PARANOIA
THE ROLEPLAYING GAME

THE R&D CATALOG

OF ASTOUNDING, AMAZING, UNIQUE AND REALLY NIFTY EQUIPMENT!

From the Wondrous Priests of R&D Central. Guaranteed Fun and Destruction or Your Credits Back!

WEST END GAMES®

An Open Letter from the Head Priest of R&D

Greetings and Salutations!

Welcome to the All-New, All-Improved Risirch and De'Sann's Deluxe Catalog for the year 1 AM (After Mega-Whoops). Within these pages you'll find the latest and greatest in grandiose gadgets and high-tech horrors from those widget-wizards, the priests of R&D (the only true Temple — beware of shoddy infidel imitations).

Many of you may notice a difference between this year's catalog and last year's, chiefly because we didn't put one out last year. Actually, we had written one (wonderful piece of work, nice picture of Teela-O with an imported Italian ice-gun on the cover), but we discovered that the Temple guards had confiscated all the copies. This year, we decided to eliminate some of the middle men (which was a good test for the new weapons product line).

So now you have this exciting Pand-O-RA's box of wonders in your trembling, sweaty hands — what do you do with it? Well, in the back of the catalog you'll find an order form, which you can fill out and bring to the Temple of Risirch and De'Sann (the only true Temple — beware of heretic heterodoxy), along with your goods in trade or Alpha Express Card, and get a gadget in your greedy, grasping hands.

Of course, it might take a little while for us to find exactly what you want, and you might even be asked to do us a little favor while you wait. By way of explanation, let me just say that since we are no longer Computerized, we must fill each order by hand. This causes problems, not only because of backlog, but because some of the R&D priests have poor hearing — just last week, one of those lucky few with a still-active terminal and some cheese came in asking for one of our newest products, a combination clear disk and grater. Unfortunately, our priest got the order wrong, and gave the customer a nuclear disintegrator. Imagine his chagrin when the customer was vaporized two seconds after his check cleared!

But rest assured, that was an exception to the rule. Most R&D products are completely safe and field-tested (in the field right in front of the temple, as a matter of fact — you know, the one you had to run through to get here). And all R&D products are guaranteed for three months or your lifetime, whichever ends first. Simply bring the offending gadget back to the Temple, and we'll explain what you did to break it, why it can't be fixed, and how much a new one will cost you.

You say you're not satisfied? You say you want more for your undying devotion and blind worship? Well, tell you what I'm gonna do: next to the order form in this catalog you'll find the rules and regulations for the exciting new "R&D Shopping Spree Sweepstakes!" YOU MAY ALREADY BE A WINNER!!! (Then again, you might not, but what's life without a little risk-taking?) The lucky first-place winner in our contest will get a chance to run wild through the corridors of R&D Temple Central for five minutes, grabbing whatever he can. Sounds great, doesn't it? (Of course, that still leaves the little problem of getting out of the Temple with the loot, since the Vulture Warriors were never too keen on this contest idea to begin with.) Think of all the fun you can have racing down the corridors, snatching up all sorts of useful, handy and potentially explosive gadgets (we're sorry, but we will be unable to separate tested gizmos from untested gizmos prior to the shopping spree, so you'll just have to take your chances).

As you know, the R&D name means quantity, first and foremost. This year, we are proud to display the *Solid Simplexkeeping* Seal of Approval on all our products, the stamp that means dependability in this uncertain age. (*Solid Simplexkeeping* is a publication of the Tmwa-R-NER Simplex, a wholly-owned subSimplex of the Bouncy Bubble Beverage Co., recently purchased in a lasered buyout by Alpha Conglomerate BETTY, a division of Risirch and De'Sann Temples, InComputerated.)

At R&D you can buy with pride, you can buy with credits, you can even buy with used bot parts! You can buy a sparkling new gadget, or a rusted hulk that still has bloodstains from the last clone that used it. (Who knows? Maybe it was even your clone who expired on top of it, in which case R&D will give you a one percent discount off the price of the sponge to scrub the stains off!)

So don't waste a moment. Plunge into the pages of the *R&D Catalog*, and check out what tomorrow's clone will be wearing, riding and incinerating his enemies with, and all at prices that will bring a smile to your accountantbot.

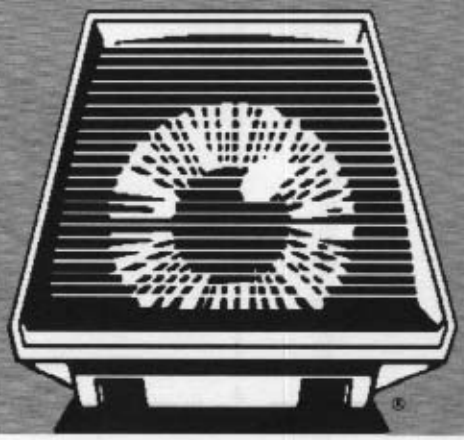
Happy Shopping!

Rip-U-OFF

Rip-U-OFF
Head Priest
Risirch and De'Sann Temple

The R&D Catalog of Astounding, Amazing, Unique and Really Nifty Equipment

by Edward S. Bolme



Weapons

"Never call a plasma generator a "gun." It's a rod, a piece, a Vulture Warrior's best friend. It's that heavy load on your back that keeps you from dodging laser blasts, and that inferno in your face when the wind is blowing the wrong way."
— Walt-R-LOO

It's a tough old complex out there. Commies around every corner, mutants and pure-strains tossing laser bursts back and forth, unspeakable monsters (which we won't speak of) lurking in the shadows just waiting to eat your face off out of sheer spite. The weapons of yesterday — plasma generators, cone rifles, laser pistols — they just won't cut it in the increasingly more dangerous society we all know and love.

