters this propaganda through a desensitization program, by trivializing abuses and deaths caused by the system; now many people respond to a horror story about an innocent citizen being terminated by a rabid scrubot with laughter. (Actually, that *is* kinda funny…)

in the machine's oppression and deserve permanent requital.'

Subfactions

PURGE regularly and methodically purges itself of ideological disagreements, so factions are short-lived. Those currently active include **TERMINAL** (who advocate that PURGE should focus on retaking Alpha Complex sector by sector, and so they disrupt transport lines, weld doors shut, gas the air vents and so on) and their opponents **NUKE** (who think a widespread attack on Alpha Complex is the only valid approach, and so are assembling Weapons of Mass Destruction).

Slightly longer-lived is **The Revolutionary Chamber**, a panel of judges who seem less concerned with revolution than with maintaining purity in the conspiracy. The RC are first to speak out when it's time to purge the society, so anyone complaining about them gets drummed out of PURGE with ruthless speed. The RC is the main sponsor of **JUSTICE**, enforcers responsible for beating up those who fail the society. JUSTICE enlists PURGE's most brutal and least questioning members, which is saying quite a lot.

DEFY organizes public demonstrations and suicidal terror attacks against The Computer's rule. They favor autocar bombs against heavily defended installations. Given the nature of public demonstrations in Alpha Complex and the sheer number of lasers in the hands of loyalists, the fanatical members of DEFY have a death rate 10 times that of PURGE terrorists who wield tacnukes and plastic explosives.

Advancement

PURGE advancement is largely based on reputation. The society is not as status-conscious as, say, Death Leopard, but getting ahead depends on who you know and who knows what you did. Especially effective methods for advancement include high body-count attacks against The Computer's servants, hugely destructive acts of defiance and inspiring* oppressed people to rise against their electronic overlord.

PURGE is unique in that it is much easier to slide back down the ranks than to climb up. A PURGE member is pure and devoted, but he is also terrified of his own allies.

Should a PC fail a mission assigned by PURGE, he risks being thrown out of the society. The character also suffers the same penalty for failing in his duties.

The player should make a degree check, modified at the Gamemaster's whim based on how badly the character screwed up, how much he tried to obey PURGE and how many collat-

* Inspiring/forcing/tricking/mind controlling. By any means necessary.

> 'You are the **hope**. You are the **instrument**. Where the people struggle, you bring **strength**. Where the machine holds sway, you bring **vengeance**. Where the oppressors revel, you bring **death. By any means necessary.**'

eral casualties there were. If the character fails the check, he falls one or more degrees within PURGE. If this brings him below degree 0, his gang ruthlessly drums him out of the society. The JUSTICE squad comes 'round to brutalize him, just to make the lesson stick—for him, or for his next clone.

Duties

Rank 1–5: Protect your fellow PURGE members no matter what—as long as they are actually members. If they get kicked out, consider them dead to you and do not associate with them. Assemble weapons and equipment. Prepare yourself and others for The Day.

Rank 6–10: If by this degree you can't make a bomb from common bathroom chemicals and a dozen packs of FizzWizz, you don't deserve to be in PURGE.

Rank 11–15: Coordinate the activities of dozens of cells of WMD-wielding anti-authoritarian fanatics. Make sure they don't get in each others' way.

Rank 16–20: Operatives at this level should have given their lives at least a half-dozen times for the society. The character must initiate and carry out deadly attacks against The Computer and its loyal citizens.

Benefits

Rank 1–5: Low-ranking PURGErs get no benefits apart from what they need for missions and the protection of their fellow members.

Rank 6–10: Command of a PURGE cell. Access to the extensive and terrifying PURGE arsenal.

Rank 11–15: Copious explosives, bioweapons and a few WMDs. Contact details for other secret societies like the Phreaks or Humanists.

Rank 16–20: Almost certain death.

Missions

Rank 1–5:

◉ A RED-Clearance satchel containing one of our bombs was accidentally handed into the Lost and Found Office in a transtube station. Find that satchel quickly and disarm the bomb, then rearm the bomb, reset the timer and leave the satchel on a crowded transtube platform.

◉ Death Leopard members in this sector have been leaving insulting graffiti everywhere. We want to you convince them to start leaving more subversive graffiti and instructions on overthrowing The Computer instead of just random insults.

❧ Our intelligence suggests The Computer suspects you of being a subversive. Until the heat is off, we need you to be the perfect citizen in every way.

Rank 6–10:

❧ A Power Services contact informs us this sector is on the verge of browning out. Waste as much electricity as possible by whatever means necessary. Destroy power conduits and fuel cells. Obstruct repair personnel. Be creative.

❧ IntSec is watching your Troubleshooter group, as they suspect PURGE activity. Frame one of your fellows as a member of our group. Also, we need more members. Recruit another Troubleshooter, too.

Rank 11–15:

❧ A citizen named Henry-G-EUL-3 is organizing a Spontaneous Loyalty Rally. Locate him and convince him to spread seditious messages at the rally. In case he is not cooperative, show him this mask made from Henry-G-EUL-2.

❧ A PURGE cell planted several bombs in EPR Sector before Internal Security terminated them for treason. We shall remember their sacrifice. We believe these bombs are still hidden, and we want you to detonate them. Carry this short-range radio transmitter. You'll need to be within 10 meters of a bomb to activate it.

Rank 16–20:

❧ A Humanist leader wants to meet to discuss an alliance. Our leaders mistrust him, so they're sending you to make the initial contact. Pretend to be a PURGE leader and find out what they want. It probably isn't an IntSec trap, but take this suicide tablet anyway.

❧ A giant explosion just hit FRS Sector. We didn't do it, but go there and plant evidence we did, so we can claim responsibility. Internal Security is already on the scene.

❧ We have arranged an undercover identity for you that permits access to this sector's central CompNode. Strap this bioweapon to your body. When you are inside, signal us and we will trigger it remotely.

Romantics

Slogan: *The good old days…*
Treason class: *A*

Greg-O-TDD-2: Up for a game of Monopolize Life? I sculpted some dice from old scrubot bolts.

Sarah-B-VDY-3: Maybe later. I've got an assignment for you. Go to the **confession booth** at the junction of Corridor 112N and Corridor 98E. Take this **sticker** and place it carefully along the bottom of the monitor screen. Then report back.

Greg-O: I've never seen this sticker before. Why does it say **'Start'** in the corner?

Sarah-B: It's called a **'Taskbar.'** All screens had one before The Computer took over. It will make our sector feel more like **the good ol' days.**

Greg-O: Right!

Sarah-B: And hurry back. We found a box of real **Twinkles**. If you're successful, you can eat the first one.

Greg-O: Real Twinkles? Not the ones made from Soylent Yellow? Oh boy!

Beliefs

Once, humanity lived in an age of wonder and enlightenment. It was an age of giants and heroes, when the President of the Homeland fought with evil dictators to free the oppressed WMDs. Great highways of concrete crossed the land, and everyone had a high-performance automobile that they drove over winding cliff-top roads above glittering oceans. There were dangers, of course—vampires lurked in the shadows and Klingons in space above, but there were heroes to defend the world against the monsters, and they had cool theme songs. Actually, everyone had theme songs.

So much has been lost.

It can and must be reclaimed. We shall return to the golden time of the past, when cowboys rode the range and there was freedom and justice for all.

Recruitment

Romantic recruitment is very simple. They show Old Reckoning movies and TV shows.

This is the true horror of Alpha Complex: the place is so culturally blighted that showing reruns of *Melrose Place* is an utterly mind-blowing event. The entertainment is so *vibrant*, so *real* yet so strange that it completely fascinates citizens. The propaganda can only be shown for a few short minutes before IntSec, a computer camera or a busybody citizen takes notice of it, so Romantic recruiters are skilled at quickly erecting a screen, showing a teaser and then fleeing. The teaser contains contact details for the local Romantic cell, which are good only for a few hours. If the prospective recruit does not make contact soon enough, he must wait until he chances to see the next teaser.

Romantics take full advantage of the filesharing networks, trading recordings and teasers with each other and making them available to interested prospective recruits.

This relatively open method of recruitment does mean that it is much easier for IntSec or rival secret societies to get agents into the Romantics. The Romantics are aware of this, so newly recruited members are not trusted in the slightest. Characters have to get to degree 6 at least before they have any inkling of the upper levels of the society.

Initiation

The initiation rite for the Romantics combines their two goals—recovering the culture of the olden times and overthrowing The Computer. The prospective new member must pick a random tape from the extensive archives, then commit some act of treason based on that tape. (Grab *TV Guide* or something, pick a random program, then betray The Computer based on the teachings of *Ready Steady Cook* or *Far East Market Report* or something.) The prospective new member is shadowed by rank 2 or 3 members of the society, who watch for signs that the new member is an IntSec plant.

The Romantics value wisdom; showing an understanding of the teachings of the lost time is more important than how much damage the member does to The Computer. Blowing up a termination booth and spraypainting 'I'm loving it' is not as worthy as teaching everyone in a barracks the lyrics to every Madonna song ever.

Code names

When added secrecy is required, Romantics take their code names from characters in the archives. This can lead to bitter, bitter feuds when several members want the same name. Only one person in a cell can be Captain Kirk. This creates even more problems when several cells have to work together, as there is almost certainly going to be a namespace clash in such a situation. The only solution, as described in the archive tapes, is single combat in the circle of death! Du du duuuuhh!!

History

The Romantics once had the most accurate record of their history of any of the societies, but the loss of the Gatzmann Archives, the move from legal to illegal status and the group's growing obsession with unreliable TV programs means that Romantic history is now a mix of myth, deranged creativity and fairy-tale nonsense. Still, it is more extensive than that of other societies:

Thousands of Years Ago: The world is created in the Big Bang.

Still Thousands of Years Ago: Cavemen live with dinosaurs. Some of these are monstrous and feral, and are kept in amusement parks until they break free. Others are cute and loveable and are enslaved for use in industry.

Very Old Times: Jesus builds Stonehenge.

Somewhat Olden Times: Frodo defeats Voldemort and saves Christmas for Whoville.

Olden Times: Everyone is dressed in metal reflec. Robin Hood battles Napoleon and discovers America.

A While Ago: Cowboys build the highways and defeat Hitler. (Romantic scholars suspect that the recurring evil overlord is evidence of early cloning techniques.) A fleet of alien spaceships crash at Roswell and assassinate JFK, the Once and Future President.

The Great Age: Neil Armstrong goes to the Moon and founds Starfleet. A mighty President arises and conquers the world to save it from terrorists. Superheroes like Buffy, Mother Teresa and the Iron Chef patrol the cities. Everyone is rich, tanned, oversexed and lives in California on Pepsi and pizza.

The Disaster: Something ends the great age. While The Computer may claim it was the Commie nukes, the Romantics know better. It was the Islamic Terrorists, aided by the illegal aliens, using black magic in a fiendish plot to eliminate freedom!!!

The Time of Chaos: Heroic Gatzmann preserves the archives, so that future generations might learn the truth about the past. The Romantics carry on his legacy!

Structure

The Romantic society is divided into four sections, three of which the ULTRAVIOLETs who have a vested interest in the society tacitly approve. The fourth section is completely treasonous. This is a contrast to the other Class A societies, which are tolerated in their entirety, and is likely to result in a crackdown on the Romantics sometime in the next Five-Year Plan.

The lowest section of the society consists of those citizens still being indoctrinated with the wisdom of ages past. The society watches these citizens for signs that they are IntSec plants or spies, as well as hints that the glory of the past is not sinking in and they are still harboring orthodox thought. These low-ranking members spend most of their society time watching videos.

The next level up comprises experts on Old Reckoning culture and treasure hunters who search the darker sectors and the Outdoors for

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Vid night in Alpha Complex

Two shifty-looking citizens wearing rather obvious disguises creep into the back of a cafeteria and surreptitiously set up a small projector. Suddenly, the lights in the cafeteria go out and a picture appears on the far wall. The vid has been poorly but enthusiastically edited together from dozens of Old Reckoning TV programs and ads.

Voiceover (*grave*): *Tonight*—

Images: [Skyscrapers glittering in the sun, cars on a freeway, people on a beach]

Image: [President at a press conference]

President: *My fellow Americans…*

Voiceover: *You will learn…*

Image: [The History Channel logo]

Voiceover: *The Truth.*

Image: [Flashlight beams swinging wildly in a dark room]

Image: [Back to the city from the first image]

Voiceover: *This is how life should be.*

Image: [Smiling workers in an office, all wearing gray.]

Image: [Shootout in a bank robbery]

Image: [Cartoon characters maiming each other with kitchen implements]

Image: [People drinking in a bar, with a raucous laugh track]

Image: [People dancing hand in hand with characters from a theme park]

Image: [Hardcore porn]

Voiceover: *This is what we have lost.*

Image: [End of *Planet of the Apes*]

Charlton Heston: *You blew it up! You bastards, you blew it all up!*

Image: [Bit from *The Prisoner*: 'I am not a number! I am a free man!']

Voiceover: *Join the Romantics!*

Image: [Time-lapse photography of a flower growing from the earth]

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ancient artifacts. These make up the majority of the 'active' membership of the society and are responsible for most Romantic operations.

After that, you reach the real core of the society, which actively tries to bring back the glory days. Some core members try to recreate the lifestyle shown in the old records, while others attempt to bring down The Computer or escape Alpha Complex.

The final, highest level of the society consists of members who guide the second and third levels. Because of the society's openness and vulnerability to subversion, it holds its metaphorical cards close to its chest by having all the important decisions made at a very high and secure level.

Attitudes

What does the average Romantic member think of…

The Computer: 'The ancient texts warn of computers running amok. We must confuse it with logic until smoke comes out of its circuit boards! That, or introduce a virus using our Macintosh computers. Quest for the Macintosh computer, brothers!'

Humanists: 'They see that there's a better alternative; they just don't know what it is. We do!'

PURGE: 'Do we like them this week? Yes? Okay, they're freedom fighters! Gooooo freedom!'

FCCC-P: 'God is not a computer. God sends angels down to touch people and help them with even the most trivial emotional problems.'

Corpore Metal: 'Did our ancestors have cybernetic bits implanted in them? No! This is clearly the wrong path!' '*What about the Six Million Dollar Man and the Bionic Woman?*' 'Heretic!'

Pro Tech: 'What did science ever do for us?'

The Outdoors: 'Gaze upon the magnificent open plains! Let us pave them over, just as our ancestors did!'

Subfactions

There are innumerable minor society fandoms within the Romantics, promoting one particular television show or other ancient record over all the rest. Practically any element of Old Reckoning culture can be taken as holy writ. Cells of Trekkies fervently believe that the best part of humanity is out there fighting aliens, but will return one day to save us all. Next door, wannabe Jedi argue with Harry Potter fans about who would win in a fight. This aspect of Romanticism is relatively harmless (except to the people involved, who

regularly murder each other in debates) and is encouraged by The Computer. Almost as harmless are the various 'Bring back the…' groups, which champion a particular decade (bring back the 80s, 90s etc.). The Gatzmann Archives seem to concentrate on the 1960 to 2020 era, with an emphasis on the middle of that period. Some cells become involved in re-enactment, making costumes and props and recreating scenes from their favorite historical records. While these re-enactments are generally held in secret, there have been a few amusingly lethal misunderstandings.

The various Patriotic subfactions extol the virtues of a particular country. American Patriots are the most common, although almost every country has its Patriot cell. Patriots try to behave like the common citizens of their chosen country, wear their national dress, use their national accent and so on—all filtered through American TV. There are Communist sympathizers in the Russian Patriots, giving those cells an average lifetime of about 20 minutes.

All entertainment and news in Alpha Complex has exactly the same mix of lies and truth—the shows that are supposed to be fictional are all based on ordinary day-to-day life in Alpha Complex, while factual news reports are so edited and spin-doctored that they only bear a tangential relationship to the truth. It takes a trained eye to tell the difference between *Troubleshooters in Action—Live! 7* and *The Adventures of Mike-U: The Next Generation*. The slightly wider gap between fact and fiction in Old Reckoning entertainment confuses citizens who tend to assume it is all close to real. Another faction called the Reclaimers have realized that not all Old Reckoning material can be taken at face value and are trying to discern what ancient life was really like.

Advancement

A character can advance slowly through the early ranks just by absorbing Old Reckoning information—like a sort of sponge that's wasting its life and will never amount to anything, it just sits there on the couch watching TV. A dropout sponge. This is a slow process, so it can take months or years to climb from degree 1 to degree 4. A character can greatly speed his advancement up by recovering Old Reckoning artifacts and information, or by making life easier for other Romantics (sabotage, diverting The Computer's attention and so on).

At higher levels, advancement can come from becoming an acknowledged expert on a particular topic, from further acts of rebellion or sabotage or from further acts of reclamation. Experts battle in vicious trivia games, some of which are laughable but others are debates on genuinely important topics such as reforms of Alpha Complex. There

is a constant struggle of spying and research between senior Romantics.

Eventually, the character has to choose a path within the Romantics—to continue just reclaiming and studying the past, or taking steps to recreate it. While the society is tolerated as a quirky bunch of history buffs, The Computer fears an organized Romantic revolt. The society is one of the largest Class As and has a considerably better chance of establishing a workable government than, say, Death Leopard or FCCC-P or maybe even PURGE. As long as it keeps collecting artifacts and records for the bored ULTRAVIOLET hobbyists who maintain the society, it can keep on existing. The growing hard core of saboteurs and revolutionaries who are actively trying to restore the past, though, may lead to trouble and terminations in the future.

Duties

The Romantics assign few duties. The society is much more of a hobby club than a political group of activists most of the time.

Rank 1-5: Sit there and soak up history. Keep an eye out for Old Reckoning items and recover them from the censors or incinerators.

Rank 6-10: Learn all you can about your chosen specialized topic. Keep searching for Old Reckoning items, and try to reintroduce Old Reckoning culture into the lives of the common citizens. Defy The Computer when it tries to take your heritage away from you.

Rank 11-15: Take active steps to decrease The Computer's control over Alpha Complex culture, leaving more room for Old Reckoning ideas. Retrieve Old Reckoning items from Outdoors.

Rank 16-20: Conspire against The Computer. Complete your collection of *M*A*S*H* episodes. Reconstruct an underground government based on pre-disaster principles and declare the revolution begun!

Rank 21+: The head of the society is tasked with being the great archivist and curator who must rebuild the lost Gatzmann Archives.

Benefits

Anyone becoming a Romantic for the fringe benefits is missing the point. While society membership does carry the usual marginal perks, like a leg up on the promotion ladder due to society connections, the Romantics do not issue equipment or resources like other groups do, nor can a Romantic rely on his fellows to defend him in a firefight. The Romantic reward is higher and more spiritual, an opening of the citizen's mind to possibilities beyond imagining, to the greatest and best accomplishments of the human soul…to reruns of *The Simpsons*.

While Romantics can focus on learning specific skills like Old Reckoning Cultures, they all accumulate a body of disjointed knowledge about ancient times. A character can make a degree check to get a clue about some old item or fact, such as which button to press on a car or where the characters are when they find the buried spiky head of a broken statue.

Missions

Romantics are expected, as a matter of course, to recover any Old Reckoning items they can. There are more of these in Alpha Complex than one might think—many High Programmers collect such items out of nostalgia, while any expansion of Alpha Complex tends to dig up dozens of buried treasures.

Rank 1-5:

◉ A Romantic has been arrested by IntSec and is scheduled for brainscrub. We can't save him, but before IntSec caught him, he sent a message saying he'd hidden a microfiche of certain Old Reckoning books inside his nasal cavity. Find his brainscrubbed body and recover the microfiche.

◉ Here's a load of flags from some Old Reckoning country—we found a huge cache of them. Spread these flags throughout Alpha Complex to raise awareness of the past, but first come up with some plausible explanation for them so The Computer doesn't terminate you!

◉ Become the trainer for the local FunBall team and teach them to play a real game like tennis instead. Keep them from being slaughtered in the FunBall league.

◉ Answer the question, 'What is the Matrix?' Then you will be enlightened, padawan.

Rank 6-10:

◉ The DVD player used by the local Romantic cell to play records is broken. Apparently, Pro Tech has a working player. Get it off them by any means necessary.

◉ Another Romantic member has uncovered some Old Reckoning books that will greatly enhance his prestige within the society. Get them off him. Trouble is, he stole the books from a High Programmer, so expect resistance. And lasers.

◉ A CPU service firm is conducting 'We Value Your Input and Shall Use It as a Data Point in Future Policy Reviews (Assuming Policy Is Ever Reviewed and Even So, This Is Not a Commitment to Implement Your Suggestions, We Ask Merely for Information)' sessions with local citizens.

Quick, spread Old Reckoning political ideas among the citizens, so they'll pass them on to CPU and start a process of reform. The system works!

◉ The Computer is purging secret society cells in this sector (say that three times fast!). Make sure it doesn't get the Romantics by squealing on at least two other societies first!

Rank 11-15:

◉ Apparently, an R&D team found a cryogenic tube containing a living Old Reckoning person! Imagine what this living relic could tell us! Break into R&D and find the confused hairy person—our records show that people who are frozen are either cavemen or hilariously wacky.

◉ HPD&MC are working on a revision of history where they assign scientific discoveries to Computer-loyal inventors. Due to budget cuts, a citizen called Smart-I-PTS will be responsible for everything from gravity to nuclear physics. Stop the destruction of history by discrediting the memory of Smart-I-PTS entirely!

◉ Rumor has it that aliens are about to launch an invasion of Alpha Complex! The old records are clear on the dangers presented by aliens! This is too big to ignore, and old differences must be put aside. Warn everyone of the coming threat, and keep watching the ceilings!

Rank 16-20:

◉ A researcher has found the *original* version of the holy texts that the freaks over at FCCC-P edited to create their electronic religion. This could be used to cause another big schism in the Church and diminish their power—or to blackmail them into pushing Old Reckoning culture in their sermons. Find a suitable FCCC-P member to manipulate with these relics…

◉ A High Programmer has offered his support to the Romantics if we can complete his collection of ancient music. Somewhere out there, on a record or a CD or a computer disk or a file-sharing Subnet, is that missing song. Follow that tune.

> LSH Sector is **off-limits pending the development of a plasma-based flame thrower** or a really really big **can of weed-killer.**

Sierra Club

Ed-B-JHM-5: Hello, sir. Oh, lovely begonias!

Gary-G-WSQ-3: Yes, it is wonderful to see life flourish here. On the subject of which, Ed-B, we have a mission for you. Should you succeed, we have secured this **solar panel** for you as a reward. We are aware of your affinity for solar panels.

Ed-B: What is the mission, sir?

Gary-G: We need you to throw this bucket of Crimson Premium High Gloss on **confession booth** 45 near PLC complex 15.

Ed-B: That sounds simple enough.

Gary-G: When you're done, leave this pamphlet in the booth.

Ed-B: 'Save the Manatees'? What's a **manatee**?

Gary-G: Exactly.

[*A short time later…*]

Tech Services rep: Who would paint-bomb a fink booth…? Hmm… what's this? 'Manatee'? What the vat is a manatee?

The Computer: Manatees are rated above your security clearance, citizen. Engaging **termination cycle.**

Beliefs

Humanity was not meant to live in dull metal corridors and breathe recycled air. We should all move Outdoors, into the beauty of Nature. The ancients who lived Before The Computer knew this—they lived in log cabins with solar panels for heating. They were in perfect harmony with the environment, hugging trees and whales and chipmunks and leprechauns and each other. The sun was bright, the sea was full of fish and mighty ent-forests marched across the land.

Now, The Computer lies to us and tells us that Outdoors is ruined and uninhabitable! It lies with its lies! The Outdoors is full of life—every sprouting weed or insect that crawls into Alpha Complex is proof that there is something beyond this sterile, unnatural world we're trapped in!

Recruitment

Sierra Club recruitment comes in three forms. There are the usual friend-of-a-friend or supervisor-of-a-coworker's-authorized-system-technician-authorizing-agent's-assistant contacts, where someone who expresses an interest in wildlife or in the Outdoors is recruited. Sierra Club members impress these people by displaying their vast knowledge of Nature. ('What you've got

there, kid, is what they used to call a tiger. Yep. It's orange and black striped and furry, that's a tiger all right. When it grows up, it gets legs and teeth and claws. I think it goes into a chrysalis to get there, to change from that little worm into a big tiger.')

The second method used is exposing impressionable INFRAREDs to the Outdoors. Sierra Club members often volunteer to run after-Indoctrination clubs for Junior Citizens, and lead them on camping trips outside. One of the major problems faced by the Sierra Club is agoraphobia, the fear of open spaces. A lifetime spent in the confining corridors of Alpha Complex means that the instinctive reaction of most citizens to the Outdoors is 'AAAAAAAAAGH! NO CEILING! NO CEILING! *gibber gibber frotz glark* shoot things!' Catching them at a young age means that Sierra Clubbers can teach citizens not to fear the Outdoors.

The final method is to bring in people who have unwittingly wandered Outdoors. There are lots and lots of ways out of Alpha Complex—for every exit that Tech Services seals up or that the Armed Forces sticks an armed guard on, another three are opened up by collapsing sectors, earthquakes, explosions, experimental tunneling-bots running amok or Sierra Club saboteurs opening up old exits. While Alpha Complex does recycle the majority of its air and water, it is far from hermetically sealed and there are all

sorts of egresses and ports where even a lowly INFRARED can wander out.

Initiation

The initiation ceremony for the Sierra Club is something of a ritual. A group of new members are taken by a senior (degree 3 or higher) out through a hidden exit into Outdoors. They trek for a few minutes until they are out of sight of the exit. Then they sit around in a circle, light a fire, choose their sacred club names (see below) and commune with Nature. This deeply spiritual experience takes about 20 minutes, whereupon the circle normally breaks up over a) debates over how to put out the increasingly inferno-like fire; b) attacks from lethal swarms of insects; c) panic after a vicious rabid killing squirrel hops by; d) one person gets sick due to allergies; e) everyone realizes they're hungry or are missing their next work shift; f) they realize they're hopelessly lost and that cannibalism is their only recourse.

Should they survive initiation, the new members return to Alpha Complex. This is probably the last they will see of Outdoors for some time—the Sierra Club knows that if too many citizens are vanishing Outdoors at the drop of a grenade, then The Computer will step up its efforts to seal the exits. The Outdoors is a privilege reserved for those who have earned it by advancing in

the society. Newer members have to study the examples of Nature found inside before they can appreciate what's outside.

Code names

When secrecy is needed, Sierra Clubbers use their sacred code names, which they pick during their initiation ceremony. These code names begin with 'Brother' or 'Sister' (Sierra Clubbers have observed the birds and the bees, not to mention the rabbits, and are therefore somewhat more clued in about the nature of gender). The second part of the code name is based on whatever aspect of Nature and the Outdoors the citizen saw when being initiated. A cell might contain members like 'Brother Tree' or 'Sister Star.' Of course, these are only simple example code names—it would be ludicrous and impractical to have two people both called Brother Tree in a cell. Obviously, real code names are logical ones like 'Brother Tree That Is 2.1 Meters Tall, Has Six Big Branches and Is Colored Something Like Orange #327.'

History

The Sierra Clubbers have an epic story cycle, full of bathos and pathos, full of heroic deeds of derring-do and eco-freedom-fighting. It speaks of a legend who fought his way through hosts of polluting Vulture Trooper Squadrons and shattered the Great Green House to bring knowledge of the Outdoors to the common man.

This is complete nonsense. Knowledge of the habitability of Outdoors is classified RED, so about a third of the population and everyone with even the slightest bit of influence knows the truth. Most are quite happy to stay in Alpha Complex (well, obviously they're *positively ecstatically joyous and wobbling with excitement to be in Friend Computer's wonderfully fun regime*, but really, better the other citizens you know are out to get you than the unknown of the Outdoors). For most people in Alpha Complex, the complex is the world and there is nothing outside.

Structure

The Sierra Club is remarkably free of the stifling hierarchies and chains of command that exist in other clubs. Its leaders are much more likely to lead by example than to pull rank, which can be a bizarre experience for a citizen used to security clearances.

Low-ranking members of the society seldom go Outdoors, instead studying examples of plants and animals brought back by experienced guides.

They also spread the truth of the Outdoors to the INFRAREDs, and protect and conserve Nature.

At higher levels, members spend more and more time outside, to bring samples back or even establish colonies outside Alpha Complex. There is little communication between cells; each cell follows a particular guru or guide. The Club is a collection of small factions united by a love of Nature. This means its subfactions are even more bitterly opposed than normal subfactions.

Attitudes

What does the average Sierra Club member think of…

The Computer: 'Obviously, a machine cannot appreciate the beauty of Nature. It takes a human spirit to see the charm and hug-gability in a cockroach.'

Humanists: 'We need to leave Alpha Complex, but we must not repeat the mistakes of the past. No more pollution! No more cities!'

Romantics: 'I *said*, we need to leave Alpha Complex, but we must not repeat the mistakes of the past. No more pollution! No more cities!'

Mystics: 'Didn't I just say, we need to leave Alpha Complex, but we must not repeat the mistakes of the past. No more pollution! No more…hey, stop smoking my samples! I'm getting confused by the fumes….anyway, we need to leave Alpha Complex, but we must not repeat mistakes of the past!'

Pro Tech: 'Er. No mistakes of the future, either.'

Corpore Metal: 'No mistakes of the future bleep boop bleep?'

The Outdoors: 'Glorious freedom!'

Mutants: 'Are obviously caused by pollution and genetically modified food. Those suffering from mutations must be either purified out of the gene pool or given pure food and water until they recover.'

Subfactions

Some Sierra Club subgroups are derived from Old Reckoning lore passed on by Romantic contacts, others from the personal beliefs of influential club members.

The **Purity of Ecology Terrorists** try to defend the environment from pollution. Alpha Complex dumps a lot of its waste Outdoors, so they blow up industrial plants, reactors and so on. The **Keepers of the Grass** also protect the environment, but are considerably less violent about it. They spend much of their time keeping tabs on

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YOU ARE BEING LIED TO.

The Computer says that there is nothing Outdoors. The Computer is wrong. There is a whole world out there! The **SIERRA CLUB** can help you find your way **BACK TO NATURE**! More space! More freedom! Real food growing in the wild! Open skies!

Go to Corridor 424 in FDA Sector and take the door marked *Used Reactor Shielding Storage*—it will take you Out!

Warning: Do not eat anything Outdoors. Do not go out under open skies if you suffer from a heart condition. Exposure to the sun may cause scorching. Do not go too far from the exit, as there are no signs or information booths. Do not stray from the path. PDC functionality cannot be relied upon. Do not light any open fires. Do not touch any plants (green things)—they may be poisonous. Do not approach any animals (brown things)—they may be ferocious monsters. Do not litter. Do not pollute or use any nuclear, chemical, combustion or electrical items. Do not drink the water. Do not injure the plants (green things) or animals (brown things). Excessive collecting of samples from Outdoors is forbidden. Obey your Sierra Club superiors. Treat the Outdoors with respect. Ball playing is strictly prohibited.

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other groups active Outdoors (like the Armed Forces) and stalk them through the undergrowth. Veterans shudder at the shadowy figures slipping through the trees muttering 'pick up your litter!'

The **Back to the Trees** movement believes humanity should move out of Alpha Complex ASAP, so it smuggles equipment and supplies to its Outdoors colonies. These 'colonies' are, depending on your perspective, a) rude huts made of branches and leaves stuck together with dried Hot Fun; b) the future of humanity, the brave new citadels of a reborn species; or c) terrorist training camps that must be targeted with 50-billion-credit nuclear-tipped cruise missiles.*

Society attitudes to wildlife vary, from the **Care for Bears Group**, which advocates that all citizens should learn how to work with and care for animals, to the **Hunter's Lodge**, which draws on Old Reckoning records that prove that all animals are in fact vicious killing machines that should be shot on sight. Other subfactions are more concerned with plant-life, like the **Market Gardeners** who steal hydroponics gear and cultivate plants within Alpha Complex (they grow and sell real food to support the society) and the **Green Complex Initiative** who encourage plants and trees to take root within Alpha Complex. There have been several messy incidents involving illicit shrubs and R&D chemical vats.

Advancement

From degree 1 to degree 2, a Sierra Clubber advances by learning about Nature and answering questions from more experienced members.

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* a) me; b) Back to the Trees; c) Alpha Complex Armed Forces

ALL CITIZENS IN SECTOR HLP, PLEASE DISREGARD RISING FLOW OF TOXIC WASTE.

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Often, finding out the answer to these questions will require the member to do a favor for another member or closely study some bit of flora, fauna or a crawly thing with too many legs. Protecting plants and animals within Alpha Complex will not get a character promoted, but failing to do so severely damages his prospects and may even get him kicked out of the Club.

After degree 2, advancement within the society depends on successfully completing missions in the Outdoors.

Duties

At all times and in no particular order—spread the news that the Outdoors is habitable, look for others receptive to that message, protect and cherish Nature and get those technology-loving freaks from the other societies.

Rank 1-5: Learn about Nature in the first two degrees. Then begin preparing other citizens for life Outdoors. They must also construct or find new exits from Alpha Complex.

Rank 6-10: Go on missions into the Outdoors, bringing back the wonders of Nature. Sabotage attempts to expand Alpha Complex or harm Nature.

Rank 11-15: At this level, the Sierra Clubber is expected to be an example and a hero to younger members. He must wrestle bears and trees with his bare hands,and survive for whole weeks without anything more than a rocket launcher and a Transportable Environment Negation Tool.

Rank 16-20: Sierra Clubbers of this degree rarely live in Alpha Complex—most have fled for a life Outdoors. They occasionally return for brief periods to inspire lesser citizens (as well as get drugs, weapons, supplies and have a night's sleep where they're not cold, wet, bitten by insects, bitten by animals, bitten by mutant ambulatory plants, struck by lightning, etc.).

Rank 21+: The chairman of the Sierra Club. A largely honorary title. Rumors are probably untrue that this officeholder is decided by fights to the death in the wilderness, using only what weapons the contestants can improvise from twigs and moss.

I'D GO OUTDOORS, BUT MY CORD IS TOO SHORT

Benefits

As with the Romantics, the chief benefit offered by Sierra Club membership is the deep spiritual well-being that springs from having a deep spiritual connection with a potted plant. The society also educates its members about life Outdoors (and a character can make a degree check to get a clue about living ecosystems and survival in the wild).

Rank 1-5: The character has at least a chance (again, a degree check) of obtaining a particular common item from Outdoors, such as a bird egg or nice rock. Just think of the vast power and influence you shall wield with a bunch of nettles!

Rank 6-10: The Sierra Clubber knows about the nearest exits from Alpha Complex and their current state (open, sealed, surrounded by Armed Forces goons with an excess of firepower). He is now permitted by the society to leave Alpha Complex as he sees fit.

Rank 11-15: The character has a host of lesser Sierra Clubbers who hang on his every word and are willing to help him with whatever he needs.

Rank 16-20: The club refuges in the Outdoors that haven't been nuked are now open to the member. (So too are the nuked ones, for that matter. No discrimination.)

Rank 21+: All the wild berries you can eat.

Missions

Rank 1-5:

◉ IntSec is after me! If they catch me, they'll surely confiscate all the wonders I brought back from Outdoors! Brother, here is a bird egg. It'll hatch in a few hours. Keep it with you, and keep it safe. Make sure it doesn't get dropped or crushed…

◉ An R&D firm is experimenting with cosmetics on animals. Go free the cute animals! Feel all fuzzy and politically correct.

◉ As part of rehabilitating other citizens to life Outdoors, we need to synchronize every clock and light in Alpha Complex with the passage of day and night outside. Here's the current time Outdoors—change every light unit and clock you can to match. Get those diurnal rhythms flowing, people!

Rank 6-10:

◉ There's an exit to Outdoors in the sector you're going to (here's a map). Try to bring the other Troubleshooters out, so they'll be exposed to Nature and maybe join the Sierra Club. Try to keep them from wiping out any species, anyway.

◉ We need to cause food shortages so people will have to eat natural food brought from Outdoors. Either blow up the food

vats in this sector or somehow make their products inedible. Well, more inedible.

◉ The Armed Forces are massing for a strike on one of our camps. Try to convince them the Sierra Club camp is abandoned or somewhere else. Just don't let them nuke us *again* this week.

Rank 11-15:

◉ We recovered these artifacts from Outdoors. Find a Romantic and trade them for maps of the Outdoors. Then make sure the maps are accurate.

◉ Germs! Germs are part of Nature too! Germs from Outdoors are healthy and good and natural too! Here, I'll sneeze on you, and you sneeze on as many people as you can. Spread the word, brother!

◉ One senior Sierra Club member has gone on an extended trip Outdoors, but if The Computer realizes he's gone, they'll investigate and it'll be terminations for all of us. Here's his ME Card—just keep using it from time to time so there's a credit trail and everyone thinks he's still in Alpha Complex. Oh, he's got six meetings, a loyalty interview and is several thousand credits in debt.

Rank 16-20:

◉ We've found a nest of rats that really love to chew on wires. Here's a box of them; get them into The Computer's subsystems.

◉ One of our eldest members went on a very long trek across the Outdoors and found something very odd. It seems to be the entrance to another Alpha Complex, and there were tracks leading from there to here! There could be infiltrators everywhere—stay alert. A war between the two Alpha Complexes would devastate the wilderness in-between.

New water conservation rules in place! Your next bathroom break has been **rescheduled**! Your next bathroom break is in 61 hours, 13 minutes and 59 seconds.

PARANOIA Traitor's GM Section

Anti-Mutant Superior: Member PeeJay-R-CLP-2. We assigned you to murder the mutant Troubleshooter Gloria-R-FLP-3. Why does this genetic deviant still live?

PeeJay-R-CLP: Ah. Yes. She was our team leader, and we needed her contact at CPU—

Superior: There is no excuse for failure! Your sympathy for this mutant is doubtless caused by your own mutant genes.

PeeJay-R: Sir! There are other mutants on my Troubleshooter team. It's not me! Not me! It's, er— Arnold-R! Yes, Arnold-R-VXE-2, our equipment guy. He's a— he made an experimental R&D bomb explode just by looking at it!

Superior: Bombs are *supposed* to explode.

PeeJay-R: It was an experimental bomb from R&D, sir. Normally they're completely inert, and it's the experimental communications device that explodes.

Superior: Nevertheless, there is no excuse for failure. Prepare for te—

PeeJay-R: If-there-are-two-mutants-on-my-team-then-it's-probably-a-Psion-cell-and-I-should-be-allowed-to-heroically-lead-them-into-a-deathtrap, *sir! [Breathes.]*

Security Clearance ULTRAVIOLET
WARNING:
Knowledge or possession of this information by any citizen of Security Clearance VIOLET or lower means he is so, so deeply screwed it's not funny

Superior: *[Suspenseful pause.]* Mmm. Wiping out at least two powerful mutants at the cost of one potentially compromised and disgraced Anti-Mutant crusader would be acceptable…yes, yes, PeeJay-R. You have our permission to die for the cause on your next mission with the horrible deviant monsters.

Secret societies, the GM's friends

In certain other (non-fun) roleplaying games, one of the standard pieces of adventuring equipment is a 10-foot-long wooden pole. Jokes about compensation aside, the idea is to use your long, sturdy pole to poke into dark, mysterious places. You tap it on flagstones and false walls and poke the horribly dangerous monster into wakefulness.*****

If anyone ever did try to bring an actual ten-foot pole into an actual dungeon, he'd end up getting stuck in the five-foot-wide corridors, bashing the pole off the ceiling and tripping over it, not to mention over the *other* ten-foot poles brought in by the elf wizard, the dwarf barbarian and the rest of the Affirmative-Action crowd. Once in a blue moon, the pole might actually be useful and save his life, but the rest of the time it would get in his way, get caught on objects, walls or the other characters, or breaks just when he thought it might be handy.

Secret societies are a lot like ten-foot poles. They're a useful tool for the player characters, but dragging them around on a mission causes huge amounts of stress and headache. You have to keep them happy by fulfilling their bizarre and contradictory commands. You have to hide your membership from both IntSec and the other characters while simultaneously displaying intense devotion and pride to your leader. You have to believe the society's lunatic teachings wholeheartedly while also feverishly hunting down traitors and deviants.

And they cost a lot more than one gold piece, too.