Here at R&D, we believe your weapon should be up to any job. Whether you're mowing down a mob of Romantics desperate for Old Reckoning dirt on someone called Charles-N-DIE or slowing down a slew of scrubots bent on cleaning your clockcycles, you should be able to rely on furious firepower from an awesome array of death-dealing devices.

What do we at R&D look at when we design a weapon? First, there's "killability" — just how many people will this weapon turn into random, scattered atoms with a minimum of mess and fuss? Then there's mobility — can it be carried, lugged, dragged, or rolled toward the enemy, or does the enemy have to be lured to it (by making rude noises at them or questioning the product make of their birthing vats). How much of a recoil does it have? Will the same blast that vaporizes your enemy blow you through a wall, too? (Granted, that would double the "killability" figure, but it would also cut into the potential for repeat business pretty drastically.)

Naturally, we worry about the possibility of our weapons falling into the wrong hands. Here at R&D, we will sell only to people we know personally, or to people who know someone we know personally, or to people who look honest, or to people who don't really look that honest but who are willing to pay cash. At R&D, we put the safety of the complex first.

When it comes to weapons, Risirch and De'Sann is the foremost manufacturer — and if you order three weapons from this catalog, you'll get a free supply of foremost (or try the new economy pack, the fivemost). Scurry through any simplex, particularly at night-cycle, and chances are those laser beams and mega-blasts you're dodging are our babies. Everyone looking to wreak a terrible vengeance on a perfect stranger knows Risirch and De'Sann, the R&Deities.

Ever have one of those kind of daycycles? You roll out of your cot, brush your teeth, go out the door, and right away you're outgunned by the neighbors. From there, the day goes downhill, and you do, too, usually with some air vents you didn't have before. And why does this happen? Because your average simplex resident laughs at lasers these days — you need an ultimate weapon. The kind aliens come down to take away from humans in Old Reckoning wall-pictures, the kind scientists used to build in five minutes and then spend five decades explaining how it advanced the cause of science and they really didn't know it would turn the core of the planet to tapioca, but isn't it interesting that it did? You need the kind of weapon that will make your neighbors sit up and take notice right before they lie down and die. And we have that weapon here at R&D — and we're going to keep it, too, but you're welcome to come visit it whenever you want.

Or maybe you're not in the market for something that lethal. Maybe you're looking for something so dreadful, so frightening, that people will run screaming down the corridors if you even move to take it out of its case. Something that causes your victim unimaginable pain, and leaves him around to enjoy it. Well, we've got that, too, and it even makes us wince to think of it.

Looking for a gift for that special someone? Something that will say, "You are loved, you are respected, you are well-protected against hordes of bloodthirsty mutants," and say it in a subtle and romantic way? Look no further, for R&D (the Temple with a heart) has got a weapon that provides the ultimate in safe, comfortable protection.

In the next few pages, you'll meet the dynamic and the deadly, weapons that can wipe out the complex as we know it, or just your little corner of it. Shop in good health.

The Assault Shaker

For Todaycycle's Movers and Shakers

Are you ...
Faced with numerous opponents?
Working in tight areas?
Outnumbered on the attack?
Desperately seeking a weapon worth its weight in sodium chloride?

From the Files of Rip-U-OFF, Head Priest of R&D:

Yes, friends, it can be difficult. It's a dirty job, and no one likes to do it. We're talking about cleaning the vermin out of the store rooms. Mutants, renegades, derelict loyalists, radioactive cockroaches — all piled in together in a big heap of organic nastiness. And somebody's got to go in there and clean 'em out before they eat the light bulbs or something. Not a savory chore, but very necessary.

Or maybe your problem is a little different. You might be faced with the prospect of entering a densely populated den of treason and filth, a veritable nature baby factory churning out the worst in human wannabes, a veritable purgatory of wall-to-wall psychopaths who want you to be their next meal.

A very good friend of mine had that exact same problem. Seems someone hired him to get an important device — I think it was the Dimensollapsable Transitron. Anyway, it was located on an industrial sublevel filled with all sorts of bioengineering rejects, held in the slimy pseudopods of the king of the Sluggoths.

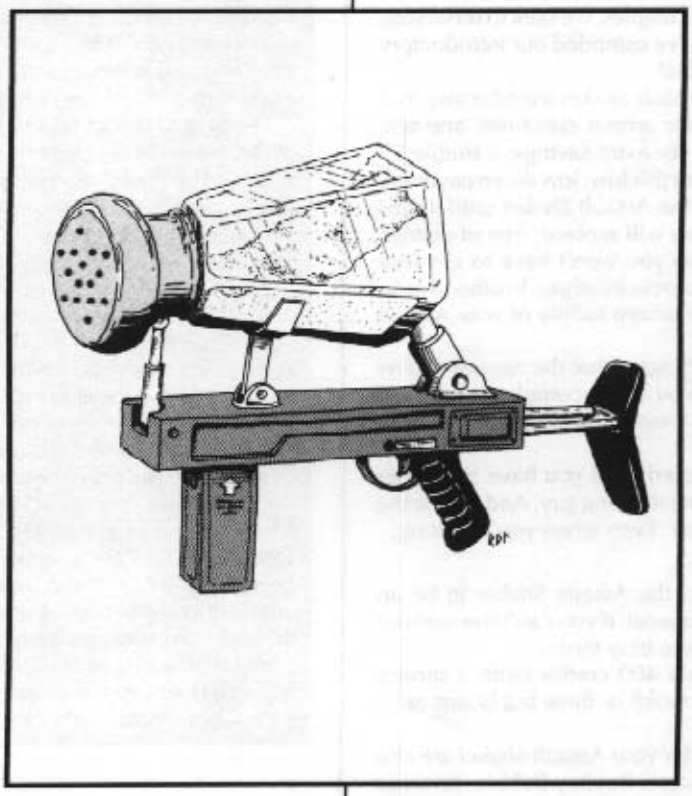
Sluggoths, for those of you who don't know, are really ugly creatures that look like slimy piles of garbage with eyestalks. They smell worse than Infrareds. Pseudopods are what they grab things with.