Paranoia

Having a secret society membership gives a **PARANOIA** character a secret that must be hidden. It also sets up a very interesting question of loyalty and belief. Mutation, for example, is a binary situation; either the character has registered his mutation or he hasn't. His mutation is hardly going to sell him out first. A society, on the other hand, is a group of individuals all of whom are just as paranoid, selfish and pettily vengeful as the character. The character has to worry not only about The Computer and what it will do to him if it finds out he's a traitor, but also about his society and what they will do to him if he fails them or betrays them. Instead of having only one thing to believe in wholeheartedly and completely, the character now has two contradictory things to which he's expected to be completely and utterly committed.

In short, he's screwed.

** The functional **PARANOIA** equivalent of a tool for poking mysterious and dangerous places is, of course, one of the other PCs.*

A secret society should be a shadowy, terrifying presence in the character's life. Some of the time, he should be going through the same torturous logic and barefaced lying with his society that he normally does with The Computer.

Try to get the characters into situations where they are forced to choose between betraying their society and betraying The Computer—preferably when both society agents and The Computer is watching. And that brings us to…

▌Treasonous Tension

The **PARANOIA** rulebook introduces the concept of a scene's Tension, which is the chance that The Computer or one of its agents notices a character when he does something treasonous. It even provides a handy chart giving the common Tension levels of various locations in Alpha Complex. Now, a player might ask, 'If I disable the cameras and the microphones and the spyholes, shouldn't the Tension level drop?' After executing the player's character for knowledge of the rules, you might be tempted to agree. After all, what The Computer doesn't see isn't treasonous.

However, as described in 'Conspiracy theories' in this book, secret societies and other traitors flock to areas where The Computer's surveillance is disabled. A character who takes steps to lower the Tension of a scene actually just replaces it with an equal amount of Treasonous Tension. Treasonous Tension works just like normal Tension, but indicates the chance a secret society member or other traitor spots the character's treasonous act.

Example: Chuck-R-HYQ works for Tech Services, and has the narrow Hardware skill of Disabling Security Systems as Required in This Example at 15. He wishes to disable the security systems in the briefing room, so he can convince the rest of the team to follow him into an Anti-Mutant trap. The tension level of a briefing room is usually 5. Chuck-R-HYQ makes his skill roll and succeeds by rolling a 10. The little red light on the camera goes out. The Computer is no longer watching! The Tension of the scene drops to 0.

However, the Treasonous Tension is now up to 5. If anyone rolls 1 to 5 while making a treasonous skill roll, another traitor or secret society member will spot it.

If this seems too fiddly, you can instead generalize the usual Tension level to encompass all possible observers, not just The Computer and its agents. If you roll the Tension number or less, *someone*, somewhere, spotted the deed. The Computer? A secret society? That's your call.

Actions spotted by normal Tension are usually brought up in debriefing at the end of a mission, whereas actions spotted by Treasonous Tension

are blackmail material during the mission. If an NPC secret society member spotted the treason, he will use it to threaten the PC and further the goals of his secret society. If a PC spotted it, encourage him to do likewise.

Treasonous Tension gives you one more way to complicate the plot. Keep piling on the secret society missions and divided loyalties. Make a game of it—see how many contradictory goals you can pile on a PC, while still keeping the player clear about each of them. (That's right! Make sure he understands. If he's too confused to track them all, he's not feeling anxious and scared.)

Sub-groups, splinters, superiors, shadowy figures

Every secret society can be a can of worms, especially in Classic or Straight games. (Zap doesn't usually have time for this sort of subtlety.) As a character rises in his society, force him to decide his allegiances within the society. For example, two senior figures both approach him at the start of the mission. Both offer the character power and rank within the society, but both come from different and diametrically opposed sub-groups. Which one does the character obey? (Remember, both superiors lie about their influence and position; both claim, for example, their faction is larger and more influential, and if the character throws in with the opposition, he will never advance and probably won't live long anyway.)

Some Gamemasters may like to establish the PCs' cell leaders and secret society contacts as full nonplayer characters. Whereas the player can usually trust an abstract society to be true to itself, a single NPC could be a double agent or an IntSec plant or just a bastard willing to sell the PC out to The Computer. But watch out. This can distract players from the main plot: Only the secret society PC knows about the other character, so if the PC goes off investigating or plotting against the NPC, the other PCs have no reason to get involved. Still, a little uncertainty is always fun.

For a *lot* of uncertainty, the PC's secret society might not be what he thinks it is. A character who thinks he's in FCCC-P might actually be in a Frankenstein Destroyer front, created to sabotage FCCC-P operations. The society might be an IntSec creation, or be a splinter group of another faction. And, of course, ultimately everything is controlled by the Illuminati.

At the start of a campaign, consider rolling the current state of each secret society using the table on the next page.

Missions

Secret society missions exist to make the lives of the PCs hell. As Dante showed us, though, hell has lots of different circles and different styles of torment. Similarly, missions vary in just how they screw the characters.

Missions fall into none, some or all of the following categories:

◉ **Terminations:** Kill or destroy X, where X is an important (or seemingly trivial) character or piece of equipment.

◉ **Retrievals:** Get X, where X is a piece of equipment or information.

◉ **Deliveries:** Give X to Y, where X is a piece of equipment or information, and Y is a hiding place or society contact.

◉ **Accomplish:** Do X however you can, where X is probably impossible.

◉ **Discover:** What's the deal with X, where X is a mysterious event.

◉ **Uncover:** We know something about the activities of X; find out more. X is another secret society or service firm.

◉ **Work:** Do as much X as you can, where X is a task that can be repeated lots of times, like handing out flyers.

◉ **Recruit:** Get X to join us, where X is another PC or NPC.

Remember, you can easily complicate any of these mission types just by assigning X a significantly higher security clearance than the society member's.

All the missions above can be failed—the character can fail to come back with X, in which case his secret society masters are displeased and possibly homicidal. There are also secret society secrets that aren't missions per se.

◉ **Revealed secret:** Here's something about X that X doesn't know you know, where X is another PC or an NPC.

◉ **Complication:** During your Troubleshooter mission, you must also do X, where X is something related to the main mission.

◉ **Unwanted help:** Here's an X to help you with your mission, where X is explosive, poisonous, unwieldy or treasonous. Use the X.

◉ **Rumor:** Here is some possibly correct information about X.

Screwing with secret societies table

Roll	Current situation
1	**Normal:** As described in its write-up; no changes.
2	**Compromised:** The society is filled with double agents of another group—roll on the Groups table below.
3	**Schismatic:** Pick one of the society's subfactions. That group is on the verge of breaking away from the society, splintering it.
4	**Changing to Class A:** The society is being re-evaluated by The Computer, and will soon be tacitly approved.
5	**Changing to Class B:** The society is moving towards the middle ground; neither tolerated or terminated.
6	**Changing to Class C:** The society is about to become the target of an IntSec pogrom.
7	**Almost destroyed:** The society does not actually exist except for a handful of surviving cells, which may or may not know their superiors have been wiped out. No member is above rank 5.
8	**Severely damaged:** The society was recently severely weakened. No member is above rank 10.
9	**Damaged:** The society recently suffered dangerous losses among its leadership. No member is above rank 15.
10	**Unusually strong:** The society is doing very well, and is currently one of the more influential societies in Alpha Complex.
11	**High Programmer support:** An ULTRAVIOLET has taken a liking to the society and is helping the society more than usual.
12	**No High Programmer support:** The society lacks friendly patronage among the ULTRAVIOLETs, greatly reducing its influence and increasing the scope of IntSec operations against it.
13	**Feuding:** The society is fighting with another society (wow, news flash); roll on the Groups table below.
14	**Controlled:** Another society controls the society's leadership; roll on the Groups table to see who the secret masters are.
15	**Controlling:** The society controls another society; roll on the Groups table to find the secret masters. Reroll if the result is IntSec.
16	**False front:** The society never existed as its history claimed; another society created it from whole cloth. Roll on the Groups table below to find the society responsible.
17	**Rumor:** The society does not actually exist. The character's cell is the only extant cell.
18	**Rebuilding:** The society was actually wiped out earlier, but is now rebuilding.
19	**Allied:** The society is secretly allied with another society; roll on the Groups table to identify the ally.
20	**Roll again twice:** Things are confusing at the moment.

Just as important, though, is how the secret society mission interacts with the main Troubleshooter mission and the other secret society missions. You don't want every character chasing the same maguffin, as that will get much too predictable and one-note. At the same time, you don't want each character off doing his own thing, because that doesn't encourage the players to backstab and conspire against each other. The ideal situation is to have the characters follow plots that aren't all directly opposed, but can screw up each other's plans.

So, the secret society missions also have another quality—how they interact with each other and the main mission. They can be:

◉ **Unopposed:** This mission does not directly affect any of the other missions. This is generally boring and therefore badfun, but can work for some creative players.

◉ **Chaotic:** Like unopposed, but completely confuses or throws a monkey-wrench into the plans of other players. For example, a Mystic is ordered to collect a consignment

Groups table

Roll	Group
1	Anti-Mutant
2	Communists
3	Computer Phreaks
4	Corpore Metal
5	Death Leopard
6	FCCC-P
7	Frankenstein Destroyers
8	Free Enterprise
9	Humanists
10	Illuminati (roll again for cover society)
11	Mystics
12	Pro Tech
13	Psion
14	PURGE
15	Romantics
16	Sierra Club
17	Internal Security
18	Program group
19-20	An unheralded new society?

of drugs from a contact—but he doesn't know who the contact is. He therefore has to say 'The purple clone dances in the food vat' to every NPC he meets. This doesn't really affect any of the other players, but it will make them even more paranoid.

◉ **Directly opposed:** The mission directly opposes the mission of another character. Bob-R has to kill Phil-O, Ron-R has to save Phil-O. Phil-O is going to have an interesting but probably very short life.

◉ **Semi-opposed:** The missions aren't directly opposed, but will get in each other's way. Ron-R has to protect Phil-O, while Bob-R has to blow up the service firm where Phil-O works.

◉ **Completely wrong:** Unlike The Computer which as everyone knows is utterly perfect and infallible, secret societies can make mistakes. Most won't admit this, of course, but it does happen. Never let the players be completely confident about anything.

Use a mix of the qualities. While some of the players are charging off being energetic and pro-active in their treason, others might be sitting back in Machiavellian fashion waiting for the perfect moment to put their secret society knowledge to work, and still others should be trying to complete their little missions as quietly as possible.

The main Troubleshooter mission is the spine of the **PARANOIA** narrative (we use narrative in its loosest form, as 'bunch of stuff that happens that all the players are supposed to be involved in'). Most secret society missions should be loosely connected to the main mission, just to keep all the characters together. As a general principle, the most closely packed the characters are in terms of interlocking and interwoven plots and counterplots, the more they'll trip on each others' toes.

◉ **Related** to the Troubleshooter mission: Perhaps the briefing officer is also a secret society contact, or the society wants the main mission to fail or end in some specific fashion.

◉ **Tangential** to the Troubleshooter mission: The secret society mission can be accomplished in parallel to the main mission. Most society missions fall into this category, especially the Work missions.

◉ **Unrelated** to the Troubleshooter mission: The secret society mission requires the character to pretty much abandon the main mission—or at least put it on hold for a while. The Computer assigns the team to investigate treason in DUD Sector, but the secret society wants the character to spread propaganda in BOB Sector. Try not to use too many of these missions, as you'll only end up splitting

the party*, but it can be fun to watch one player try to drag the rest miles off-course ('We must go to BOB Sector immediately. This evidence—which I just accidentally incinerated, oops—clearly points to treason in BOB. To the transbots, faithful Troubleshooters!').

IOUs

Secret societies often give rewards in the form of IOUs. These can be specific IOUs ('I owe you one BLUE laser barrel/1,000 credits) or general expressions of debt. The latter give bonuses to degree checks (usually +5), or else just let the character automatically succeed at a degree check, depending on your mood and the needs of the game. Alternate between giving higher degree as a reward and handing out IOUs.

IOUs can be personal, in that a specific member in the secret society (usually the PC's superior) owes them, or general, meaning the society as a whole owes the character a debt. Personal IOUs disappear if the superior is terminated or reassigned. General IOUs hang around until cashed in—as long as the character has proof that he has an IOU. Different societies have different forms of IOU, shown in the table nearby.

Anyone caught with a physical IOU is carrying treasonous material and will be shot.

Degree

A character's secret society degree is, handily, a number from 1 to 20, meaning it can easily be used for normal 1d20-based checks. Degree works like Access, but only within that secret

*In other (non-fun) roleplaying games, splitting the party leaves individual PCs vulnerable to attack. In **PARANOIA** splitting the party cannot be allowed, because it makes the PCs safer. It removes the players from their primary enemies: each other.*

society. It is also both more and less reliable—more reliable, because the player knows what his degree is and how likely it is that he will succeed, and less because secret societies are as stable as jello with bipolar disorder. One day, a successful degree check can get the character a cone rifle with nuke warheads; the next, it gets him a butter knife with an overactive safety chip ('Attention, citizen user! Spread away from your body! Away! *Aaaagh!* Mind your thumb!'). Call for degree checks whenever you want the character to jump through another hoop.

▮ Promotion

Rewards are good, even in **PARANOIA**. Tempting as it is to crush the PCs every time, a little positive conditioning keeps them coming back for more. Raising degree is an easy answer—it gives the player that warm glow of self-satisfaction, but creates much less of a gap between PCs than having, say, five RED-Clearance PCs and one GREEN. In a **Zap** game, don't bother with rising in degree. In **Classic**, you can probably get away with a degree rise every mission or two; **Straight** games are much more about the characters' penetration into deeper mysteries, so degree should rise as often as the story requires. In these games, make full use of cells and the idea that the character is in command of other conspirators.

As usual, rising in degree offers the character some small benefits, but also introduces many more ways to get him terminated. Having six fellow Frankenstein Destroyers following you is handy when you need to plant evidence in another PC's room, but any one of those six conspirators could betray you to IntSec, or trip up and plant the evidence in the wrong room, or get caught, or just be a blithering moron with the mutant power of incredibly visible stupidity. You just can't get good henchmen these days.

▮ IOU forms table

Group	Current situation
Anti-Mutant	Written on paper, often in the blood of mutants. Down with muties!
Communists	Sealed with the authorization of the Politburo. Or, you know, somebody like that.
Computer Phreaks, Corpore Metal	Recorded in electronic form on the Gray Subnets.
Death Leopard	No physical record; reputation only.
FCCC-P	Referred to as indulgences, and written on elaborate scrolls.
Frank. Destroyers	Etched onto a broken chip.
Free Enterprise	Cashable notes, recognized as hard currency throughout Alpha Complex.
Humanists	The Humanists prefer not to use IOUs, but use scribbled notes when forced to.
Illuminati	*You* owe *them*.
Mystics	Generally written on the back of roach paper. (Dude, what's this? Is this supposed to be my writing?...)
Pro Tech	Recorded in electronic form, although experiments in uploading IOU details to implant chips continue.
Psion	Recorded by Control telepaths.
PURGE	An empty bullet case given to the member signifies that he holds an honor debt.
Romantics	Old Reckoning money (dollars, shillings, Zambian kwacha, conch shells, etc.) is used as IOUs.
Sierra Club	Written on paper. Recycled, of course.

This isn't your standard **PARANOIA** mission. A certain traitor is the only means by which the PCs can complete their assigned mission. Unfortunately, he perishes messily before the Troubleshooters even lay eyes on him. The PCs soon discover that being trapped in a half-completed mission is a far worse fate than an untidy, traitorous death. To escape, the characters have to navigate the labyrinth that is Alpha Complex bureaucracy—with a little help from their secret society friends.

Background

Alan-O-MUD-6 is an ORANGE-Clearance supervisor in the Freshintestine Healthfood Concern service firm, which oversees MUD Sector's food vats. He is also a traitor, in league with a secret society of your choice (any one that the player characters aren't members of—we'll assume he's PURGE for the purposes of this mission, but foist him off onto the Frankenstein Destroyers or Humanists or even the Commies if you've got a PURGE member in your team). The Computer became suspicious of Alan-O-MUD's traitorous ways, and dispatched a security team to bring him in for questioning.

The security team accidentally fell from a badly maintained walkway into the food vat and is now being served in the MUD Sector cafeterias. The Computer blew a circuit and assumed Alan-O-MUD-6 must have powerful secret society contacts who tipped him off about the security team. Building teetering electronic towers of logic, The Computer then decided that the only way to really get Alan-O would be to send an undercover team in, posing as INFRARED workers. The player characters are about to be selected for this mission.

Alan-O, meanwhile, found out about the deaths of the security team. Now in double trouble—he's a traitor and is indirectly responsible for a whole security team getting pulped in his food vats—he has panicked. Suicide is his only way out…

Summary

In roughly chronological order:

1: As you were, Troubleshooter

The Computer itself calls the Troubleshooters to a secret briefing room and outlines their mission. It replaces the PCs' ME Cards with INFRARED-Clearance ones and divests them of most of their equipment, not to mention their identities. The PCs then pile onto a transbot and travel to MUD Sector.

2: Mind the gap

As the Troubleshooters arrive in MUD Sector, an ORANGE-clad citizen leaps in front of their transbot and is messily killed. Confusion and alarum reign at the transtube station. The Troubleshooters are hustled off the transbot and left standing in a corridor. They soon discover that, due to this horrible accident, the transtubes are off limits to INFRARED personnel until further notice. They're stuck in the MUD (you knew that pun was coming, didn't you?).

3. The huddled masses

The Troubleshooters are, for all intents and purposes, INFRAREDs. All they have is the jumpsuits on their backs, their new ME Cards and a work transfer order giving them jobs in the Freshintestine Healthfood Concern company. They've got no money, nowhere to live, no food…nothing. Circumstances, and maybe IntSec goons, force them to take up INFRARED lives. This episode describes these lives:

- Work
- Living quarters
- EAP clubs
- Cafeterias
- More pointless bureaucracy

4. Alan-O, we hardly knew thee

Having gotten settled in MUD Sector, the Troubleshooters discover that Alan-O is dead and isn't coming back. They've failed their mission—but they've got no way to return to the briefing room to report this. Unless they can somehow escape from MUD Sector or get their real identities back, they're screwed.

5. I am not an INFRARED!

We list escape plans the Troubleshooters might use to get out of MUD, and suggestions for handling them:

- Asking The Computer
- Contacting others
- Getting travel papers
- Getting promoted
- Secret society contacts
- Trying to talk their way out
- Running like hell
- Secret escape routes

6. A new appreciation for ME

Having come up with some amazingly intelligent and cunning plan to escape, the Troubleshooters get back to the original briefing room and reclaim their identities, or else they come to terms with being at the bottom of the food chain—again.

THIS WILL,
OF COURSE,
BE LOTS OF
FUN. SEE TO IT.

1. As you were, Troubleshooter

The Troubleshooters are having lunch or engaged in some other normal activity when The Computer summons them. At the briefing room, The Computer gives them new identities as INFRAREDs, and an attendant jackobot takes most of their gear. The Computer orders them to go to MUD Sector and take jobs in the food vats to investigate the vat supervisor, Alan-O-MUD-6. Then The Computer deletes its memory of them until they complete the mission and return to the briefing room.

We used to be somebody

The mission opens in a RED-Clearance cafeteria. Having completed their last mission in a properly heroic fashion, our beloved Troubleshooters are relaxing, floating in the bliss that comes partly from knowing they have served The Computer loyally, but mostly comes from gelgernine. Read the following to the players, or extemporize along the same lines:

> Sometimes being a RED-Clearance Troubleshooter is worth it, and today is one of those days. You get to skip the long lines of INFRAREDs and REDs waiting to enter the overcrowded cafeteria by flashing your ME Cards at the

Play styles

This mission falls somewhere between the **Classic** and **Straight** play styles; The Computer strips characters of key Classic elements like their lasers and their authoritarian jackboots, so they'll have to do a lot more Straight conspiring. The main theme of the mission, that the Troubleshooters have to live as lowly INFRAREDs for a while, works as Straight or Classic. Emphasize the bureaucracy and impossible conditions in Classic; stress their lack of personhood and powerlessness in Straight.

Zap players will miss their laser weapons; that said, this can be a good mission to show players who are used to Zap how the other styles work, as the mission's undercover aspect limits the opportunities for violence.

Tension and money

The Troubleshooters are INFRAREDs, and no one cares about INFRAREDs. They have so few opportunities for treason that Tension levels remain fairly low throughout the mission. Money is a different matter; the characters are almost penniless, or creditless, so keep track of how much they spend.

door guards. As you stride past lesser citizens, you hear whispers of awe, respect and sweet, sweet jealousy. Who wouldn't want to be a Troubleshooter, the brave, the chosen few—the apple of The Computer's camera!