Needless to say, my friend was not too keen on retrieving the device, but he had promised his employer he would do it, and, like me, he is a man of his word. He bid me farewell, for he thought we'd never meet again. That's when I gave him the *Assault Shaker*.

He returned a week later, somewhat slimy, but in good spirits. "It was a Collapsible Transient Dimensitron," he said. "A portable, disposable measuring device. Not what they wanted at all!"

"That's fine, and I'm glad to see you survived the ordeal. Tell me," I said carefully, conscious of the fact that I might later be quoting myself in an advertisement, "How did the Assault Shaker work? Did it help you accomplish your misinformed mission?"

I was relieved to hear him enunciate clearly on his reply. The priest transcribing the dialog smiled. "It was great," he said. "And so easy to use! I spent just five microcycles familiarizing myself with it, and I felt like I'd been using it for years! I never thought a close assault weapon like this could be so easy to use! You really must make this available to the weapon-buying public! They'll love it! Do you have something I can use to scrape off this Sluggoth pseudopod slime? It's starting to harden."



Pepper 'em with Death

The Assault Shaker is a close-in weapon, an improved design on a similar Old Reckoning device. The Old Reckoning version was a small, hand-held weapon, with a small cone of effect, minimal ammo, and very short range. It was manually operated, had no safety, and in fact the only thing going for the design was that it was cheap and readily concealed.

But we at Risirch and De'Sann Temples have improved the weapon dramatically, without sacrificing the concealability or the portability!

Your Enemies Will Be Shaken

The Assault Shaker sweeps out a path of destruction, cleaning the mutant filth out of even the most recessed of nooks and crannies. The Assault Shaker can penetrate even narrow cracks and crevices to deal death to those in your way. The Assault Shaker fires an estimated five million rounds per microcycle in a 20 gradian wide swath, enough to obliterate even the most determined human wave attack.

Here's How It Works

We took the standard stock and chassis from an automatic slugthrower, and stripped off the firing mechanism and barrel assembly. The firing pin was replaced with a lightweight jackhammer, which in turn is powered by an advanced design hypercapacitor mounted in what used to be the ammo clip for the slugthrower. Power packs are thus easily interchangeable, allowing for continuous use of the Assault Shaker in a protracted firefight.

The ammo cartridge/dispersant itself is made of transparent aluminum, which, aside from being light and strong, allows you, the seasoned combat veteran, to readily gauge the amount of ammunition you have left. Braced in front by a hyperalloy magnetic spring, it is guaranteed to have full recoil in excess of 300 shakes per picocycle. Not only that, but the magnetic properties of the spring result in sawtooth oscillation for maximal efficiency of dispersal. Meanwhile, the padded-foam grips insure that none of the vibratory forces will adversely affect your aim or grip!

The Hippie Hippie Shakes

The ammunition itself is a wonder to behold. In the Old Reckoning, Assault Shakers were loaded with a corrosive ionic compound in its most concentrated form. This compound has been shown to corrode metals, damage meat, make water unpalatable, and even cause small gastropods to shrivel away into nonexistence.

But todaycycle's ammunition is even better. Today the ammo is the most corrosive compound we know, and has been carefully purified and refined into microcrystalline form. Each individual crystal is so small that it is almost invisible to the naked eye, yet each is packed with all the necessary coreactants and catalysts to make it an almost universal solvent. (No, it will not react with the transparent aluminum ammunition case.)

The crystals are angular enough to cut deep into most materials before reacting, yet light enough that they float in the air for up to 10 picocycles, an impenetrable barrier when you lay down some good defensive fire.

The Price — Cheap

We know it seems too good to be true, and to be perfectly honest, it is. But here at Risirch and De'Sann Temples, we seek to serve you, our valued customer. That's why we've extended our introductory special for another three monthcycles!

You can obtain your very own Assault Shaker introductory trial kit (contains one Assault Shaker, one ammo container, and one power pack) for just 150 creds, or, for extra savings, a simple 25 grams of reactor-grade plutonium! For this low, low down payment, you earn the right to carry and use the Assault Shaker until it runs out of ammunition. Furthermore, we will replace, free of charge, your Assault Shaker power pack, so you won't have to get your targets to sit still after the first few microcycles of use. In other words, you get the full benefit of the entire ammo supply of your Assault Shaker.

If, after this trial period, you don't agree that the Assault Shaker is the handiest weapon around, if you aren't completely satisfied with its performance, if, for some reason man was not meant to know...

Simply return it. No questions asked. And you have no further obligations. Really. Hey, I'm an understanding guy. And I value the opinion of you, our worthy customer. Even when you're wrong.

Terms

But I am confident you will find the Assault Shaker to be an indispensable part of your combat arsenal. If you can't live without the Assault Shaker, get a load of these easy terms!

The Assault Shaker runs a measly 400 credits (with a service charge of 10 kilograms of food vat mold) or three bot brains (with a handling fee of one shrubbery).

Full warranty service guarantees for your Assault Shaker are also available, for a mere six-pack of Classic Bouncy Bubble Beverage every monthcycle.

Additional transparent aluminum cartridges are available. They run 150 credits each. Bulk ammunition is also available, packaged in chemically resistant cartons, for two week's worth of fresh food or the equivalent in toxic waste.

Ask your confessor about Assault Shaker Accessories, like the Assault Turbofan, Assault Pinstriping, Assault Harness, Assaulting Battery, Assault Lick, Assault-2 Injury, Assault Tedpeanut, and the Assault Shaker Chemically Resistant Bayonet.

Each of these magnificent accessories is crafted with the same quality and care as the Assault Shaker, and they are all guaranteed to add spice to your combat use of your new weapon! Just think how much fun you'll have! You shake, they bake!

Order now, supplies are limited.

GM Game Stuff

Assault Shaker: Type 10F
Range: 3m A$ ammo 20/6*
*ammo lasts 20 rounds, power packs last 6
Note: the crystals hang in the air for up to three rounds, depending on vents and breezes in the area.

Most of you probably noticed the not-so-oblique reference to "After the Collapsitron," an adventure in the *Crash Course Manual*. The Assault Shaker is also a great accessory to any gastric adventure, like, say, *More Songs About Food Vats*. These are all great ways to bring the Assault Shaker into your campaign.

Once it's there, your players will try everything possible to get rid of it. Remember, it's loaded with an almost universal solvent, so you can really go to town!

When they fire, great clouds of it can settle to the ground and eat away the floor. Or maybe the floor is resistant, so it eats away the Troubleshooters' boots as they pursue their vanquished foe! Anybody who breathes it in is in for a serious case of heartburn.

There are also a wide variety of tactics and counter-tactics with this weapon. It can be fired off the top of a tall building. The enemy might have some powerful fans to blow the dust at the Troubleshooters. If an enemy somehow breaks the transparent aluminum, there'll be big-time trouble. And don't you wonder what happens when a laser blast passes through the *transparent* aluminum and hits the crystals?

The biggest design flaw of the Assault Shaker is the tendency of the ammo and power to run out at different times. This is accented by the fact that ammo often leaks out through the front dispersal screen, and the power usage is a little inefficient. Feel free to change it from a 20/6 to a 18/5. Or worse. Keep the Troubleshooters constantly running out of one or the other.

And if all else fails, have the power pack drop out. After all, the ammo clip holder is designed to support the weight of 10 slugs, not a large and heavy hypercapacitor. Or maybe the dispersal screen isn't as resistant as it's supposed to be and it gets eaten away. Suddenly the entire remaining supply of crystals is shaken into the air, producing a billowing cloud of acid death. Run!

Getting the payments together for the Assault Shaker can be deadly, too. The only known supply of toxic waste might be in the hands of a very conscientious simplex director, who carefully disposes of everything his plant produces. How are the Troubleshooters going to explain to him that yes, they really do need to go into the toxic waste dump, but no they won't do anything to compromise the integrity and safety of it? Then, once they raid the buildingfill, how are they gonna carry it back? Hope somebody wants to be a mutant. How much toxic waste is equivalent to two weekcycles' food, anyway? We don't know either, but we think it's a lot. Fresh food is awfully rare.

The Papercut Chainsaw

A Weapon for a New Age

From the Files of Rip-U-OFF, Head Priest of R&D:

"Our customers — the faithful — always demand the best. But we want to go one step better than that."

"But this will sell. Just tell them it's the best!"

"No. We want to give them the best. Let the equipment speak for itself."

"But this is cheap! We'll make a bundle!"

"We are not priests for the money! We are priests because it is right! As for you, you are cast out, along with that piece of trash you invented — that sacrilegious idle idol you would have me sell the faithful! And don't let me catch you starting up any heretic temples! Begone! You are excommunicatored!"

Thus went all too many of my conversations with lesser priests, after I decreed that we would create the ultimate melee weapon for our faithful.

But it was not only my search for the ultimate melee weapon that amazed my fellow priests and sent them scrabbling after various and sundry items. For I also decreed that the ultimate melee weapon, as the most holy of hand-to-hand ordnance, would be given away ...

ABSOLUTELY FREE!

Really? Free?

Yep.

But I'm not going to tell you how to get one yet, because first I feel obligated to tell you what it is.

Just what does it take for something to be the ultimate melee weapon? Let's analyze this together, shall we?

First of all, it must do damage. Not necessarily overwhelming damage, but enough to really hurt. If you want overkill, just drop buildings on people or hit 'em with a tacnuke. Overkill is not what a melee weapon is all about. A melee weapon is something to be avoided, because it hurts. After all, most of the people you meet are not really afraid of death. They're afraid of severe injury. And tax collectors. But that's beside the point.

More important than damage when designing a melee weapon is the question, "How much blood is gonna fly?" In this world of laser pistols and cone rifles, melee weapons are old and generally obsolete. But there are still those aficionados who use melee weapons for the sheer aesthetic pleasure of it. Let's face it, there's very little more satisfying than seeing someone's eyes bug out when you nail him a good one. There's nothing more satisfying than trampling your fallen enemies underfoot. So we want a weapon that's fun to use — a real showcase in combat.