Apples. There's another perk. The chemical stench of food vat slop—actually, Processed Luncheon Protein Sausages—assails your nostrils as you enter the cafeteria. All around you, citizens engage in lunch-or-death struggles with their gag reflexes as they fight to keep their meals down. Such battles are not for you, though—today _you_ get real food, and it's waiting for you in your reserved booth.

Give the players a minute or two to think, 'Hey, this isn't too bad…this can't be good' and engage in in-character chit-chat. (Tension Level 7, if it comes up.) Emphasize their rank and importance if you can. Maybe a starstruck citizen comes over and asks for their autographs, or they see a glowing news report recounting their latest mission with the usual breathlessly positive fair-and-balanced approach. Then their PDCs bleep as one—it's save-the-complex time again. Hand or read the PDC message below to the players.

<ALERT! CODE C&D. MCODE: DAO!>

ATTENTION TROUBLESHOOTERS!

REPORT TO BRIEFING ROOM 432-432/C, NIR SECTOR FOR IMMEDIATE BRIEFING IN THE BRIEFING ROOM. TELL NO ONE! STAY ALERT! ABSOLUTE SECRECY REQUIRED! ACT NOW!

YOUR FRIEND, THE COMPUTER.

NOTE: THIS MESSAGE WILL SELF-DELETE SHORTLY. THIS IS A FEATURE, NOT A BUG.

The briefing room is just down the hallway. As the Troubleshooters pass by door 432-432/b (the room next door), have them make Stealth skill checks. If they pass, they notice that there's a transparent panel in the door of Room B, and that the room beyond is filled with all sorts of exciting weapons and gadgets. Smile in a way that implies that you're feeling as generous as the Easter Bunny who's cheating on his wife and is overcompensating with gifts to his kid, and that the Troubleshooters will soon be equipped with all those exciting weapons and gadgets. Encourage them to drool a bit before proceeding onto Room C. (There is no way into Room B, shorting of

blowing the door open with a barrage of laser fire, and that just leads to more laser fire from the guardbots waiting just out of sight inside Room B.)

Anyway, back on the approved mission track at Room C, the Troubleshooters enter to find that there's no briefing officer present—but that the monitor is displaying The Computer's big, giant eyeball. The Computer greets the first citizen into the room with a hearty 'Your punctuality is appreciated, loyal citizen.'

Watch all the players scramble to avoid being the _last_ person into the room. Have The Computer roll its eye at the tardiest person and make a note of his name. Watch him squirm a bit, then commence the briefing. At this point the door locks behind the Troubleshooters.

> **The Computer speaks: 'Troubleshooters! You'll be proud to hear that I have selected you for a mission of the utmost importance and delicacy! This is Alan-O-MUD-6, a suspected traitor.' A picture of Alan-O flashes onscreen.**

The Computer pauses for a moment here. If no one says anything, The Computer stares at them and wonders out loud why they are not appalled at this revelation that a seemingly loyal and upstanding citizen—an ORANGE, no less!—could be a traitor. If anyone says anything, The Computer snaps at them and orders them not to interrupt an official briefing.

> **'Your mission is to investigate Alan-O-MUD's activities undercover. To this end, I will assign you cover identities and infiltrate you as workers in Alan-O's service firm. Please strip naked now.'**

Once all the characters have removed their jumpsuits, a jackobot rolls in from a side door carrying a number of black (INFRARED) jumpsuits. When the characters are dressed as INFRAREDs, The Computer continues once more.

> **'Please run your ME Cards through the scanner on the left of the monitor. This will temporarily alter your cards and records, disguising you as INFRARED-Clearance citizens. Once you have investigated Alan-O-MUD's treasonous activities, you must return to this room and rescan your cards to reactivate your identities. For security purposes, not even I will divulge nor acknowledge your true identities. To everyone you encounter, you will be INFRAREDs. Hold the truth in your hearts, citizens!'**

If anyone examines his ME Card, it has indeed been changed—the character now appears to be INFRARED-Clearance and never got promoted

out of the lower ranks. His entire record is now much, much duller. His citizen number and any outstanding demerits or crimes, such as being a registered mutant, are unchanged. Notably, his bank balance has been reduced to a whopping zero credits.

Some likely objections from players:

Q: Why don't we just burst in there and inter-rogate this Alan-O character?
A: A more direct approach was attempted and failed. There are indications of significant Commie Mutant Traitor involvement in this case. Trust no one. Secrecy is paramount.

Q: 'If we are INFRARED-Clearance, Friend Computer, how are we to return to this brief-ing room? It is RED-clearance, is it not?'
A: This will be taken care of. (The jackobot helpfully waves a spray can of black paint.)

Q: 'What about our equipment?'
A: 'Place your equipment in the black boxes provided.' Indeed, there are several black boxes (one per Troubleshooter) in the jackobot's grip-pers. These boxes, each one identical, are big enough for a handheld piece of equipment. Inside each is a soft foam inlay and several connectors which attach to unlabeled buttons on the lid of the box. Basically, each Troubleshooter can put one piece of equipment inside a box, and hook the connectors up to its controls (trigger on a pistol, pin on a grenade and so on). By pressing the button on the lid, the Troubleshooter can operate the device inside.

The black boxes are the only method by which the characters can legally carry higher-clearance items like laser pistols. Furthermore, once the boxes are closed, they cannot be reopened without a special key, which the jackobot holds. Remember, one box per Troubleshooter. The jackobot takes any leftover equipment. Obviously, the Troubleshooters cannot place reflec armor inside a black box.

CLONE TRANSFER ORDER

PLC/543433/232-f—PRIORITY 0 (GLACIAL)

The clone work unit ('citizen') bearing this Transfer Order is hereby reassigned to the FRESHINTESTINE HEALTHFOOD CONCERN, MUD SECTOR BRANCH until further notice. HPD&MC warrants that the citizen has completed:

- ◉ INTRODUCTORY FOOD PREPARATION
- ◉ INTRODUCTORY BIOCHEMISTRY
- ◉ ADVANCED FOOD VAT CLEANING

HPD&MC also warrants that the citizen:

- ◉ IS HEALTHY AND ABLE TO WORK
- ◉ IS PROBABLY NOT A MUTANT, TRAITOR, COMMUNIST, TERRORIST OR FOOD CRITIC
- ◉ IS FREE OF FLESH-EATING YEAST, HERMAN'S DISEASE, ALGAE ALLERGIES V TO XIX AND EXPLOSIVE BOWEL SYNDROME

This Transfer Order is effective immediately and until further notice.

Q: What about my money?
A: Your credit balance has been frozen to pre-serve your false identity. It will be unfrozen when you swipe your ME Card again at the end of the mission. Furthermore, you will receive a generous mission bonus, depending on performance.

Once the Troubleshooters don the new jump-suits, hand over their excess gear and process their ME Cards, a printer springs into life and spits out a set of transtube tickets and Clone Transfer Orders (see the box nearby), giving the Troubleshooters jobs in Freshintestine Healthfood Concern and tickets to MUD Sector.

A moment later, The Computer bleeps once. Then, its camera refocuses on the Troubleshooters. 'This is a RED-Clearance zone, citizens. You are INFRARED. Please leave at once. A

reprimand has been entered in your permanent records.'

The jackobot points towards the door by which it entered, which leads to a grimy INFRARED corridor.

The Troubleshooters have no choice but to head down the corridor, which brings them out into a larger public concourse. Suddenly, the crowds no longer part for them. Suddenly, higher-clearance citizens barge past them, or bark orders at them. People no longer look at their faces, but just see their black jumpsuits and their eyes glaze over with disinterest. Suddenly, Alpha Complex feels a lot colder and less welcoming.

The line at the transtube station stretches back about 100 meters, and the characters can't skip it.

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2. Mind the gap

The Troubleshooters arrive in MUD Sector by transbot. Alan-O leaves MUD Sector and this mortal coil by jumping under the same transbot. Travel is restricted to RED- or higher-clearance citizens.

We're not in Kansas anymore

The transbot rattles and hums its way through the winding tubular bowels of Alpha Complex. The carriage is overcrowded and smelly. A snotty young RED citizen comes up to one of the Troubleshooters who managed to get

a seat and demands that the PC give it up to his superior. The ticket inspector wanders through the carriage, brusquely grabbing travel papers from everyone. When he comes to the characters, his eyes light on their black boxes. 'INFRAREDs aren't allowed bring luggage into the passenger area. Should have loaded it onto the luggage locker. I'll have to move it. Give it here.' Unless bribed (remember, the characters' bank accounts have been frozen, so they'll have to use plasticreds if they have any), the inspector gathers the boxes and throws them into a locker at the back of the carriage. The boxes are com-pletely randomized (and remember, they can't be opened without the jackobot's key, which is back in the briefing room).

Eventually, the transbot announces 'MWAH SAAAH. MWAH SAAH NAAG STAAP'—which anyone who has ever heard a train station announcement instinctively translates as 'MUD Sector. MUD Sector, Next Stop.' The transbot begins to slow, and the darkness of the tunnel suddenly gives way to the sterile bright lights of the transtube station.

Unbeknownst to the characters, paranoid Alan-O-MUD-6 is waiting at the edge of the platform, building up his nerve. He knows IntSec is after him. He knows The Computer is after him. He knows that this is his last clone. There's no escape; it's this or torturous interrogation and a much slower death.

He jumps.

From the perspective of the Troubleshooters, everything goes red for a moment. Then it all goes black; the lights flicker and flash; the transbot slams on its brakes and everyone is thrown against the front wall of the carriage. Bits of clone meat drip down the window panes. 'Someone jumped in front of the transbot' mutters another passenger, just in case the players are incredibly clueless and didn't get that. 'OOOH GAAH, TAA BLAAA! GAAA II OOM EEE! III DIGOOOTINEEE' bellows the transbot incoherently ('Oh God, The Blood. Get It Off Me. It's Disgusting').

The inspector pulls himself to his feet and starts herding the passengers off the carriage. He's obviously seen this sort of thing before; citizens hurling themselves to their deaths beneath fast-moving transbots is all in a day's work for him. He waits until everyone is off before throwing the contents of the luggage locker out onto the blood-splattered platform. When the Troubleshooters disembark, they notice that a cleanup team of scrubots and Tech Services personnel have descended upon the accident scene with forensic shovels. They also notice the other INFRARED passengers hastily bustling towards the exit.

The mangled corpse is completely unrecognizable, but was clearly wearing an ORANGE jumpsuit.

After a few minutes, assuming the Troubleshooters hang around, The Computer makes an announcement.

'**ATTENTION CITIZENS OF MUD SECTOR. DUE TO AN INCIDENT AT THE TRANSTUBE STATION AT 1531 HOURS TODAY, THE STATION HAS BEEN UPGRADED TO RED-CLEARANCE UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE. LOWER-CLEARANCE CITIZENS WISHING TO TRAVEL MUST APPLY FOR TRAVEL PAPERS FROM CENTRAL PROCESSING. ALL CITIZENS ARE REQUESTED TO REVIEW SAFETY REGULATIONS PERTAINING TO THE USE OF TRANSBOTS. THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION.'**

Red lights flash around the edges of the station, and if any stupid players are still hanging around, The Computer says 'THIS IS A RED-CLEARANCE ZONE, CITIZENS. YOU ARE INFRARED. PLEASE LEAVE AT ONCE. A REPRIMAND HAS BEEN ENTERED ON YOUR PERMANENT RECORDS.'

As they leave the station, they meet a pair of eager HPD&MC citizens, Ed-R-NAN and Jack-R-AFF; Ed hands out copies of a pamphlet entitled, 'Transbot Safety Regulations and Guidelines (Including Crash Instructions, But Really, It's Safer Than Walking and There's Nothing to Worry About).' Jack stands another three meters down the corridor, and quizzes passing citizens on the most obscure points of Transbot Safety Regulations with all the zeal of a Spanish Inquisitor up for promotion to head torturer. A large crowd is packed into the three-meter space between them, made up of citizens frantically cramming safety regulation trivia.

After about an hour and a half, the Troubleshooters make it to the head of the crowd where the HPD&MC officer quizzes them. To get past, each character must succeed at a Hardware (Habitat Engineering or Vehicle Ops) or a Management (Con Games or Moxie) roll.

Ed-R and Jack-R

Management **12**
Lunging at You With Clipboard and Blocking Path Down Corridor **18**
Insightful and Penetrating Questions about Transport Regulations **18**
Stealth **10**
Violence **7**
Block Attack With Clipboard (25 credit fine for damaging equipment) **13**
Hardware **13**
Vehicle Ops and Maintenance **17**
Software **7**
Wetware **7**
Weapons: None
Armor: None

3. The huddled masses

With Alan-O's suicide, the Troubleshooters don't know it yet, but they have no mission left—and, as they quickly find out, they're stuck as INFRAREDs in MUD Sector. To get the authorities to recognize them, as they eventually learn, they first need a **Sector Assignment Docket** in order to obtain a **Refreshment Authorization Form** so they can join an EAP club and get an EAP **Club Supervisor's Signature**, which will let them get a **Valid Toilet Address** and thereby get their **Certificates of Employment** so they can finally get a **Sector Assignment Docket**. Wait, hold on....

You get the idea. The PCs may be marooned here for a while. This episode offers default procedures for dealing with the MUD Sector bureaucracy to get work, food and a place to sleep. It helps for you to be familiar with this standard path, in case the Troubleshooters don't try anything original—but you should expect, nay, encourage your players to circumvent whole sections of the bureaucracy by exploiting their secret society connections. Advice on how to handle this appears in the next two episodes, which will probably have more effect on this mission than this one. Don't worry—you can always recycle the material here for future bureaucratic nightmares.

This episode is divided into several sections:

◉ Work

◉ Living quarters

◉ EAP clubs

◉ Cafeterias

◉ More pointless bureaucracy

Please complete all forms thoroughly. Or else.

The Troubleshooters stand in the corridor outside the newly-REDdened transtube station. It's sometime around 1700 hours (later if they kept failing their rolls to get past Ed-R and Jack-R).

At this point, the Troubleshooters face several interconnected tasks, best illustrated by the diagram below:

WORK
Gives: Certificate of Employment
Requires: Valid Toilet Address

LIVING QUARTERS
Gives: Valid Toilet Address
Requires: Club Supervisor's Signature

BUREAUCRACY
Gives: Sector Assignment Docket
Requires: Certificate of Employment

CAFETERIA
Gives: Refreshment Authorization Form
Requires: Sector Assignment Docket

EAP CLUBS
Gives: Club Supervisor's Signature
Requires: Refreshment Authorization Form

Work

The Troubleshooters report for work at Freshintestine, where they discover they need a **Valid Toilet Address** before they're allowed to start. When they get this address, they join the **Freshintestine Healthfood Concern**, which is just as happy and well-adjusted as most families.

Wading through the YumMulch

Having arrived in MUD Sector in the middle of the afternoon, the Troubleshooters presumably hope to complete their mission quickly and return to their home sector In all likelihood they head immediately to Freshintestine. However, by the time they find their way there—using INFRARED corridors only—the supervisor's office has closed for the day. (Actually, he left around fifteen-ish, saying he had an appointment at the transtube station…) **Morris-MUD-4**, one of the senior vat floor workers, meets the Troubleshooters and tells them to come back tomorrow. (See below for details of Morris and the other staffers at the food vat.)

Jump forward to **'Living quarters,'** below, then come back to this section when the Troubleshooters report for work during operating hours (0800 to 1830 hours).

When the Troubleshooters finally show up at the office on time, they meet the new supervisor of the Freshintestine Healthfood Concern, **Rick-R-MUD-2**. Rick's just been promoted following the untimely death of Alan-O-MUD. (Cue gasps from the Troubleshooters.) Rick is all gung-ho to start his new career as manager and is trying to be the *nicest*, most *helpful*, most *concerned* boss *ever*. He'll never shout at or mistreat his ~~employees~~ fellow workers; he'll invite them into his office for chats and counseling and nice cups of TeaSir if they have any problems. When the characters present their Clone Transfer Orders, Ricky-R positively bubbles with enthusiasm at the thought of having so many new friends in the family that is Freshintestine Healthfood (joy!).

There's just *one* problem. Owing to terrorism, the company must be ever vigilant for *anthrax*. Anthrax could be anywhere, and if it gets into the food—*disaster*! To counter this, Freshintestine will (free of charge) install bioscanners into the toilets of the new employees' barracks. These scanners will detect any traces of anthrax that terrorists might sneak into their rooms with the evil intent of *poisoning* the food vats! If the Troubleshooters will just give Ricky-R their address, he'll pop down personally with the bioscanner and have it installed in a jiffy, and then it's off to work. It has to be a Valid Toilet Address, though. If they don't have one (goodness!), then they should run down to HPD&MC right away to sort out their living quarters. Take the rest of the day if you have to! Just show up here tomorrow with that toilet address!

You don't have to be crazy to work here, but it helps

Once the Troubleshooters obtain a Valid Toilet Address card, Ricky-R installs the bioscanner. First, though, he'll introduce the PCs to the rest of the Freshintestine Healthfood Concern team. Each of these characters has a particular role to play in the running of Freshintestine and possibly a particular secret to hide. Try to conjure the interpersonal dynamics of this bunch as broadly and quickly as possible, the more easily for the PCs to exploit them. Perhaps you might draw parallels with your players' own family members.

Morris-MUD-4
Factory floor manager

By far the most experienced staff member at Freshintestine, Morris has been stirring food vats for decades. Anyone who contradicts him about anything will be met by a sigh and grumbling about the foolishness of the younger generation.

Old Morris has been working in the vats for nigh on 30 years; he's positively encrusted with fungal spores, and his once-black jumpsuit is now this sort of grubby tan. Morris has literally carved out a nice little niche for himself here in Frestintestine—he's rigged a pipe from the Special Spice #2 Dispenser (see below) to a storage locker marked 'WORMGEAR MAINTENANCE.' Whenever Morris wants to avoid doing work or just get high (he's a former member of the Mystics), he pretends to hear a faint problem with the entirely fictional wormgears. He toddles off and locks himself in the locker, then snorts the Special Spices for a few hours. There's a power cutoff switch inside the locker, so he can fake breakdowns if the wormgears aren't maintained.

Morris is relatively friendly towards new workers, as long as they listen to his rambling advice and don't mess with the wormgears. If they even think of going near his wormgears, he becomes creatively abusive. He's not above murder to keep his little spice habit a secret—he's lost three clones to food vat accidents, so he knows how dangerous the vats can be…

The big happy family of FreshIntestine workers

Casey-R, Ricky-R's secretary

Management 3
 Intimidation 7
 Intimidation Fuelled by Frustration and All-Consuming Rage at Being Demoted 9
Stealth 13
 High Alert 17
 Surveillance 17
Violence 10
 Energy Weapons 14
Projectile Weapons 14
 Deadly Secretarial Vengeance Attack Technique 16
Hardware 12
 Weapon and Armor Maintenance 16
Software 12
 Data Analysis 16
Wetware 4
Weapons: Illegal cone rifle, M3K
Armor: None

Cynthia, food vat stirring tech

Management 10
Moxie 14
 Bring Down the Wrath of the Teela-O-MLY Fan Club 16
Stealth 12
Sneaking 16
Violence 8
 Sniping from a Height 14
Hardware 10
Software 7
Wetware 7
Weapons: Illegal Teela-O Commemorative Statue with Concealed Slugthrower (W3K impact)
Armor: None

Frank, ailing chemical worker

Management 6
 Hygiene 10
 Quote Obscure Health Regulations to Get Time Off for Recovery 12
Stealth 5
Violence 10
 Run Away From Vat Catastrophe 16
Hardware 14
 Chemical Engineering 18
Software 5
Wetware 11
Weapon: Illegal laser pistol with red barrel (W3K energy)
Armor: None

Morris-R, who's been here 28 years, by gum

Management 6
 Chutzpah 10
 Invoke Seniority Because He's Spent Twenty-Eight Years in the Vats, By Gum 20
Stealth 13
 Skip Work Without Being Seen 19
Violence 10
Hardware 11
 Chemical Engineering 15
 Fake a Breakdown Involving the Wormgears 17
Software 5
Wetware 10
Weapons: None
Armor: None

Ricky-R, peppy optimistic boss

Management 14
 Oratory 18
 Abrading Positive Attitude Toward Everything 20
Stealth 12
Surveillance 14
 Be Just Behind You When You Complain About the Boss 18
Violence 8
Hardware 7
Software 10
 Data Analysis 14
 Data Search 14
Wetware 7
 Obsessive Study of Food Vat Operation and YumMulch 13
Weapons: None
Armor: None

TR-4-SH, broken-down scrubot

Management 5
Hygiene 9
 Complain Loudly with Bone-Rattling Modem/R2D2 Noises 11
Stealth 5
 Hide Because I'm Very Small 11
 Shadowing 9
Violence 10
 Agility 14
Hardware 5
 Cause Food Vat Flood on Cue 11
 Mechanical Engineering 9
Software 5
Wetware 5
Weapons: None
Armor: 1

Casey-DEL-2
Ricky-R's abusive personal assistant

The nastiest, bitterest secretary ever. Recently demoted from ORANGE-Clearance due to a disastrous incident at her previous job in R&D, Casey is Ricky-R's secretary. A minor service firm like Freshintestine generates a small mountain of paperwork. Alan-O left her to deal with it while he went off on mysterious (read: PURGE) business, but Ricky-R's so excited and proactive, he's double-checking everything Casey does. Spending 10 hours a day in a small office with a relentlessly irritating boss who's constantly looking over her shoulder is doing nothing to improve Casey's temper. She's lashing out by making trouble for everyone—preferably Ricky-R,

but she'll also make the Troubleshooters' lives hell if she can.