This in turn leads to another criterion for melee weapons: the "Terror Factor". This should be emphasized. The more horrifying a weapon is, the more your opponents will run screaming into the darkness. There's an easy way to make a weapon terrifying: motorize it. Think of it — what's more intimidating than a chainsaw? What looks nastier than a vibroblade whining in the hands of an assailant? What evokes more stark raving fear than a motorized drill in the hands of a dentist? What seems more unstoppable than a tax collector with a pocket calculator?

So that was a given. It had to be motorized. But a motorized what?

Take a minute now, sit back, close you eyes, and think of the most insidious and painful injury you've ever suffered. Not the biggest injury, because we're not talking overkill here. Not the most damaging, because our weapon will be motorized. We're talking the injury that was small, easy to administer, and overwhelmingly painful. An injury where lots of blood flowed.

We thought about an automatic nail puller, and even tested a prototype, but it was just too difficult to get the target's hands into the confounded thing.

The nosehammer, a jackhammer-like device, proved unwieldy. And besides, a guy's only got one nose, so when you bloody it, there's not too much more you can do.

Our Auto Tax Audit Ax never got off the drawing boards. Pity. It was looking real good.

We tried a Multihammer Funnybone Banger, but it was such a cumbersome contraption that we finally had to give it up. Besides, there wasn't any blood. But clone, oh clone, did those test subjects dance and sing! We were thinking of renaming our abbey the Shirl-Y Temple.

But then we did just what we asked you to do. We sat back and thought about the most obnoxious injury we'd ever sustained. And divine (well, infernal) inspiration came upon us. Evil grins slowly spread across our cherubic countenances. We worked feverishly through the night.

And now we have it. The blood flies. Three of my testing robes are now permanently stained. It was fun! We ended up running down the halls, chasing each other back and forth like dirty scrubots!

What did we create? We created the Papercut Chainsaw!

And It's Free?

Yes, it is, but if you'll just wait a minute, I can finish explaining about the weapon.

See, paper cuts are the most vicious of injuries. They hurt like the dickens, and they bleed everywhere.

So we were looking at papercuts (figuratively speaking). They can even penetrate normally protective substances. The paper doesn't have to be sharp, or even new. Paper cuts just happen. So why not *make* them happen?

We designed a pistol-grip chainsaw with the rotating belt held out away from the user's body. Attached to this belt are 100 sheets of 40 kilogram bonded laser printer paper, which are rotated at speeds in excess of 50 revolutions in a picocycle — 50 RIPs! (Rather appropriate, don't you think?)

But What About It Being Given Away Free?

I'll get to that in a moment. I'm not done explaining the features!

With 100 sheets spinning at 50 RIPs, a good swing at your enemy could generate *five thousand individual paper cuts!* And if each cut generates just one small drop (0.05 cc) of blood in five picocycles ... well, you can do the math.

How Do I Get One for Free?

Hold on, hold on! There's more I have to tell you about ...

... like all the wonderful safety features we have. The chainsaw stops automatically when you release the trigger, so you don't have to worry about accidentally dropping it on your foot. The paper is held out a safe distance away from the body. The power system is completely insulated, so you never have to worry about short circuits or nasty electric shocks! Plus, the handle is made of Slippo-Grippo™ foam rubber, so you're assured of calm, confident control in even the most savage of slaughterhouses!

... like all the zorchy accessories we have to make your papercut chainsawing even more enjoyable. We've got splash guards! We've got pinstriping! We've got colored paper! We've got noise-makers! We've got gloves and stainproof jumpsuits for a complete chainsaw wardrobe fashion statement that says "I'm a-gonna cut you but good!"

Tell Me How to Get My Very Own Papercut Chainsaw for Free — RIGHT NOW!

My, we are being excitable today, aren't we?

To get your FREE Papercut Chainsaw, simply order four items from this catalog. That's all there is! But this offer ends at midnight-cycle tonightcycle! If you beat the deadline, the Papercut Chainsaw will be shipped to you FREE OF CHARGE!

Important Note

The following is to be read only by lowlife cheapskates who try to rip us off.

These four items must be main catalog items. Accessories do not count. So don't try to rip us off by ordering the Assault Shaker, the Assault Shaker Shoulder Strap, the Assault Shaker Bayonet, and the Assault Shaker Condiment Tray. It won't work. And if you try it anyway, in spite of all our warnings, we'll give you a Papercut Chainsaw — business end first. Don't think we're not serious. Remember who you're dealing with, bub.

Important Note Two

If you're not trying to rip us off, please ignore the previous paragraph, and send us a letter explaining how you got the wrong catalog. This catalog is for cheapskates, not for you.

Not only that, but if you order a Papercut Chainsaw, you can also take advantage of our hypercool bonus offer!

What? A Bonus Offer?

That's right! If you order now, we'll send you a pair of our patented and fashionable Slippo Grippo™ slippers, the perfect footwear for fashion fighting, for only five kilograms of miscellaneous hand tools.

Plus ...

Yes, that's right! Two bonus offers on top of the free bonus offer we've already described! If you order before the first Twosday of Year Two of the Crash, we'll sell you one of our limited-edition, trademarked brand-name Leth-R-FCE leather masks! Yow! Talk about a fashion statement! And the synthe-leather can be stained in any of four colors to mix and match your Slippo Grippos! Act now!

Game Stuff

Papercut Chainsaw: 9M; tends to ignore or even shred armor (gamemaster's discretion).

This is another of R&D's ploys to make big bucks.

Note that all you have to do to get one of these babies is to order four things. There are at least four things in this catalog that can be ordered and later returned at no obligation. Yep. R&D knows that.

But first, the people ordering the stuff are bound to test it, and that'll get them hooked. Once they've used the stuff, they'll want to buy it.

Second, R&D can drag its feet on giving refunds. Or arrange to pester the customer so he won't get around to returning the item before the no-obligation trial period has expired.

Third, the Papercut Chainsaw is cheap to build.

And fourth, when Troubleshooters have the chainsaw, they're gonna want the accessories.

Especially the splash guard.

And *that* is expensive.

All of the Papercut Chainsaw's accessories (in fact all the accessories sold for any of the items in this catalog) are dirt cheap to produce, and thus have a very high profit margin associated with them.

So it's not much of a problem to give away the Papercut Chainsaw, when you can follow up by selling a cheap piece of plastic with a chintzy logo and bill it as a Custom Splashguard. And then the customer will discover the need to get Splashguard Wipers to maintain visibility during use. Then, a few monthcycles later, he'll have to buy a Splashguard Wiper Fluid Refill and maybe new Splashguard Wiper Blades.

(Isn't obsolescence wonderful?)

Then someone swings a bat at him and breaks the Splashguard, forcing the unfortunate to buy another one. And, of course, his Wipers were bent by the blow, right?

And, to top it all off, the paper gradually wears out and needs to be replaced. The parts are cheap, but the labor is dear.

And so it goes. That's why some cynics call R&D "Rich and Devious."

And now a few words about the weapon itself. The Papercut Chainsaw tends to damage any armor it's used on. One quick way to do this is to reduce any armor (including, say, reflec, which does not directly affect the chainsaw) by one column shift per hit.

The device malfunctions on a 19 or 20, sending sheets of paper flying everywhere, temporarily reducing visibility to near zero.

It!

Destructophile's Delight!

The moment is coming — in its own time, for all of us. The moment. The crisis that will determine the future. The confrontation that will decide the course of events, the altercation that will dictate who will have the initiative — the momentum. Will you seize the moment, or will your enemies?

When the moment comes, will you be protected? Will you have what it takes? Will you be able to issue the inevitable ultimatum with calm assurance, or will your confidence be shaken by the fact that you would not be able to back up your implied threats?

Eventually, it will happen to you. The more you have, the higher the stakes in the political games you play. And when you're in the big leagues, you'll be playing against some pretty heavy hitters. They hit heavy because they have heavy guns. And eventually, you will achieve such heights of power and prestige that your arsenal will fall far short of your requirements ... you'll be playing big league ball with a little bat.

When this happens, you'll need some insurance. You'll need a brand new weapons system you can count on to back your hand wherever you reach. A weapons system that can devastate the sort of opposition you'd expect to meet in transector politics. A weapons system whose range is no less than that of your imagination.

You'll need IT.

IT is the ultimate weapons system.

IT can satisfy your every arsenal need.

IT is not available in stores.

IT will destroy your enemies in the blink of an eye. And you'd better blink; the flash is awfully darn bright.

You want IT.

You need IT.

And in today's cutthroat political world, you can't live without IT.

You won't regret IT.

Does IT Really Work?

Judge for yourself. The following is a transcript of a conversation which took place in a secret conference room of one of our most valuable clients, shortly after she bought IT. She was having a face-to-face meeting with an enemy emperor named Khan-I who threatened to crush her simplex unless she allowed herself to be absorbed into his repressive confederation.

Khan: "Choose now: surrender or die."

Her: "You better retract that threat and apologize, or you're gonna get IT."

Khan: "You wouldn't dare do IT."

Her: "I mean IT, Khan. I'm serious about IT. IT's not something I'd joke about."

Khan: "I don't think you have IT."

Her: "Here IT comes, Khan."

Khan: "No, don't do IT!"

(IT explodes. IT wipes out Khan's empire.)

Her: "IT is finished."

You'll Love IT

IT is the most destructive device in the world. IT is so big that we can't actually ship IT anywhere. We must keep IT inside our temple ground, where IT dutifully awaits your order to fire. But rest assured, IT is completely safe inside our Temple. No one would dare try to sabotage IT, for we, too, have IT. You can sleep soundly, assured that IT is but a fingertip away. IT is watching over you.

IT is guaranteed to utterly annihilate your enemies or your money back! If you are less than completely satisfied with IT, we will cheerfully refund all your money, and you can consider all the casualties to be our gift to you!

I've Got an ITCH

IT is controlled by a small, hand-held device; the IT Control Handpiece, or ITCH for short. The ITCH is unmistakable. Imagine the fear you'll generate when you say, "I've got an ITCHy trigger finger."

Just point the ITCH and push the switch, and IT will do the rest.

How Much Does IT Cost?

IT is only a one-shot weapon, and IT doesn't come cheap. But IT is the investment of a lifetime.

IT runs complete for 300,000 credits, up front, cash only, no bickering. But IT's worth IT.

Game Stuff

Oh, come on! Give us a break! You think we could assign paltry numbers to IT? How 'bout damage column 73, with a +14 to the damage die roll and ignore armor shifts? Would that make IT any more appealing or powerful? Sheesh, you guys are so picky.

IT is a hoax. IT doesn't exist. Materially speaking, IT is utterly worthless. Well, we suppose the ITCH could be sold for parts.

Nonetheless, IT actually works, because people believe in IT.

See, IT is a simple get-rich-quick scheme from R&D. They figure they'll sell small little ITCHes for 300,000 credits and invent this myth about the doomsday weapon it controls.

By making IT a one-shot weapon, they can keep people from wantonly testing IT and thereby finding out IT's a fake. Thus IT has never actually been used, and R&D continues to sell them at a slow but steady (and profitable) rate.