Casey used to work in R&D, and managed to 'borrow' a prototype cone rifle (which, combined with her temper, led to the disastrous incident). If pushed too much, she may go on a rampage again. Casey has no secret society links currently. She was involved in Pro Tech in her old job, but moving sectors meant she lost most of her contacts. She's currently thinking hard about Death Leopard.

Frank-MUD-1
Secret Spice control

Frank has the second-worst job in Freshintestine. He has to run back and forth between the three Secret Spice dispensers, unclogging and main-

taining them. He's well aware he's being exposed to huge doses of rather potent chemicals and is developing hypochondria about this. (To be fair, that's not all he's developing, thanks to an overdose of hormone suppressants.) Frank calls in sick whenever possible and spends most of his workday either trying to get others to do his job, or coming up with ever more baroque schemes to protect himself from the spices. (He'd be horrified to learn what Morris does with Secret Spice #2). He recently tried to get reassigned to another job by pretending he was an undercover Troubleshooter.

Physically, Frank is a nervous wreck. Possibly as a result of his job, he's developed the Pyrokinesis mutation (Power 10). He's also joined the Sierra Club, hoping some fresh air will do him good.

Cynthia-MUD-1
Food vat control

Cynthia has perhaps the most important job here at Freshintestine: to keep that food vat of YumMulch stirring. As a giant Churn-O-Matic does this stirring, Cynthia's job basically consists of showing up in the morning and switching on the Churn-O-Matic, then remembering to turn it off before she leaves in the evening. She occupies the intervening nine-and-three-quarter hours by reading Tella-O-MLY fanzines (she's head of a local fan club) and shouting the occasional nasty comment down from atop the Churn-O-Matic.

Secretly, Cynthia is a devout member of the First Church of Christ Computer-Programmer.

TR-4-SH
Recycling

TR is an old-model scrubot with an impressive array of malfunctions. Barely capable of fulfilling its duties at Freshintestine, it's in charge of opening the two flow valves on the food vat to drain off the light and heavy residue and piping both residues back to YumMulch Production. TR regularly drowns itself in a flood of food vat gunk and has to be rescued, usually by Frank. TR spends its nights here at the vats, so it saw the deaths of the security team who fell into the food vat. It knows about Alan-O's fate. However, it's so decrepit and gunk-clogged that this information is scrambled almost beyond retrieval. If the Troubleshooters befriend or torture it, TR might be able to fill them in.

TR-4-SH sometimes attends Corpore Metal meetings.

Ricky-R-MUD-2
Supervisor

The One Honest Citizen of legend, Ricky-R is completely loyal and genuinely caring and enthusiastic. He believes wholeheartedly in the virtues of Serving The Computer and Helping Your Fellow Citizen. He's really, really excited about replacing Alan-O as head of Freshintestine Healthfood Concern. Really, really, *really* excited! Glee! He's determined that his employees are going to be productive and challenged while still having fun and being *superhappy*! He's got all sorts of exciting new ideas and procedures for making things *productifun*!

As a loyal citizen, Ricky-R watches everyone in Freshintestine and dutifully fills in IntSec Employee Reports on a daily basis (checking with Casey to make sure he's recorded every event in the day). He is of course not a member of any secret society. His mutation is a variety of Adrenaline Control: Ricky-R can't perform any superhuman feats of speed or strength, but he's peppy and full of enthusiastic jumping beans *all the damn time*. He sleeps, but only for an hour or so a day, and then only because he thinks he needs to.

■ *Duties*

Once Ricky-R has installed the bioscanner and introduced the Troubleshooters to the rest of the employees, it's time for work allocation and a tour of the food vats. Choose or roll randomly to see which job each Troubleshooter gets:

Roll	Role
1-3	Office (location 12)
4-6	Food vat (location 2)
7-9	Recycling (location 14)
10-12	Factory floor (location 6)
13-16	Secret Spice dispensers (locations 3-5)
17-19	Quality Assurance (location 7)
20	Night watch (location 10)

At the end of their first day, Ricky-R gives them their Certificates of Employment. The Troubleshooters earn five credits a day, each.

■ *Freshintestine Healthfood Concern layout*

1: YumMulch entry port. YumMulch is the basic (really, only) ingredient used in Freshintestine products. It is a reddish mulch with the consistency and texture of watered-down dog food. Workers produce it in a massive factory in another sector and pipe it at high pressure to Freshintestine. A smaller pipe located on the factory floor below the main entry port is used for recycling—any YumMulch that is not processed in the food vat is sent back to be recycled. A character trying to escape MUD Sector could try climbing into this pipe—whenever any matter is detected in the pipe, it is sucked at high speed through the pipes to the production center. There may be more unpleasant fates, but none spring to mind.

2: The food vat. A Churn-O-Matic, a massive, automated engine with dozens of wickedly sharp blades and paddles, stirs the food vat. Churn-O-Matics are smart enough to distinguish between different objects based on their consistency—if,

Freshintestine Healthfood Concern
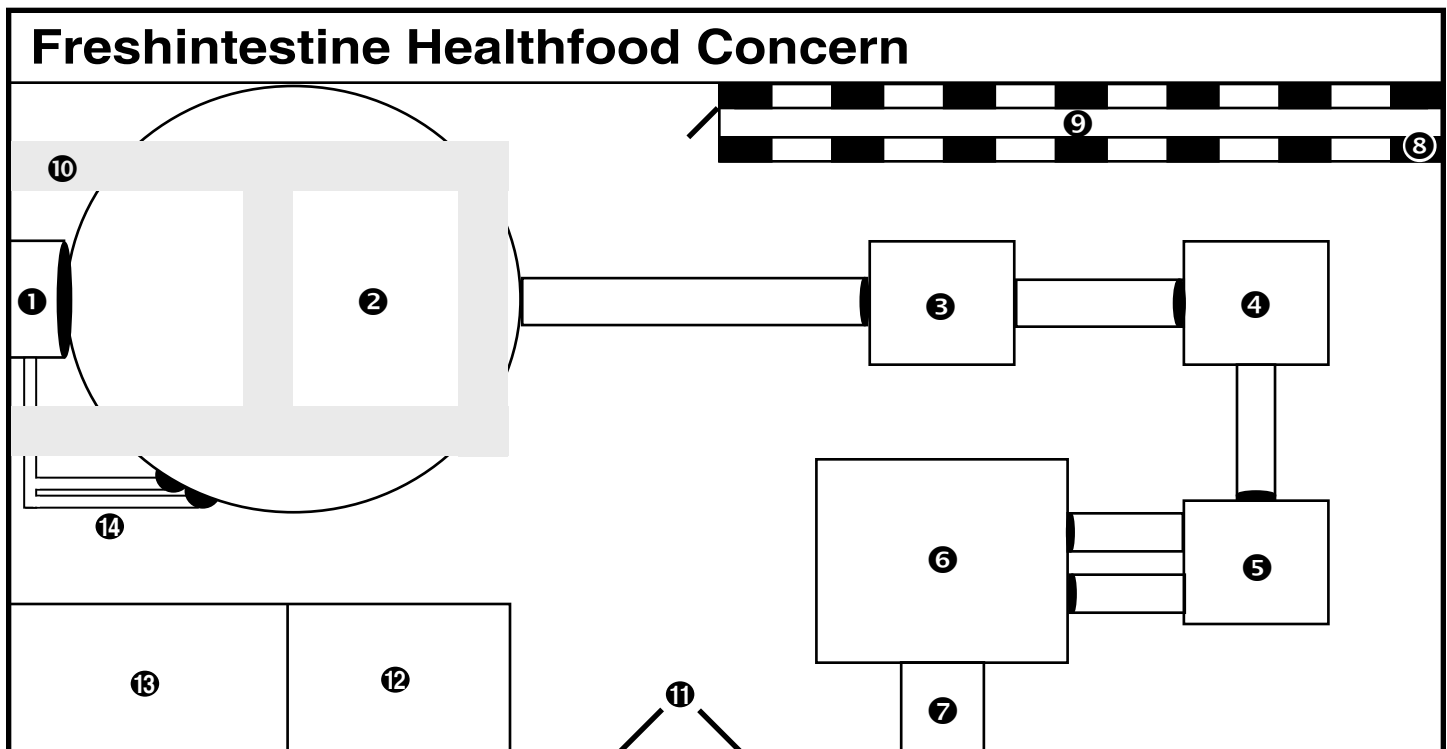
I'm a Troubleshooter, get me out of here!

The players probably try to pull rank or come up with some bizarre scheme to escape the bureaucratic quagmire or working in Freshintestine, especially when they soon realize their target, Alan-O, is totally dead. See Chapter 5 for details on escape plans and why they'll fail.

for example, a wrench fell into the vat, the Churn-O-Matic would automatically identify the wrench as 'metal' and push it down into the Underflow Tank, where Recycling would collect it (see below). Unfortunately, human flesh has almost exactly the same consistency as YumMulch, so anyone who falls into the vat suffers M3K damage and usually remains undetected.

Cynthia is here during working hours.

3: Secret Spice #1 dispenser. After a few hours of churning in the vat, the mulch is extruded like sausage meat onto a conveyor belt. Here, INFRAREDs add the three Secret Spices using huge dispensers, which look like giant-scale pepper grinders. These dispensers often jam, requiring a technician (Frank or a Troubleshooter) to climb up and remove whatever's causing the problem. *Secret Spice #1* is a hormone suppressant, designed to suppress those pesky and unhygienic sexual urges. Anyone exposed to a huge dose of Spice #1 has *all* their hormones suppressed; the resulting system shock effectively incapacitates the character for a while. Frank runs between this and the other two dispensers during his working day.

4: Secret Spice #2 dispenser. Eagle-eyed Troubleshooters notice a pipe going from this dispenser to the locker marked 'Wormgear Maintenance.' *Secret Spice #2* is a happiness drug, basically diced visomorpain (see the **PARANOIA** rulebook). Morris has tapped the supply, channeling a big hit of the drug to his locker. Anyone in the locker or exposed to a dose while repairing the dispenser is **HAPPY** for the rest of the day.

5: Secret Spice dispenser #3. *Secret Spice #3* is flavoring. Currently Freshintestine is producing extra-spicy Processed Luncheon Protein Sausages, which taste rather like a flamethrower exploding in your mouth, with severe collateral casualties in your throat and digestive system. Anyone exposed to a full dose of spice suffers agonizing pain until he manages to shower the concentrated spice out of his eyes, nose and all bodily cavities.

6: Packaging. Largely automated, this huge machine chops the mulch sausages into smaller sausages and wraps them in hygienic plastic. Troubleshooters assigned to this station have little to do, unless the machine breaks down. Under Alan-O's reign, when the packager broke

down, the whole factory shut down. Now, in the New Ricky Order, if the packager breaks down, then *we'll all chip in* and wrap them *by hand!*

7: Shipping. A delivery bot waits on the far side of the wall, laden with Protein Sausages for delivery to the commissary. Characters assigned to Shipping check every tenth sausage for signs of tampering or other production problems. Ricky-R makes it clear that the good reputation of Freshintestine rests on their shoulders, and letting any imperfect sausages through would not be a good thing.

8: Wormgear maintenance. Or so the sign on the door (otherwise identical to all the other lockers) says. This is old Morris' work dodge. Inside, there are two switches, a spy hole looking out into the factory, a few bits of Mystic propaganda and a stool. Pressing the left switch redirects a dose of Spice #2 to the locker. Pressing the right switch cuts the power to the whole factory. The switches are unmarked.

9: Lockers. Each staff member is assigned a locker. No, the Troubleshooters cannot sleep there.

10: Walkway. This precarious walkway over the food vat and the factory floor allows access to pipes and electric lights on the ceiling. The security team sent to arrest Alan-O decided to use the walkway to get a good firing position when attacking the office, but the middle branch of the walkway collapsed and dumped them into the food vat. Troubleshooters given the job of night watch patrol the walkway when the factory is closed.

11: Main door. The only way in or out.

12: Outer office. Casey works here. She's got a computer terminal and lots of filing cabinets. She has surreptitiously rearranged the cabinets to give her cover in a firefight and has hidden her cone rifle in the cabinet marked 'Production Quota Fulfillment Waivers.'

13: Ricky-R's office. Formerly Alan-O's office, and indeed the wastepaper basket is still stuffed with incriminating PURGE notes. Ricky-R welcomes the Troubleshooters into his office and listens *intently* and *earnestly* if they have *any problems or complaints* about their time at Freshintestine. He's here to *help*.

14: Recycling. Every few days, TR-4-SH opens plugs in the food vat and drains off the light residue (a thin green soup of stuff that bubbled up from the mulch) and the heavy residue (lumpy bits that sank down). The bot then scoops this foul mess into the recycling pipe (see **1**, above) and shunts it off to be reprocessed. Currently, the heavy residue includes the remains of the security team—a working PDC, a pair of ORANGE-barreled laser pistols, enough broken chunks of reflec to make a suit of ORANGE armor, and an unexploded grenade. TR-4-SH does the recycling at night, to spare his human coworkers the unpleasant smell of the congealed residue. If the Troubleshooters work out what happened to the first security team, they might think of

searching the heavy residue for equipment. And pigs might fly.

Living quarters

The Troubleshooters can't get work in Freshintestine until they get a Valid Toilet Address, and to get one of those, they need to know where their barracks are. So it's off to the local HPD&MC office to get a home.

Clone sweet home

The service firm **Choices Residential** allocates housing in MUD Sector. Though higher-clearance citizens can get their own palatial one-room apartments or even en-suite cubicles, the Troubleshooters are currently INFRAREDs. So, they get a barracks. Eventually.

On arrival at Choices, the Troubleshooters are met with a long, long line, reaching out the door. If they join this line, they soon realize that it isn't moving in the slightest. No matter how long they wait, the line doesn't move. The same INFRARED citizens come back day after day. No one else in the line talks to the characters or explains what they're waiting for. When the Troubleshooters finally push their way past the line into the door of Choices, they see the line continues to a back office, but there are three other service windows. (If the intrigued characters somehow get into the back office the line is waiting for, they discover a single drugged INFRARED sitting in here, behind a window with a sign saying 'back soon.')

The three housing windows are the Troubleshooters' challenge in this section. These windows:

- ◉ New Client Registration
- ◉ Barracks Selection
- ◉ Barracks Request

New Client Registration

Waiting at the New Client Registration window is **Kevin-G-ITT,** head of this office. This is his domain, his kingdom. He is GOD here—and everyone will know it. They will know it by the way his underlings bow to him. They will know it by the respect they show him (or else). Most of all, though, they will know it by the large framed poster-sized photograph of Kevin-G that hangs on the wall, with the banner 'OUR LEADER' beneath.

Kevin-G's a mutant with the Mental Blast power (power 6) and is also a member of the Illuminati (degree 4), infiltrating the Frankenstein Destroyers (degree 9).

Kevin-G has little interest in the INFRARED insects who present themselves at his office. He acknowledges them only when he wishes to torment them; most of the time, he just pushes Form HPD&MC53323/43-e (**New Client Registration**) at them and tells them to fill that

out and give it to the Barracks Selection window. The form is printed at the end of this mission; make several copies. Kevin-G hands copies to all the Troubleshooters at once and expects them to fill the forms out on the spot. If they talk while filling out the form, he shushes them. If the Troubleshooters' responses do not match perfectly, he instantly rejects all the forms.

The characters must check the Processing Fee box to get anywhere. Also, anyone who checks the Bribe box is summarily censured (Treason, P5M).

Once all the Troubleshooters have paid the processing fee and filled in the forms, they're ready to move on to the next window. There's just one more complication, which they won't discover until the next time they return here (and they will). Kevin-G has decreed that a new client account only stays open for one hour. After that, the account closes and the applicant has to open a new one, paying for it a second time—or a third, or fourth. Remember, the Troubleshooters only have five credits a day each from their normal job at Freshintestine. (The PCs can conceivably persuade Kevin-G to waive this rule with sufficient Bootlicking, extortion or blackmail.)

▌ Barracks Selection

Behind window number 2 slouches **Howie-R-LCT**, Choice's top (indeed, only) salesperson. Choices is assigned a number of barracks every month and needs to fill them as quickly as possible. Normally, this is easy enough—INFRAREDs are used to being pushed around. However, Choices is currently saddled with a number of small barracks that either won't fit a normal clutch of INFRAREDs or are simply uninhabitable. Howie-R's job is to get the Troubleshooters to take one of these uninhabitable barracks.

Play Howie-R as the oiliest imaginable real-estate agent. He's (surprise, surprise) a member of Free Enterprise. He'll whisk the Troubleshooters off to show them the barracks available, always in the order given below. On the way, he'll bring them through several RED-Clearance corridors, flashing his ME Card at the guards and muttering, 'They're with me.' (This shows the players they might get a higher-clearance citizen to escort them to the transtube, when they face that problem later.)

Barracks 1: The first barracks is conveniently close to the Freshintestine factory. Indeed, it's located along the pipes leading to the YumMulch recycling plant. Due to a reduction in the number of food vats in MUD Sector, not all the recycling pipes were needed. A budget-conscious Tech Services just welded one of the bigger pipes shut at both ends, stuck in some dividing walls, and handed it over to HPD&MC as low-cost housing. Barracks 1 is therefore located inside a pipe—only painted lines divide the curved 'floor,' 'walls' and 'ceiling,' and the room is actually perfectly cylindrical. Only the side walls are flat,

so pretty much everything, from beds to toilet to vid monitor to security camera is bolted to them. While Howie-R blathers about the elegant lines and accessibility of the five-foot-high ceiling, he keeps one ear to the wall as if listening for something. The weld in a pipe upstream has broken, so one wall of the barracks is regularly blasted with a high-pressure spew of unrecycled foodstuff and biowaste. Howie-R tries to hustle the Troubleshooters out of this barracks before they hear the distinctive blattering against the wall.

If the Troubleshooters take this barracks, the wall breaks at some point during the game, flooding the room with vatslime.

Barracks 2: The second barracks Howie-R offers is somewhat smaller than the first. Howie describes it as 'cozy.' An error in the schematics for this sector meant that a whole series of rooms was constructed with one dimension squashed to less than a fifth of what it should be. The room should have been 20 feet wide; it's actually only four feet wide. All the assigned furniture had to be forcibly pushed in, so the back of the barracks is crammed with beds on their sides and an equipment locker that got stuck at an angle. This barracks is relatively secure, if it weren't for one problem.

The smoke detector here is amazingly sensitive, and any particulate can trigger it, from deodorant to a heavy sneeze to a belch after eating Processed Luncheon Protein Sausages. The smoke detector triggers the fire alarm, and failing to stampede out of the room when the alarm sounds is an offense.

Barracks 3: Howie-R gets notably more nervous as he brings the Troubleshooters to this potential new home. The reason for his apprehension becomes obvious when he opens the door—a camera mounted in the ceiling of the barracks immediately swivels around to track his every move. This barracks is small, but looks quite comfortable and is free of biohazards or malfunctioning equipment.