R&D figures that if someone ever does try to use IT, the situation will be some sort of dire emergency, and when IT fails to operate, the customer will probably be killed by his opponents and R&D will never have to refund IT's price. After all, you have to be alive to file a claim.

If, somehow, the customer does manage to survive the crisis without IT, the ITCH has a built-in "malfunction," which can then be blamed on gross negligence on the part of the customer. Most customers will then apologize, pay a nominal repair fee, and vow to take better care of their ITCH. And even if the customer demands a refund, R&D has had the use of 300,000 credits for quite some time. That can accumulate a lot of interest ...

The interesting thing is that IT does actually have an effect, because people do believe in IT. If someone is threatened with IT, they will usually make some concessions to avoid having to deal with IT. Thus, since IT exists in people's imaginations, IT actually does end up having some value — a psychological threat value. IT has been quite profitable for some who have bought IT. They have received more than 300,000 credits in tribute and plunder thanks to IT.

I Scream Cone

Flavor. Variety. Big Explosions.

Hand-Sized Heavyweight!

Imagine holding, in the palm of your hand, a device with amazing destructive capabilities. No, REAL destructive capabilities. A small device, not very heavy, that could cause damage to something hundreds of meters away, despite the presence of intervening walls.

Imagine holding, in the palm of your hand, a cone rifle that weighed only 1200 grams. And not having it misfire. Not even a little bit.

Well, maybe just a little bit. It is a cone rifle, after all.

But this new device isn't! It's not a cone rifle at all! It's just a cone! A cone that doesn't need a rifle! It's amazing, it's fantastic, it's Risirch and De'Sann's all-new **"I Scream" Cone!**

A Message from the Head Priest:

I can see by the vacant look in your eyes that you haven't the foggiest idea what we're talking about.

We're talking about Risirch and De'Sann Temple's startling quantum leap into weapons miniaturization. A readily portable explosive device. A real ghetto blaster. I'm talking about a weapon that makes the cone rifle obsolete. As obsolete as The Computer. After all, the cone rifle breaks down. The Computer broke down. Now do you see why they're both obsolete?

The "I Scream" Dream

We were all gathered in the sanctuary meditating upon the cone rifle. It seemed like it was a pretty good weapon, but we knew that it lacked perfection. And perfection is what we seek. After all, here at Risirch and De'Sann Temples, we will sell no device before we test it thrice.

There were several problems that we were able to identify with the cone rifle.

One, it was big. Big, bulky, cumbersome, and a real pain to get into a confession booth or through those rotating glass doors. And you couldn't shove it up people's nose, like you could a laser pistol.

Second, it was difficult to use. After every shot you had to set it down, dig out another cone, load it , pick it back up and raise it to your shoulder, and meanwhile the Commies are charging and they're almost on you and the cone has slipped out the back of your cone rifle and fallen square on your big toe, possibly detonating or at the very least causing a minor explosion of profanity. Not fun.

Third, it tended to malfunction. Jamming wasn't that bad, but spontaneous detonation was a very unpopular occurrence.

We decided there was only one way to overcome these obstacles: keep the cone, but get rid of the rifle.

This was harder than it sounds, but we did it.

We developed a self-propelled cone. Self-propelled, so you don't have to lug around a big huge cone rifle. Self-propelled, so you can use it at a moment's notice. Self-propelled, because we like the sound of that word.

And not only is it self-propelled (ah, music!), but when in flight it makes a noise just like the weapons in Old Reckoning war vids. It shrieks as it comes in for an impact, terrorizing your targets. That's why we called it the "I Scream" Cone!

The "I Scream" Cone is based on the standard cone used across Alpha Complex. It has been significantly streamlined to increase its range and accuracy, and it has a large quantity of gentle explosive attached to its rear, which provides it with propulsion.

How Do I Fire It?

Simple. Just angle the "I Scream" Cone however you want and drop it. When the explosive attached to the back of the shell contacts the floor, the sudden concussion causes the explosive propellant to detonate, and the force of the explosion sends the "I Scream" Cone arcing in a beautiful parabola, right to where your enemies are hiding. The angle you drop it determines its flight path, and the height from which you drop it determines how much of the propellant explodes, and therefore how far it will fly. You control the horizontal, you control the vertical. It's like a tubeless mortar!

Note that, for your convenience, the explosive is rounded to make it easier to aim and fire. If it was a flat disk of explosive, angling your shots would be quite difficult.

The parabolic flight path of the "I Scream" Cone makes indirect fire a breeze! You'll have your "I Scream" Cone dropping over enemy walls, plopping into enemy foxholes, and bypassing most if not all enemy bulwarks. You don't even have to see them — you only have to know where they are!

But wait, there's more! Indirect fire can work in reverse, too! You can launch the "I Scream" Cone over obstacles that are right next to you! Now you can fire over a brick wall without exposing your valuable brain to hostile fire! Just hide behind your cover, drop the "I Scream" Cone, and let it fly! Meanwhile, you're absolutely safe from return fire! Won't your enemies be surprised!

The Only Limits are Your Imagination

We've already received reports from several proud owners of the "I Scream" Cones, praising the weapon's incredible versatility. And it truly is versatile. Some folks seem to think that the parabolic flight path would be a major detriment. If you think you'd be restricted by an arcing line of fire, read these true-life testimonials!