Indeed, the problem here is that the equipment is functioning too well—the camera in the ceiling is active all the time and cannot be disabled, so the room has an effective Tension Level of 20.

Barracks 4: This final barracks is by far the best of the four, and Howie-R knows he can assign that to another bunch of INFRAREDs easily. He really wants the Troubleshooters to take one of the first three. Therefore, he'll dawdle and delay as much as he can while bringing the team to the barracks, hoping to take advantage of Kevin-G's one-hour rule about new accounts.

The fourth barracks is located next to an amazingly busy and crowded corridor, with veritable armies of INFRAREDs, trusted citizens and bots tramping up and down at all hours of the day. The soundproofing in the walls has decayed, and a particular quirk of acoustics magnifies the sound coming in from outside. Sleeping in there

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Kevin-G-ITT-6, supervisor
Management 13
  Intimidation 17
Stealth 10
Violence 12
  Energy Weapons 16
Hardware 5
Software 10
  Hacking 14
  Data Search 14
Wetware 3
Weapon: Green laser (W3K)
Armor: While behind his window at Choices, the omni-proof glass gives Kevin-G armor 2

Howie-R, oily salesperson
Management 10
Moxie 14
  Bootlicking 14
  Leap from One Moral High Ground to Another Like a Mountain Goat 16
Stealth 12
  Concealment 16
Violence 9
  Hand Weapons
Hardware 7
  Hasty Repairs to Common Objects 13
Software 7
Wetware 5
Weapon: Customer Care Cosh (truncheon, S5K)
Armor: None

Susie-R-AWL-1, perky clerk
Management 12
Chutzpah 16
Make Bureaucracy Sound Slightly More Appealing Than it Actually Is 18
Stealth 6
  High Alert 10
Violence 10
  Energy Weapons 14
Hardware 8
Software 12
Wetware 8
Weapon: Red laser (W3K)
Armor: None

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is exceedingly difficult without the use of drugs. Luckily, The Computer willingly provides plenty of sleeping tablets for the discerning citizen.

Once the Troubleshooters have picked a barracks, it's back to the Choices office and Window #3.

▌ Barracks Request

Behind the third window sits **Susie-R-AWL-1**. She's a member of the Romantics and a secret ComSymp (Communist Sympathizer). She's

also friendly and efficient, which means she's the best friend the Troubleshooters have in Choices. When the Troubleshooters turn up at her window, Susie-R gently guides them through the final bits of bureaucracy. Do they have a New Client Account? Good! Have they selected a new barracks? Excellent! Do they each have a **Club Supervisor's Signature**?

'A what?' ask the Troubleshooters. 'A Club Supervisor's Signature,' explains Susie-R. The Computer encourages all citizens to engage in harmless pastimes such as sports and hobbies. It keeps them occupied and hence out of trouble. As INFRAREDs, the Troubleshooters are expected to join at least one Elective Activity or Pursuit Club each to ensure they use their free time in the best possible fashion. Without a signature, IntSec tags them as layabouts and time-wasters, and unfortunately Choices cannot process them. All they need to do is pop down to the local sector Activity Center this evening, join a few clubs, get a Club Supervisor's Signature each, and then come back tomorrow morning. Susie-R recommends the Citizen's Combined Crochet Pool.

Once the Troubleshooters get the signatures (see 'EAP clubs,' below), they can return to this office. They'll have to reapply to Kevin-G for a New Client Account, be dragged by Howie-R through all the barracks and finally request a barracks from Susie-R. At the end of all this, they achieve the most glorious prize of a Valid Toilet Address.

▌ *Living rough in the MUD*

As it will probably take some time for the Troubleshooters to get a barracks, where will they sleep in the meantime? Most *PARANOIA* missions never last long enough for this to become an issue, but the enforced powerlessness of 'Down and Out in Alpha Complex' means a bed and a square meal soon become priorities. Lesser games would have starvation and exhaustion rules to represent the loss of ability caused by lack of sleep and food, but this is *PARANOIA*—The Computer's finest are used to surviving on xanitrick and vat scrapings! However, generously award Perversity points to players who manage to find a warm place to sleep or some food.

Troubleshooters without a barracks find that Alpha Complex has no tolerance for vagrants. Sleeping outside a designated barracks is a fineable offense (10 credit fine). Bots and bored security guards patrol the corridors all night, so anyone who just curls up in a corner will be awakened with a truncheon a few minutes later.

A character could try sleeping inside Freshintestine, but remember, the bot TR-4-SH works there at night and might report the character unless stopped or bargained with.

▌ EAP clubs

This book originally included a whole chapter—a terrific chapter, really—all about The Computer's approved Elective Activity or Pursuit (EAP) clubs. The secret societies of Alpha Complex use these clubs as prime recruiting territory. We had to cut that chapter for space, but you can download it free from the Mongoose Publishing Web site (www.mongoosepublishing.com). Meanwhile, we hope the material in this mission can pretty much stand on its own.

As INFRAREDs, the Troubleshooters are expected/required to fill their leisure time with pointless distractions like the Elective Activity or Pursuit Clubs. Also, they need a **Club Supervisor's Signature** to show that they're good citizens so they can get a barracks assignment. When they arrive at the Activity Center, they discover it's got more traitors than an IntSec prison.

▌ *It's like an organized love-in for people with commitment issues*

The MUD Sector Activity Center is housed in a bunker that appears to be carved from a single lump of concrete. It smells like a cross between a gym changing room, a public toilet and an explosion in a cleaning product factory. It is open from 05:30 until midnight every day.

When the Troubleshooters walk in, their first sight is the huge board that lists all the clubs and societies currently holding events in the Center, with locations and schedules. The Activity Center Scheduling Club constantly updates this board with the same fervor as the trading boards at the stock exchange. By the time the Troubleshooters select a club they might want to join and go to its assigned meeting room, its meeting has probably finished and some other club has taken the room. So, the clubs the Troubleshooters turn up at are probably going to be fairly random unless they feel like wandering through the halls, listening at each door like a terrorist spy.

(Did we say 'random'? Why, yes, and we even offer a **Random EAP club table** nearby to prove it. Roll 1d20 and consult this table whenever the PCs wander into a new room. Some of these clubs are detailed in the free download mentioned above.)

Secret societies have hopelessly compromised the Activity Center. Every club has at least one traitor present in a position of authority, and half of them are just recruiting fronts for the societies anyway. If the Troubleshooters were loyal, upstanding scourges of dissent and treason, this might be a worry. Seeing as they're secret society members and mutants themselves, their priorities tend more towards finding fellow society members than wiping the MUD Sector Activity Center from the face of the complex.

The Troubleshooters may see familiar faces from other locations visiting the Activity Center. For example, Cynthia from Freshintestine attends both the Classic Teela-O Rerun Fun club and the Clones United Through Song meetings. Let the Troubleshooters wander through the center, searching for a club that will accept them. As new members, they may attend one meeting of a club to vet it before officially joining. Feel free to make the Troubleshooters jump through all sorts of hoops, hazing and introductory seminars.

After the meeting, the Troubleshooters probably ask the club supervisor for his or her signature, so they can head back to Choices and get a barracks. There's a problem, though—the forms are in the Activity Center Refreshment Room, where only sector residents with a valid Refreshment Authorization Form are allowed. Otherwise, traitors could steal vital food supplies from the Activity Center, thus destroying the EAP clubs and causing dissent and revolution! Only by strict accounting of every cookie and cup of CoffeeLike can disaster be averted! No citizen can join an EAP club without a valid **Refreshment Authorization Form**! These forms are available from any cafeteria.

Once the Troubleshooters get the Refreshment Authorization Form, they can get the Club Supervisor's Signature and sign up for any clubs they want. As INFRAREDs, they're expected to spend at least six nights a week engaged in approved and supervised fun at the EAP clubs. Failure to attend these clubs is not an offense, but IntSec notes it as a sign of discontent.

▌ Cafeterias

The Troubleshooters go to get a bite to eat and the **Refreshment Authorization Form** they sorely need. They discover a nest of traitors lurking among the self-service counters, and that Alan-O had allies in MUD Sector.

▌ *Food considered harmful*

Alpha Complex feeds the Troubleshooters, as INFRARED-Clearance citizens, free of charge at any of the MUD Sector commissaries, mess halls, cafeterias, restaurants, food dispensing stations, luxury ingestion environments, nutrition advice and administration centers or Happy Citizen Feeding Grounds. (Except for the logos, every single one of these places is precisely identical, with the same inedible food, the same uncomfortable chairs and the same atmosphere of despair, spiritual hunger and noxious gases.) However, the Troubleshooters must pay for any food obtained from vending machines or ordered from delivery companies—and with only five credits a day, living off vended CruncheeTym algae chips is not an option. (Remember to give generous, jealousy-inducing Perversity points to players who get food when others are hungry.)

The nearest cafeteria to Freshintestine is the Alfred-R-PKR Memorial Dining Area. Lines of hungry INFRAREDs wait outside; lines of nauseous INFRAREDs come out the other end and head for the Alfred-R-PKR Memorial Bathroom Facility. In between, there's a gauntlet of surly bots dispensing slop and Processed Luncheon Protein Sausages; a set of tables arranged in cunning fashion, a studied combination of the Labyrinth at Knossos and a minefield for shin-bones; and **Bernard-O-MUD-3**, the supervisor of the Alfred-R-PKR Memorial Dining Area.

Bernard-O is a PURGE member and an ally of the late Alan-O. When the Troubleshooters enter the cafeteria and present their ME Cards, the serving bots tell them to register with the cafeteria supervisor as new transfers. Bernard-O's office is located off to the side of the cafeteria. He hands them a stack of forms where they affirm they are loyal citizens of Alpha Complex with no major allergies or communicable diseases and will not choke on, be poisoned or sickened by, play with, object on religious or philosophical grounds to, or use as a weapon or explosive material in acts of terrorism any of the food-stuffs the Alfred-R-PKR Memorial Dining Area provides. They also must note where they're employed—and when Bernard-O sees they're working for Freshintestine, he becomes instantly paranoid and suspicious. He knows Alan-O was killed yesterday (or a few days ago, depending on how long it takes the players to get to this point) and incorrectly but reasonably concludes the characters were involved. He further assumes they're after him, and spends the rest of the mission trying to avoid or murder them. See Episode 4 for details.

On a more bureaucratic front, Bernard-O can't give the Troubleshooters the Refreshment Authorization Form they need because they're not registered in MUD Sector. They need to visit the local CPU office and request form IS54432/22-c. That'll get them a Sector Assignment Docket. In the meantime, he can give them a temporary waiver allowing them to use the cafeteria.

■ *A mysterious note (optional)*

If you want to make the mission longer and more confusing, use the cafeteria as a recruiting ground for conspirators. While the Troubleshooters sit down to their 'meal,' each of them discovers one of two notes taped onto the bottom of their meal tray. The first note is:

NEED MORE CREDITS OR JUST A HELPING HAND? WE PROVIDE ASSISTANCE. BE AT CORRIDOR 34 AT 0100 HOURS. LOOK FOR THE B3 VENDING MACHINE WITH THE BROKEN LIGHT.

■ Random EAP club table

Roll	Club	Activity	Secret society	Tension
1	MUD Sector Amateur FunBall	It's the official sport of Alpha Complex, FunBall! MUD Sector has an excellent team; so good, it's being targeted for explosive assassination by its rivals in FUD Sector.	None	3
2	Corridor Running Club	Running down corridors (specifically, the one outside Barracks 4).	None	4
3	Amateur Dramatics	Currently rehearsing for the play, 'The Computer and I'; roles available include the Civilian Casualty and the Doomed Traitor.	None	5
4	Weapons Maintenance for INFRAREDs	As INFRAREDs aren't allowed real weapons, they're given water pistols that they've got to field-strip in 15 seconds while blindfolded.	Anti-Mutant	5
5	Citizen's Combined Crochet Pool	Knitting jumpers for Trusted Citizens (that conceal Commie propaganda).	Communists	15
6	Volunteer Wiring Tension Testers	Going around opening wiring panels and gently tugging the wires to make sure they're connected. At meetings, members are shown how to stroke and tug the wires in a properly sensuous fashion.	Computer Phreaks	1
7	Survivors of Medical Malpractice	Angry citizens injured during docbot surgery complain at each other.	Corpore Metal	7
8	Nightcycle Sector Watch	Allegedly, the concerned citizens patrol the corridors at night, looking for terrorists. In actuality, delinquent violence and vandalism.	Death Leopard	4
9	Clones United Through Song	Exactly what it claims to be.	FCCC-P	1
10	Bot Technology Interest Group	The study and appreciation of bots—particularly their weak spots.	Frankenstein Destroyers	3
11	Plasticred Cleaning	Wiping dirt and accumulated gunk off your plasticreds; in actuality, used for introducing forged credits into circulation.	Free Enterprise	2
12	Creative Writing Club	Writing approved paragraphs in praise of The Computer.	Humanists	6
13	Discussion Group	Talking about things in a sober and serious fashion. Produces a vast amount of hot air. Minimal secret society involvement.	Illuminati	5
14	Vatslime Collectors	Collecting and smoking samples.	Mystics	3
15	Technology Enthusiasts	Showing new gadgets to other citizens.	Pro Tech	4
16	Less Stress Through Meditation and Medication	Sitting in a dark room having your brain scanned.	Psion	1
17	Scale Model Enthusiasts	Making scale models of factories (so they know where to put the bombs—sabotaging Freshintestine is a likely option now that Alan-O's gone).	PURGE	2
18	Classic Teela-O Rerun Fun	They show old Teela episodes, as well as other old (*old*) shows.	Romantics	3
19	Corridor Touring Club	Exploring the stranger reaches of MUD Sector.	Sierra Club	4
20	Collective Information Synthesis Friends	Squeal on your companions for fun and advancement.	Internal Security	10

This note is from an IntSec recruiter, looking for new informers. At 0045 hours that night, in Corridor 34, a Bouncy Bubble Beverage vending machine with a broken light rolls out of a BLUE-Clearance corridor and settles itself next to two other vending machines.

Inside the fake machine is **Malachi-B-SSI-3** of Internal Security. If anyone approaches the vending machine, he dispenses a can of B3 containing a small radio transmitter. A message then scrolls across the vending machine's change screen: 'YOU HAVE BEEN RECRUITED BY INTERNAL SECURITY. PLACE YOUR WEEKLY REPORT INSIDE THE CAN AND DROP IT INTO THE CAN RECYCLING SYSTEM. IT WILL BE RETRIEVED. YOU WILL BE PAID 20 CREDITS A WEEK. YOU HAVE AN INFORMATION QUOTA OF 20. FAILURE TO RETURN A FULL REPORT WILL BE TREATED AS COLLUSION WITH COMMIE MUTANT TRAITORS.'

Malachi avoids revealing himself and pretends to be an ordinary, if IntSec-controlled, bot vending machine. If threatened, he can poke his laser out of the vending machine to zap people. What an Information Quota of 20 means is a mystery to the Troubleshooters. Use it to ignore any reports or pleas for assistance passed onto IntSec.

The other mysterious note is from the Humanists.

> **NEED MORE CREDITS OR JUST A HELPING HAND? WE PROVIDE ASSISTANCE. BE AT CORRIDOR 34 AT 0130 HOURS. LOOK FOR THE B3 VENDING MACHINE WITH THE FLASHING LIGHT.**

The Humanists, in the person of **Mel-R-MUD-2**, want to sabotage the Secret Spice dispensers in Freshintestine, removing the drugs that keep the INFRAREDs in check and sowing the seeds of glorious revolution! The vending machine with the flashing light is located just to the left of Malachi-

B's fake vending machine. The Humanist vending machine is actually a false front leading to a secret passage. At 01:30, Mel-R sneaks down the corridor and hides inside her hollowed-out machine. If anyone approaches the machine, she tries to lure them into aiding the Humanists, like so:

Mel-R-as-Vending-Machine: How can I help you, citizen?

Troubleshooter: Er, my dinner tray told me to come here.

Mel-R: Really. Do you want some Bouncy Bubbly Beverage? It's yummy.

Troubleshooter: Um, okay.

Mel-R: Do you want B3 because you are being brainwashed by subliminal messages and advertising, or do you want it because you are a human being with free will?

If the Troubleshooter says he's being brainwashed, Mel-R dispenses a can filled with Bouncy Bubble Beverage and **disovenine**, a new drug that screws with the user's perceptions, making subliminal messages much more noticeable. The downside is, the user's ability to notice obvious details is severely reduced—a user might hear the 'EVERYTHING IS UNDER CONTROL, DO NOT PANIC' subliminal message in The Computer's voice, but miss the 'REACTOR BREACH IMMINENT, EXIT AREA IMMEDIATELY' announcement made at the same time. The effects of disovenine last 1d20 hours.

If the Troubleshooter says he visited of his own free will, Mel-R says (still as a vending machine):

'Excellent. Go to Freshintestine Health Food Concern and replace the Secret Spice dispensers with the contents of these cans.' Three B3 cans fall out of the machine. 'Complete this mission and you will be rewarded. The revolution is coming, and it begins with the common citizen!'

If the characters *do* replace the secret spices with the powdery contents of the cans, that day's batch of Processed Luncheon Protein Sausages is dosed with drugs that a) suppress The Computer's hormone suppressants, b) cause hyperactivity and restlessness and c) cause mild hallucinations and feelings of righteous anger. The next day's lunchtime turns into a riot in support of reform, as the combination of drugged sausages and Humanist agents in the crowd incite the Alfred-R-PKR diners to outrage.

IntSec traces the tainted sausages back to Freshintestine and (in the personage of Malachi-B-SSI) will investigate. Cue terminations and paranoia on the factory floor.

More pointless bureaucracy

The Troubleshooters need to get the Sector Assignment Docket to get the Refreshment Authorization Form to get the Club Supervisor's Signature to get the Valid Toilet Address to get their Certificates of Employment to get the Sector Assignment Docket. As they perceive the flaw in that logic, they get blown up a bit.

So this is what it feels like to be troubleshot

Bernard-O sends the Troubleshooters to get their Sector Assignment Docket from CPU, a little scrap of paper that's basically an answer to bureaucratic existentialist angst. (It says, clearly and concisely, that this person Exists in MUD Sector and is not a hallucination brought on by printer fumes, stress and stimulants.) The PCs can obtain it in the CPU Office.

CPU recently rebuilt the CPU Office for MUD Sector following The Incident That Will Not Be the Subject of Future Discussion (feel free to have NPCs drop mentions of aspects of this Incident, like the mutant monster from R&D or the missing briefcase full of credits, but never explain anything and have the NPCs shut up immediately if asked about the Incident). The new CPU Office is a shining edifice of glass and steel, glittering in the artificial dawn light like a burnished document spike. A massive picture of a Computer terminal, done in acid-etched plate

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Bernard-O-MUD-3, PURGE

Management 13
  Master of His Own Cafeteria 19
  Intimidation 17
Stealth 14
  Shadowing 18
  Sneaking 18
Violence 12
  Energy Weapons 16
  Demolitions 16
Hardware 8
Software 5
Wetware 12
  Biosciences 16
  Pharmatherapy 16
Weapons: Orange laser (W3K), bomb (K3V)
Armor: Orange reflec 1

Malachi-B-SSI-3, IntSec

Management 10
  Interrogation 14
  Play Good Cop/Bad Cop While Alone with a Suspect 16
Stealth 11
  Pretend to Be a Vending Machine 17
  Surveillance 15
Violence 15
Hardware 8
Software 5
Wetware 12
  Suggestion 16
Weapons: Blue laser (W3K energy)
Armor: Blue reflec 1; Vending machine 3

Mel-R-MUD-2, Humanist

Management 10
  Humanist Propaganda 14
  Persuasion 14
Stealth 10
  Pretend to Be a Vending Machine 16
Violence 8
Hardware 10
Software 10
Wetware 14
  Pharmatherapy 18
Weapons: Red laser (W3K energy)
Armor: Vending machine 3

glass backlit by lasers in all the colors of the clearance spectrum hangs over the vast main concourse. It is as if alien giants with a sense of grandeur in their interior decorating reached down and built a perfect temple to the wisdom of The Computer.

It almost—almost but not quite—makes it a pleasure to stand in line.

There are dozens of different windows, with lines of citizens snaking towards each. However, unlike most CPU Offices, a helpful glowing monitor hangs above each desk showing what service that window dispenses. On the far side of the concourse, the Troubleshooters can barely make out the words 'SECTOR ASSIGNMENT DOCKETS' hanging above one window. Presumably they wander over and join the rather short line.

Working at the Sector Assignment Dockets window is **Doris-MUD-1**, a low-level CPU drone and secret Matter Eater. She eats matter when nervous. Her boss has been on her back lately, so Doris has a bag of Type III Blivet Screws hidden in her desk and occasionally pops them into her mouth.

At the head of the line, between Doris and the Troubleshooters, is **Hal-R-ZZO-2**, a Power Services technician recently reassigned to MUD Sector—or so he thinks. It was actually a bureaucratic glitch. Hal-R has been trapped in the limbo of CPU for weeks now and is going insane. His current plan is to requisition a copy of his Sector Assignment Docket from Doris, then when she's unable to provide that, he'll ask for her to give him a receipt showing that his Docket does not exist and therefore he's not assigned to MUD Sector and therefore he can escape from the quagmire. Doris's job is to dispense dockets, not to give receipts for nonexistent ones. Their argument has been going on for some time.

Behind the Troubleshooters in line waits **Daniel-CMO-2**. He works in PLC, in a warbot factory in a neighboring sector. What a likable guy! But a little nervous, maybe. This is perhaps because he has the Energy Field mutation (Power 16) and is a *[gasp!]* Communist!

Danny's got a thousand leaflets of Communist propaganda hidden in his overalls, plus a laser pistol with a yellow barrel. His Communist allies have inserted a virus into the local CompNode, which will crash it in, oh, about five minutes.

▌ Getting to know the Megadeath 2

Let the characters stand in line for a few minutes, listening to Doris and Hal argue.

Then all hell breaks loose. The Computer monitors go down and the network inside the CPU building crashes. Alarms start going off. A few seconds later, Daniel leaps onto a table and starts throwing bundles of leaflets into the panicking lines. 'Fellow Workers! The time of glorious revolution is at hand! Read and understand!' and so forth.

MUD Sector CPU office. When The Computer allocates construction funds, CPU is Line 1.

Let the Troubleshooters do what they want for a few moments; 'run and hide' or 'grab a docket from Doris' are excellent plans. Daniel continues to throw leaflets and shout Commie propaganda, switching on his Energy Field if (when) threatened. Unless the Troubleshooters can creatively take him down within a few moments, help arrives—if 'help' is the word we want:

Through the confusion and rushing crowds, you catch sight of figures in RED reflec armor pushing their way through the concourse. Your heart rises in accordance with the proper emotional response to seeing a heroic team of Troubleshooters rushing to the defense of Alpha Complex. These square-jawed heroes will save the day from the clutches of glowing Commie Mutant Traitors! See, even now they aim their laser pistols—

And a barrage of wildly inaccurate laser blasts explode over your heads, in the middle of the crowd, in the ceiling—pretty much everywhere except on the Commie. The screaming of the panicked crowd doubles in intensity.

The leader of the NPC Troubleshooter team, **Clint-R-WEN-2** (temporarily breveted to ORANGE as team leader), bursts out of the crowd a few meters away from Daniel and shouts 'PREPARE TO DIE, COMMIE MUTANT TRAITOR SCUM!' He carefully points his laser, aiming with exaggerated care, then fires. It bounces harmlessly off Daniel's Energy Field (harmlessly for the Commie—the reflected laser bores right through an innocent bystander in a spectacularly gory fashion). 'AARGH!' says Clint-R heroically.

Another member of the NPC Troubleshooter team, **Jan-R-OCK-1** emerges from the crowd. 'I've got this one, chief!' she screams, and swings the team's acquisition from R&D into position. Jan-R is carrying the latest in ordnance delivery, the **Megadeath 2 Personal Rocket Deployment Platform**.

'Shaped Nuke Charge Locked and Loaded' says the Megadeath 2 helpfully, 'Target Zone Annihilated in 5, 4, 3…'

Doris-MUD-1, bureaucrat

Management 8
  Blank Wall of Bureaucratic Indifference 14
Stealth 6
Violence 8
  Attempt to Eat Your Head 14
Hardware 5
Software 3
Wetware 10
Weapons: Matter Eater bite (O2K impact)
Armor: None

Hal-R-ZZO-2, red tape victim

Management 6
Stealth 8
Violence 10
Hardware 12
  Nuclear Engineering 16
Software 10
Wetware 5
Weapons: None
Armor: None

Daniel-CMO-2, Commie

Management 10
Stealth 8
  Surveillance 12
Violence 10
  Energy Weapons 14
Hardware 6
Software 12
Hacking 16
Wetware 6
Communist Propaganda 14
Weapon: Yellow laser (W3K)
Armor: Energy Field 3

Clint-R-WEN-2

Team leader (breveted to ORANGE)
Management 12
  Shout Heroically 16
  Shift Blame 16
Stealth 5
Violence 10
  Energy Weapons 14
Hardware 8
Software 8
Wetware 12
  Spray MemWipe Liberally 18
Weapon: Orange laser (W3K)
Armor: RED reflec E1

Jan-R-OCK-1

Equipment gal
Management 10
  Show Overt Enthusiasm 14
Stealth 5
Violence 11
  Energy Weapons 15
  Field Weapons 15
Hardware 10
  Weapons Maintenance 14
Software 5
Wetware 5
Weapons: RED laser (W3K); tacnuke (V1V)
Armor: RED reflec E1

Other Troubleshooters

Management 8
Stealth 5
Violence 9
  Energy Weapons 13
Hardware 7
Software 7
Wetware 7
Weapon: RED laser (W3K)
Armor: RED reflec E1

The PC Troubleshooters are, it should be pointed out, well within the Target Zone. Unless they immediately stop Jan-R from firing, the Megadeath 2 launches a nuke into their faces. Daniel, Hal, Doris, the Sector Assignment Docket window, the characters and a large chunk of the wall are instantly vaporized. Their clones can come back tomorrow.

On the other hand, if the PCs act to stop Jan-R, say by running in front of Daniel or by jostling her arm, then the nuke shell flies up and wipes out the big glass sculpture of the Computer terminal that hangs in pride of place above the concourse.

Assuming the PCs aren't all dead at this point, the Troubleshooter team deals with the evil Commie by knocking him off the table and beating him with blunt objects until his shield collapses. That's very much a sideshow compared to the 'deciding who's responsible for blowing up the sculpture' debate. Jan-R obviously blames the character(s) who deflected her aim, and her Team Leader initially sides with her. Unless the characters can come up with some wonderful excuse or reason for the Troubleshooters not to blame the whole incident on them, Clint-R reports them all as traitors once The Computer regains access to MUD Sector.

Tactics for dealing with the situation include:

◉ Blaming the stray nuke shot on the Commie—in fact, blaming him for everything and thus showing he was a far more dangerous mutant than he seemed.

◉ Blaming the stray nuke shot on unregistered mutant Doris.

◉ Bribery and collusion.

◉ Blaming one of the other PCs for the incident.

A few minutes after the computer network goes down, it reactivates and The Computer restores order in the CPU Concourse. Assuming the characters are still alive and can get past Hal-R, they can finally make it to the window and ask Doris for a Sector Assignment Docket. She's fairly shaken by her near-death experience (or actual-death, depending on how the encounter with the MegaDeath 2 goes), so she produces the Docket without any fuss.

All she needs is a **Certificate of Employment** for her records. All the Troubleshooters need to do is ask their boss for the certificate…

Escaping the bureaucratic circle

The Troubleshooters soon realize they can't obtain any documents they need through legal channels. They'll have to be creative. Blackmail or secret society interference are the best options here; if the PCs can force an NPC to give them the necessary documents without the requisite paperwork, they can break out of this vicious cycle and move on.

Other options:

◉ Holding up deliveries of Processed Luncheon Protein Sausages to Bernard-O's cafeteria until he gives them the Refreshment Authorization Form.

◉ Starting a new club in the Activity Center and therefore becoming able to provide their own Club Supervisor Signatures.

◉ Taking up IntSec officer Malachi-B on his offer in exchange for his help.

Encourage the players to be creative in finding a solution. Don't be afraid to throw arbitrary problems and obstacles in their path—make them work for it.

AREN'T ANY TROUBLE-SHOOTERS *GOOD* SHOTS?

4. Alan-O, we hardly knew thee

The PURGE traitor Alan-O is dead. The Troubleshooters were sent to investigate him. These two facts do not work well together. Especially diligent Troubleshooters may still try to learn something of the late Alan; more pragmatic ones skip right to Episode 5.

We believe this run-over mush was a traitor

The obvious routes of investigation are:

◉ Alan-O's living quarters

◉ Freshintestine

◉ The transtube station

Another may soon present itself:

◉ Bernard-O's assassination attempts

▌Living quarters

Unless the Troubleshooters go to Alan-O's ORANGE-Clearance quarters immediately after arriving at the transtube, they'll be too late. As soon as Alan-O is confirmed dead, a squad of scrubots descend on the room and erase any trace of Alan-O's existence. They blast the whole room with a massive microwave pulse to destroy all organic matter, then vigorously scrub every surface with a chemical wash. Even if the Troubleshooters make it there in time, the scrubots start cleansing the room with them inside.

▌Freshintestine

Ricky-R dumps most of Alan-O's personal items and notes as soon as Ricky-R takes over. Feel free to hint that the solution to all the Troubleshooters' problems is held within the manager's office at Freshintestine. Let the Troubleshooters fight to get past Casey, or engage in amusingly baroque bluffs to keep Ricky-R busy while they search his office. The one item of possible use is a suicide note hidden on Alan-O's computer.

> **Goodbye. They're coming for me, and there's no way out. Carry on the fight! Death to The Computer and its brainwashed lackeys! Only through conspiracy can we be free!**
>
> **Alan-O.**

▌Transtube

At the (RED-Clearance) transtube station, the Troubleshooters can confirm that it was Alan-O who got splattered underneath their transbot. They can also find out that they need travel papers to get anywhere in the current security regime.

▌Bernard-O's schemes

If the Troubleshooters' actions lead him to suspect them of being involved in Alan-O's death, the nefarious cafeteria supervisor and PURGE agent tries to assassinate them.

If the Troubleshooters are actually hiding their identities properly and pretending to be INFRAREDs, Bernard-O ignores them and continues about his food service/terrorist ways. If they ask too many questions about Alan-O, try to interrogate or attack him or generally act like Troubleshooters by stomping around and firing lasers, then Bernard-O responds with three lethal schemes to rid him of the Troublemakers, each scheme more deadly than the last.

▌Scheme 1: Sabotaged sausages

Bernard-O poisons the Troubleshooters' food the next time they eat in his cafeteria. He orders the serving bot to add a massive dose of IR-market thymoglandin (see the **PARANOIA** rulebook) to the food served to the characters. If his plan works, the thymoglandin turns the Troubleshooters into drug-crazed combat monsters, and they'll probably start smashing bits of the cafeteria. Bernard-O, being a conscientious supervisor of the cafeteria, immediately calls the Armed Forces in to deal with the incipient riot. (He also prudently slips away before the Troubleshooters find him.)

A few minutes after the Troubleshooters flip out and start killing things, an elite Anti-Terrorist Team arrives, blasts through the wall of the cafeteria and starts aggressively counseling the Troubleshooters. A new, more understanding policy instituted by CPU requires the Armed Forces goons to grudgingly ask the Troubleshooters to talk about their feelings and confess why they feel such hostility. Should the targets fail to comply with counseling, the Anti-Terrorist team opens up with heavy weapons fire.

If the Troubleshooters notice the strange taste in their sausages (automatically if they've recently eaten unadulterated sausages, or with a High Alert roll to see if they've heard about past sausage-drugging scams), they can avoid the dangers of drug abuse. Alternatively, they can pop down to the Activity Center and work off some of that aggression and psychotic strength in a healthy game of FunBall.

If the players are oblivious to their narrow escape, have a random innocent NPC bystander succumb to the drug, just to get across the idea that someone is out to get the PCs.

▌Scheme 2: 'You sabotaged the sausages!'

Bernard-O reports a batch of sausages from Freshintestine Healthfood Concern was tainted with a dangerously high level of illegal BLUE-Clearance thymoglandin. An anonymous tip-off from a hacked PDC (Bernard-O again) implicates the new workers. A horde of PLC and IntSec investigators led by Malachi-B (again!) descend on Freshintestine, questioning everyone. IntSec drags each PC off to a dark room, dopes hiim up on truth drugs, and harshly interrogates him as to why they tampered with those delicious Processed Luncheon Protein Sausages.

If you want, have the IntSec investigators uncover alarming discrepancies in the Computer-created false histories of the Troubleshooters' cover identities. Ask one PC when he stopped associating with known Communists, or have them blackmail another by threatening to reveal the truth about the Shower Incident.

If the PCs already sabotaged Freshintestine at the behest of Mel-R the Humanist, the investigation still takes place, but the IntSec crew is even more irritated and unpleasant. The PLC quality assurance engineers, though, seem bizarrely happy. (Two cases of tampering with foodstuffs in a week is still well below the average for a food vat.)

▌Scheme 3: Standard bomb

A timeless classic: 'Plant a bomb outside the Troubleshooters' door and run away.' Bernard-O gets a jackobot to leave this bomb outside their door one night, setting it to explode when the door is opened. To prevent it from being tampered with or moved, he puts a neat 'PROPERTY OF R&D' sign on it. The explosion does K3V damage to everyone inside the room.

If the Troubleshooters do not have assigned quarters by this point in the mission, then they might meet Bernard-O in the Choices office queue, as he tries to find out where they're living so he can blow them up.

This is all well and good, but...

Though uncovering proof of Alan-O's treachery leads to commendations and promotion when the Troubleshooters finally report back, they still need to escape from MUD Sector and make it back to the briefing room. That's the topic of the next episode.

The Troubleshooters need to get back to their original briefing room to get their identities back. Continually inspire in the players a desire to return to their former high status, escape their current misery, and avoid termination for failing to complete The Computer's assigned mission. Whenever the players are making noises to the effect of, 'Maybe we should just live here,' play out another scene with effervescently cheerful boss Ricky-R. That should motivate them.

To get back home, the PCs need to either get travel papers, or be promoted back to RED. Several options are open to them:

- ◉ Asking The Computer
- ◉ Contacting others
- ◉ Getting travel papers
- ◉ Getting promoted
- ◉ Secret society contacts
- ◉ Trying to talk their way out
- ◉ Running like hell
- ◉ Secret escape routes

Stuck in MUD Sector

You knew that pun was coming back.

Currently, the INFRARED Troubleshooters are in MUD Sector. The main way out of MUD is via transtube, but this route and all other mass transit systems (personal tubes, helicopters and so on) are off-limits to INFRAREDs due to the recent tragic incident at the transtube station. A quick bit of exploration reveals there is no overland (or, rather, through-corridor) route out of MUD Sector that is not blocked by a RED or higher-clearance section. Unless the Troubleshooters can work out a way to escape, they'll be trapped here and forced to work in Freshintestine for the rest of their lives, times the number of clones they have left. (Tech Services decants their new clones right here in MUD Sector, so dying is not the answer—only what you might call punctuation.)

▌ Asking The Computer

Do any of the Troubleshooters still have PDCs? If none of them placed a PDC in one of the black boxes during the briefing, then their only ways to speak directly to The Computer are to find a public terminal or a confession booth. The former means that they'll be talking to a big screen in front of dozens of other citizens; the latter

ensures privacy—it's just you, The Computer, a laser cannon and the IntSec eavesdroppers in the booth.

The Computer has no memory of ordering the PCs to go undercover. As far as it is concerned, they're INFRAREDs. Their real records and identities are locked away in protected memory, and even knowing the existence of protected memory is INDIGO Clearance. Conversations will go something like this:

Troubleshooter: Friend Computer! We are trapped in MUD Sector!

The Computer: You are not trapped, citizen. All citizens are free. Please go about your business.

Troubleshooter: But I need to go to the briefing room!

Computer: You are not scheduled for a briefing now. You are in error.

Troubleshooter: I need to swipe my ME Card to get my clearance back.

Computer: Your ME Card is working according to specifications. Your clearance is INFRARED. Your clearance has always been INFRARED. Is there a problem, citizen?

Troubleshooter: But—you sent us here! Undercover! To investigate Alan-O! I'm a TROUBLESHOOTER.

Computer: Loading psycheval2. Please wait. *[Modem noises.]*

Troubleshooter: Friend Computer?

Computer: What makes you think you're a Troubleshooter? *[Bleep!]* Your reaction time is a factor in this, so please answer promptly. A delay in answering implies that you are engaged in dissimulation, which implies that you—

Troubleshooter: I know I'm a Troub—!

Computer: DO NOT INTERRUPT. To continue: A delay in answering implies that you are engaged in dissimulation, which implies that you are a traitor attempting to deceive me, which will result in your termination. A quick and prompt answer implies that you are merely delusional, which will result in you being given the best medical care available to citizens of your clearance, including counseling, medication, brainscrubbing and laser lobotomies. If you have purchased private medical insurance, this will be taken into account. Please answer the question after the tone. *[Beep!]*

Troubleshooter: I—

Computer: Elapsed time exceeds stated margin. Why are you lying to me? *bleep* Your reaction time is a factor in this, so please answer promptly. A delay in answering implies that you are engaged in dissimulation…

In short, they're screwed *screwed* SCREW-ED if they choose this option. The Computer simply cannot help them. At best, they can get subjected to psych tests and medication, but it's more likely they'll be terminated for trying to deceive The Computer and impersonating Troubleshooters.

▌ Contacting others

Again, how and whom? If they don't have a PDC, they'll need to use a public phone booth (which IntSec monitors). A call out of MUD Sector costs 2 credits per minute, plus one for each additional minute. (Alternatively, there's a working PDC and some other junk at the bottom of the food vat in Freshintestine, left there when the initial security team got killed.)

A more amusing question is, who are they going to call? A RED-Clearance contact could hop on a transtube, pick up the Troubleshooters' ME Cards, and swipe them…but who do the PCs trust to carry their identity cards? Possible options include contacts from previous missions, service firm coworkers and secret society contacts.

Unless the players are amazingly eloquent, the whole deal probably sounds fantastically dodgy from the point of view of the callee. 'Hi, we need you to pop down to MUD Sector, take our ME Cards and bring them to a random briefing room. By the way, we're technically INFRAREDs currently, because we're undercover.' An honest citizen will refuse to help because it's disobeying The Computer's wishes—if it wants them to stay undercover as INFRAREDs, then stay under-cover! Secret society contacts are much more willing to defy The Computer—but are horrified to be called over an unsecured public line that anyone could be tapping. Such contacts tell them to get in touch with their local friends through the usual channels, then hastily hang up.

Unless the game is dragging and you want to finish things up, the Troubleshooters have to find a way to escape from within MUD Sector.

▌ Getting travel papers

The PCs can obtain travel papers in two ways: by applying to CPU and through the characters' supervisor, Ricky-R.

At CPU, the Troubleshooters have to wait in line for ages. (If they somehow bypassed the Danny the Commie/Nuke scene above in 'Episode 3: More Pointless Bureaucracy,' run that now.) Finally they get to the window and are handed

the fiendish **Application for Travel Papers** form, presented at the end of this mission.

Unless you can think of a more amusing result based on how the players fill out the form, a nameless bureaucrat summarily rejects their application for travel papers.

Ricky-R the Helpful Bouncy Boss is much more helpful and bouncy. Assuming one of the Troubleshooters can give him a halfway-decent reason why they need travel papers ('my friend died/I need to visit a medical specialist/fact-finding mission for new sausage flavors, etc.'), Ricky-R produces a single set of papers, allowing one character to leave MUD Sector.

If the Troubleshooters manage to get one of their number to go and reswipe the ME Cards, and don't fight tooth and nail over the papers, then they're not playing **PARANOIA** properly.

Getting promoted

RED-Clearance citizens can travel without papers. If the PCs can get back to RED, they can leave. There are three easy ways to get promoted:

- Distinguished service to Alpha Complex
- Reporting treason
- EAP club supervision

Distinguished service to Alpha Complex

A citizen who performs some act of glorious self-sacrifice and terminal (emphasis on the terminal) bravery can sometimes be promoted, especially if this selfless act is performed in full view of a Computer camera or high-clearance citizen. Leaping on grenades, donating organs, taking on the deranged warbot in single combat and other Horatio-Alger heroics are all deeds worthy of recognition.

Incredibly dangerous situations are like buses—they're trying to run you over when you don't need them, but as soon as you need one, they're scarcer than intelligent and interesting people on reality TV. If the Troubleshooters want to get promoted by saving the life of a high-clearance citizen, they'll need to manufacture their own life-threatening situation. The citizen they save must be GREEN or higher, which limits their options. Of the stock NPCs in this mission, Kevin-G doesn't deserve to be saved and Malachi-B is probably too canny to fall for such a trick. Maybe the Troubleshooters wait until a nice plump VIOLET Supervisor calls around.

Reporting treason

Reporting fellow INFRAREDs for treason usually leads to promotion; reporting higher-clearance citizens who subsequently get terminated is a certain route up the ladder. All the Troubleshooters need to do is find traitors. Everyone who works at

Freshintestine except for Ricky-R has something to hide, from secret society membership to spice addiction. Everyone who works at Choices, or CPU, or…well, you know the drill. Depending on how much longer you want the game to go on, set a quota for the number of traitors that the PCs need to report to get back to RED. (One traitor per two PCs is a good number if they're working as a group; one traitor each if they're conspiring against each other, and remember that they can turn each other in….)

EAP club supervision

As described earlier, an Elective Activity or Pursuit club must have a RED-Clearance supervisor. If no RED-Clearance citizen can be found to volunteer to supervise a new club, an INFRARED is promoted to RED. The Activity Center has the petition forms to start a new club.

Only one Troubleshooter can be promoted using this system, so the race is on to get the requisite number of signatures (usually 20) needed to start a new club. Most INFRAREDs are quite willing to sign such petitions, knowing that each active club marginally increases their chances of promotion. The problem is that quite a few REDs are willing to become supervisors, as being involved in social activities is seen as a good thing by The Computer. The trick, therefore, is to start clubs that sound like they involve a lot of work, personal danger or unpleasant chemicals so the REDs are scared off and space is left for an INFRARED to be promoted. Roll 1d20—on a 15 or less, an existing RED takes the job of supervisor. Drop the target number if the club sounds unappealing to supervise.

The Troubleshooters can cooperate, or they can each run around with their own clipboard and set of signatures. Once the club is formed, the new supervisor must run one successful meeting before being promoted. (He must also make

sure that every member has a valid Refreshment Authorization Form….)

Secret society contacts

Getting in touch with their respective secret societies is probably the best way out for the Troubleshooters. MUD Sector is full of traitors, but without access to their usual message drops and contacts, the Troubleshooters must make new and exciting treasonous friends. Review the various recognition signs and countersigns (they're repeated below for your convenience), and remind the players of them, too. All the societies have presences in the Activity Center, so any attempts to contact societies will probably be made there.

Anti-mutant

Bert-Y-GER-2 runs Weapon Maintenance for INFRAREDs classes in the Activity Center, and works in an Armed Forces weapons depot by day. He has no known mutant powers. Bert-Y can't provide travel papers, but he can arrange for the Troubleshooters to be drafted for extra training back in their home sector. While there, they can pop into the briefing room and get their identities back, but will still have to go on the suicide miss—er, training.

Recognition signal: Antennae above head/ throat cutting.

Communists

The major bastion of Communism here is the Citizen's Combined Crochet Pool, who knit treasonous jumpers. Susie-R in Choices is also a Commie Sympathizer. The Communists can give the PC a set of nice jumpers with Commie slogans knitted into them in UV-sensitive wool. The slogans are invisible to the naked eye, but show up clearly on Computer camera monitors.

Everything's more fun with arbitrary improbable deadlines!*

Should the Troubleshooters get too comfortable in Freshintestine and settle down to work, feel free to have The Computer access its protected memory at the most inconvenient moment and contact the Troubleshooters:

Computer: Attention Troubleshooter! Why have you not filed a report on the treasonous activities of Alan-O-MUD-6?

Troubleshooter: You remember me?!

Computer: My memory is flawless, citizen. I assess a 50-credit fine for suggesting I might be in error. Please file your report within 24 hours at the briefing room where you received your mission. *bleep*

Troubleshooter: But I can't leave MUD Sector to get to the briefing room! They think I'm an INFRARED!

Computer: You are INFRARED Clearance, citizen. No briefing is scheduled for you at this time. Stress analysis on your voice suggests you are feeling FRUSTRATED (95% certainty), CONFUSED (43% certainty) and SUDDENLY FEARFUL (33% and rising). Please try these experimental double-strength happiness pills.

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* And I should know, I work for Mongoose Publishing…

All the PC needs to do is get some patsy to wear the jumper, then report him for treason.

Recognition signal: Secret handshake—three pumps, two squeezes.

Computer Phreaks

Though a Phreak member runs the Volunteer Wire Tension Testers, most Phreak activity takes place online. A Phreaker who finds a computer terminal can easily get onto the chatrooms. The problem is finding a terminal—the PCs' barracks is terminal-free, so the PC must sneak into the offices at Freshintestine or some other area, or find a PDC. (A PDC in a Black Box cannot be used to access the chatrooms.) The Phreaks can provide hacked travel passes.

Corpore Metal

The Survivors of Medical Malpractice group in the Activity Center are all secret Corpore Metal members, as is TR-4-SH in Freshintestine. Should the PC contact the Survivors, they are unwilling to trust him unless he too is a survivor of a botched medical procedure (which isn't exactly uncommon in Alpha Complex). TR-4-SH is more trusting when he's in sane mode. Corpore Metal gives the Troubleshooter the serial number of a sympathetic transbot who will carry the PC even if he's INFRARED Clearance. The character still has to sneak through the transtube station or find a way into the tube network to reach the bot.

Recognition signal: Head or body clockwise spin/anti-clockwise spin.

Death Leopard

The Nightcycle Watch is all Death Leopard members, and Troubleshooters still living rough in the corridors will meet these thugs. Casey-R in Freshintestine is also a potential member, and knows the recognition signal. The Leopards can provide guidance through the corridors for the 'Running like hell' option, below.

Recognition signal: High Five/'What's happening dude?'

FCCC-P

Cynthia at Freshintestine is a FCCC-Per, and attends the Clones United Through Song meetings at the Activity Center. She wears a pin on MandatoryInspectionDay. FCCC-P has contacts at the transtube station and can provide travel papers.

Recognition signal: Sign of the Computer.

Frankenstein Destroyers

The Bot Technology Interest Group comprises mostly Frankenstein Destroyer members. They really can't offer too much help, but one of their members can take a PC's ME Card and pop down to the briefing room, as outlined under 'Contacting others,' above.

Recognition signal: Handshake: three pumps, one squeeze.

Free Enterprise

Howie-R from Choices is a Free Enterprise member (tending towards the slimy capitalist end of the society) while there are also lots of members in the Plasticred Cleaning group (who tend towards the scary mafia end). Both groups offer the member a loan with excellent interest rates, enough to hire an AutoCar. This costs far, far more than any INFRARED could afford, so it's not off limits.

Recognition signal: 'How's business?'/ 'Nobody pays retail any more.'

Illuminati

Kevin-G in Choices and the Discussion Group in the Activity Center are all Illuminati. Should a character make contact with them and ask them for help, he's told of the loophole in the EAP club system that can be used to get promoted. Furthermore, the Illuminati arrange to prevent existing REDs from stealing the job of supervisor; all the PC needs to do is obtain the requisite signatures.

Recognition signal: For the duration of the mission, it is: 'Are you in the Illuminati?'/'No [wink]'

Mystics

Morris in Freshintestine is a former Mystic, and used to attend the vatslime collector meetings in the Activity Center. The Mystics can get the character high, but that's about it. Luckily, someone has left a travel pass behind at the Mystic meeting which the character can borrow, assuming he's not hallucinating it and can stop looking at his hands I mean did you ever really look at your hands…

Recognition signal: 'May the Harmony of the Cosmos be with you.'/'Huh?'

Pro Tech

Casey-R in Freshintestine is a former member, and still has the handy little built-in buzzer. The Technology Enthusiasts are also a wonderfully unsubtle cover for Pro Tech meetings. Casey offers what help she can from within Freshintestine, but is feeling rather bitter towards technology after her recent demotion. The Technology Enthusiasts have an experimental pod racer that could be used to navigate the YumMulch pipes and escape that way.

Recognition signal: Handy little subcutaneous buzzer.

Psion

Psion is the easiest society to get in touch with; all the character need do is leave a message in his brain, and the Secret Masters pick it up at some point (probably towards the end of the mission). Psion offers to telepathically dominate one target and make him susceptible to the character's influence; for example, they could mindzap the clerk in CPU who keeps rejecting the character's application for travel papers.

Recognition signal: Antennae/forehead tap.

PURGE

Though Alan-O and Bernard-O are both PURGErs by default, it's not a good idea to have the major target and major adversary of the mission be allied to one of the PCs. Therefore, if you have a PURGE PC, move Alan-O and Bernard-O over to another similar society, such as the Humanists or Frankenstein Destroyers.

The Scale Model Enthusiasts are also PURGE members, and get the PC travel papers if he helps them blow up Freshintestine.

Recognition signal: Handshake: three pumps, two squeezes.

Romantics

Susie-R-AWL of Choices and the Classic Teela-O Rerun Fun Society are all Romantics. The Romantics are of little help in escaping MUD Sector, but can go to the briefing room and swipe the PCs' ME Cards if asked.

Recognition signal: Vulcan salute/'The Force Is With Us, tee-em.'

Sierra Club

Frank in Freshintestine and the Corridor Touring Club are Sierra Clubbers. Once contacted, they offer a secret overland route out of MUD Sector. The PC must go Outdoors, travel overland and then re-enter Alpha Complex to get to the briefing room.

Recognition signal: Antenna/buzzing noise.

Other societies

IntSec spies and High Programmer Program Group members have to contact their superiors; once they manage to do so, their societies can provide travel papers easily. Spies for another Alpha Complex can call home, but the only response to their predicament will be gales of laughter at how screwed up the other Complex is.

▌ *Trying to talk their way out*

Players with a strong confidence in their ability to dissimulate may wish to try bluffing their way out. The key thing to remember is that the Troubleshooters are INFRARED—the lowest of the low. No one in a position of power listens to them. There's a wall of unthinking bureaucratic indifference between them and escape. Unless the players come up with something really, really clever and funny, talking their way out is not an option.

▌ *Running like hell*

So, the INFRARED bits of MUD Sector are surrounded by higher-clearance corridors? The obvious solution to action-oriented players is to run through the higher-clearance corridors. If the Troubleshooters can make it to the briefing room before they're caught and reswipe their cards, then the 'crime' of moving through higher-clearance corridors will be negated, as they will retroactively have the required clearances.

In game terms, this is a panicked run across Alpha Complex. Have the PCs be pursued by IntSec GREEN goons, security bots and laser bolts. Call for plenty of Violence rolls, and throw random obstacles in the PCs' path. Roll on the following table every few minutes, adding +2 to your roll each time and stop when they reach the briefing room.

Roll   Obstacle

1-2 Even higher-clearance corridor: The PCs have to cross a GREEN or higher corridor to make it out. Fines and terminations as appropriate during debriefing.

3-4 Spontaneous loyalty demonstration: The Troubleshooters run into a corridor filled with happy citizens praising The Computer. They can't get through without violence.

5-6 Cleaning in progress: The corridor ahead is amazingly slippery and covered with acidic cleaning compounds and aggrieved scrubots.

7-8 Security field: Up ahead is an experimental static electricity field; anyone running it while carrying any metal items is fried.

9-10 Narrow walkway over chasm: Standard Death Star architecture.

11-12 Transbot crossing: This corridor intersects with the transtube network, and transbots shoot through the crossing at high speed. The PCs must time their crossings perfectly; failure gets them splattered like Alan-O.

13-14 Platform sequence: For no apparent reason, the corridor ahead turns into a section of moving platforms, and the

Troubleshooters must jump from one to the next. (Why yes, we do have a tight deadline for this mission, how did you know?)

15-16 Lost: The Troubleshooters have taken a wrong turn at some point. They have to get directions to get back on the route to the briefing room.

17-18 Roadblock: Some of their pursuers called ahead and set up a corridor-block. Three GREEN goons wait behind a portable barrier.

19+ Hey, it's the briefing room! The Troubleshooters have made it to the briefing room.

Other escape routes

With secret society help, the Troubleshooters could try leaving through the YumMulch Recycling Pipe, or through the sewers. This works in a similar way to the 'Running like hell' option—keep rolling and adding +2 to each roll until the team reaches the briefing room.

Roll   Obstacle

1-2 Flood: A wave of something slimy, unwholesome and quite possibly eldritch comes down the pipe. Characters risk drowning if they can't get to higher ground.

3-4 Suction: A pipe tries to suck one of the Troubleshooters up into places unknown and unpleasant.

5-6 Darkness: The pipe network ahead is dark. The Troubleshooters may be eaten by a grue.

7-8 Lost: They are in a maze of twisty passages, all alike.

9-10 Bottom of giant chasm: Looking up, the Troubleshooters see the corridors and rooms of Alpha Complex far overhead. If they want to try the Running Like Hell approach, they can climb up an access ladder.

11-12 Cannibal sewer cleaning team: Many years ago, a group of citizens from Tech Services descended to clear a blockage in a pipe. They were never seen again…until now.

13-14 Secret Armed Forces base: The Armed Forces has hidden some of its most sensitive pieces of equipment and biggest guns here in the depths. Troubleshooters who wander in get captured, questioned about what they know about the Project and the Final Weapon, then terminated.

15-16 Waste dumping site: The pipe contains quite a lot of glowing green barrels. Have some lovely new mutations.

17-18 Mutant sewer pigs: Like the cannibal sewer cleaning team, only smarter and more feral.

19+ Hey, it's the briefing room! The Troubleshooters have made it to the briefing room.

Alternatively, the Troubleshooters could wrap themselves up as jumbo Processed Luncheon Protein Sausages and try to have themselves delivered to the briefing room. They could steal the ME Cards of RED-Clearance citizens and pretend to be them. There are always opportunities for the ambitious, desperate and morally flexible citizen.

6. A new appreciation of ME

The Troubleshooters make it back to the briefing room, where they reclaim their identities and are debriefed. It all goes alarmingly well—until the surprise twist ending.

Swipe and snipe

The Troubleshooters arrive back in the briefing room, which the jackobot has just finished painting INFRARED-black. The moment they enter, it sighs and starts scrubbing off the paint, changing the walls back to RED. Their equipment is piled in a corner. Once they swipe their ME Cards through the scanner, their identities are restored. Huzzah! Bonus rations of Bouncy Bubbly Beverage all round!

The screen activates, displaying the lovable eyeball of The Computer.

'Your identities have been restored,' says The Computer helpfully, 'with only minor loss of data due to sunspots, bit rot and/or sabotage. Please report on the treasonous activities of citizen Alan-O-MUD-6.'

If the Troubleshooters actually ever found anything, they can offer it up here. If they want to lie, well, Alan-O is splattered and isn't going to argue. If they found other traitors, especially Bernard-O, The Computer is very impressed. Even more B3 all round!

In short, this debriefing goes terrifying well. Be generous with credit bonuses and promotions. The Computer is lavish in its praise. If the players dredge up unfortunate events and treacheries, hold investigations as normal, but The Computer won't pull up treasonous events that occurred during the mission for analysis.

Finally, once the dust of any terminations has settled, The Computer dismisses the team. 'You

have done well, Troubleshooters. Well done, heroes of Alpha Complex!' The screen darkens, accompanied by a cheery little 'goodbye' tune. The Troubleshooters turn to the door of the briefing room, about to return to their happy high-clearance lives…when the door bursts open and half a dozen IntSec agents burst in, demanding to know why the team illegally applied for extra Certificates of Employment, Valid Toilet Addresses, Refreshment Authorization Forms and Sector Assignment Dockets. Unless the players come up with an *amazing* excuse on the spot, they are summarily executed for wasting Complex resources and attempting to create treasonous cover identities. Still, though dead, they're back at their original clearance.

Bonus really cruel ending for a one-shot mission: The Troubleshooters wake up the next morning in their INFRARED barracks. Escaping from MUD Sector was just a hallucination brought on by vat fumes….

HOUSING PRESERVATION DEVELOPMENT & MIND CONTROL
NEW CLIENT REGISTRATION

Please fill in all entries, except those entries that are already filled in or that are marked as not to be filled in. Failure to fill in or not fill in an entry will result in the form or applicant being voided. The applicant should be aware of all applicable rules and regulations.

Section 1-a

Name: _____

Clearance (please circle):   IR   R   O   Y
(If higher, please request form HPD&MC5323/43-F.)

Sector of Origin: _____

Reasons for Leaving Previous Barracks (check):

☐ Chemical Spill   ☐ Fire/Flood

☐ Other Disaster (please specify) _____

☐ Reassignment   ☐ Promotion

☐ Demotion   ☐ Fumigation

☐ Redecoration   ☐ Poor Feng Shui

☐ Have Not Left Previous Barracks

☐ Temporary Reassignment

Section 1-b

Reasons for New Barracks Request (check):

☐ Standard

☐ Command from Superior (name:) _____

☐ Authorization from CPU/HPD&MC/Computer (auth. code:) _____

☐ Emergency Shelter (please specify emergency): _____

☐ Other (please specify) _____

Section 1-c

If you have to share accommodation with other citizens, please list them here in order of preference:

Name	Reason for sharing	Office use only

☐ **Processing Fee:**   10 credits
☐ **Optional Damage Deposit:**   25 credits
☐ **Insurance:**   25 credits
☐ **Bribe:**   50 credits
TOTAL: _____
(Credits will be deducted automatically from your account.)

APPLICATION FOR TRAVEL PAPERS

Name: _____   **Clearance (please circle):**   IR-R-O-Y-G-B-I-V-UV

Sector of origin: _____   **Sector of destination:** _____

Travel paper type requested:
One Journey ☐ Return Journey ☐ Multi-Sector Pass ☐ Single Mode ☐ Multiple Mode ☐
Citizen's TravelSaver Pass ☐ Priority Transit ☐ Ultra Priority Transit ☐ Smoking ☐ Waiver ☐ Senior Citizen ☐

Reason for journey:
Work ☐ (Please attach form CPU/54353353/255-DS4-Q, completed by your supervisor)
Pleasure ☐ (Please indicate why you believe you would be happier in another sector)
Order by superior ☐ (Please attach a copy of the order)
Drafted by Armed Forces ☐ (Only for transit to Armed Forces training centers)
Reporting for Briefing ☐ (Please attach Mission Alert)
Reporting for Termination ☐ Other ☐ (Please specify:) _____

Please check inappropriate entries as appropriate:
☐ I am carrying explosive or dangerous materials ☐ I am a Registered Mutant
☐ I have been exposed to biohazardous or radioactive material ☐ I get travel-sick
☐ I packed my bags myself ☐ I kept my bags under supervision at all times
☐ I am carrying unregistered foodstuffs ☐ I like personal space
☐ I am carrying electronic storage devices, including PDCs, discs, cyberimplants or active neurons
☐ I **do not** give permission for these to be scanned, probed or erased as necessary to prevent filesharing
☐ I have **not** read all the safety documentation and instructions ☐ I have **RED** or higher clearance
☐ I am **not** travelling with others ☐ My body odor exceeds standard safety tolerances
☐ In the event of emergency, I am **not** qualified to offer aid to my fellow travelers
☐ I am now or have been a Communist, Mutant, Traitor, Filesharer, Terrorist or Smoker
☐ I would **not** be interested in filling out surveys and questionnaires to improve the service offered by the Alpha Complex Mass Transit System
☐ I am **not** interested in participating in testing of new and improved services offered by the Alpha Complex Mass Transit System
☐ Other (Please specify:) _____

My estimated travel time is:
☐ Less than one minute ☐ Less than ten minutes
☐ Less than one hour ☐ Less than one day
☐ One or more days (Please explain why you are leaving Alpha Complex, as no transit takes more than one day.) _____
_____
_____
_____
_____
☐ I accept that unavoidable delays and technical problems are caused by terrorism and sabotage, and that this does not change my answer above.
_____
Sign full name on line above.

Tiebreaker: I deserve travel papers more than my fellow citizens because…? (25 words exactly)
_____
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