Slammin' and Jammin'

"We had been able to hold off the Blind Fascists repeated assaults for monthcycles with our supply of "I Scream" Cones. But now, during their latest assault, I was cut off from the rest of my team, trapped in an open plaza. Moving down a street I saw their brand new heavy assault tank. Above the tank was a giant net parasol, designed to catch our "I Scream" Cones as they fell. I could already see two or three caught in the mesh.

"I knew that the fate of my home depended on me.

"I pulled my "I Scream" Cone and slammed it into the wall behind me with all my strength. The explosive detonated, probably all of it, sending the cone shrieking on a botline path right at the tank's hull. I saw my aim was a bit off, and the cone glanced off the tank ... and hit the support for the parasol! The net fell, and the tank ate all the "I Scream" Cones caught in the mesh! What a noise! Haven't been able to hear anything since!"

Grand Slam

"They were just out of range, taunting us with their stupid accents and frying our minds one by one with their mutant brains. We needed a little extra oomph on the cone, just a little, when Case-Y had an idea. He tossed the cone in the air, and gave it a mighty swing with his rifle. He missed, and it blew him up. I drew the short straw, so I tried next. I gave that cone a powerful hit ... it sailed through the air ... grand slam! Whatever that means."

What a Kick

"Water covered the floor to a depth of 10 centimeters. There was no way dropping the "I Scream" Cone would work. So I dropped it like football players I'd seen in Old Reckoning vidtapes, and punted the cone. It screamed, I screamed, the enemy screamed, and finally my side screamed in joy as the bad guys ran away. Everyone was so impressed that they all chipped in and bought me a peg leg. Gets you right here."

Choose Your Flavorite!

Cones for use in cone rifles have always come in a wide variety of shells. Our extensive research has shown that only a few of these were used very often in the field, hence it is these few that we have taken the pains to recreate in "I Scream" format.

Rocky Road: So named for the rubble it creates on thoroughfares, this high explosive shell packs quite a wallop!

Chocolate Chip: So named because when you use it, your enemies will "chuck a lot of chips." This vomit gas is even more concentrated than the stuff used before Mega-Whoops.

Sherbet: If this armor-piercing shell hits anything, you can "sure bet" the target's gonna snarf it!

Waffle Cone: This will make your enemies waffle with indecision as they're engulfed in a huge cloud of hallucinogenic smoke.

Buying an "I Scream" Cone

Don't buy your weapons from Hog-O-DOS, buy 'em from us! Because *we* are the only *true* priests of R&D. And we couldn't say that if it wasn't true.

You can buy "I Scream" Cones by the pint (one cone), the gallon (four cones), or in big five gallon buckets (20 cones).

One Pint: 30 creds; One Gallon: 100 creds; Five Gallons: 450 creds.

Terms

Payment must be received in advance. Prices listed are for creds, double prices if charging on Alpha Complex Express card.

Game Stuff

All stats are like cone rifles.

Rocky Road: HE cone

Chocolate Chip: Vomit Gas cone

Sherbet: HEAT cone

Waffle: Hallucinogenic Gas cone

There are two additional statistics. First is the fact that the "I Scream" Cone can cause a bunch of NPC peons to panic with the noise it makes (GM's discretion for dramatic impact).

The second is that if the "I Scream" Cone is launched on someone (e.g., bounced off their teeth or punted or whatever) the unfortunate launch pad person is damaged on column 8. Same goes for firing the cone off antique furniture, etc. Typical Alpha Complex floors are too tough to be damaged by the "I Scream" Cone, although the cones will do nasty things to the shine.

The use of the "I Scream" Cone is a tricky proposition. It requires a new dexterity skill, Tubeless Weapons.

Start this skill out at the skill base. The greater the amount they miss their roll, the further off target the "I Scream" Cone is. And remember, since this weapon has a parabolic flight path, you can miss in any of the three dimensions. The cone might hit the light fixtures or a passing flybot. It might reach the apex of its flight exactly at the height of a nearby skyscraper and land gently on its roof. It might ricochet off the dome and go somewhere else. This weapon is a real pain in low clearance areas.

Troubleshooters will also experience problems trying to use this in places where there is shag carpeting, soft rubberized walkways, or grass or dirt. There simply is not enough concussion to detonate the propellant. Likewise, hitting someone in the stomach with the "I Scream" Cone will not hurt him like it would if you bounced it off his skull. Most citizens have very hard skulls. Thick, too.

100 credits worth of poker chips is a lot. Real mega beaucoups of small plastic disks. Not to say that there aren't enough, it's just that they're kind of hard to find in massive quantities.

There is one sure-fire place to find them: among the Crazy Neddies. There are some Crazy Neddies who earn their living running casinos in abandoned bars. The most popular one is rumored to be in WES Sector — The Black Gulch™ Saloon.

A whole passel of Romantics has moved into Black Gulch and are doing quite well, except for the presence of some radical pseudo-Commie vandals known as "Red's Kin." These guys occasionally raid the sector and naturally have the requisite thick accent.

Anyway, if the Troubleshooters walk into the saloon, there are only two ways to get hold of that many chips, because they're not for sale: steal them ... or win them. Hit or stand? (See the adventure section of this product for more details — hint, hint.)

The Gatling Laser
Lots for Little

From the Personal Favorites List of the Head Priest

When intentions alone simply aren't adequate ...
When just one isn't enough ...
When you want all the protection possible ...
When you need something extra strong and rugged ...
When you want to shoot all night without fear ...
Trust us to give you what you want ...
For you, and for whoever you care for.

These days especially, with Nature Babes coming out of the grillwork, you need protection you can count on. You want the confidence of well-designed protection, so nothing lessens your enjoyment of those meaningful evenings.

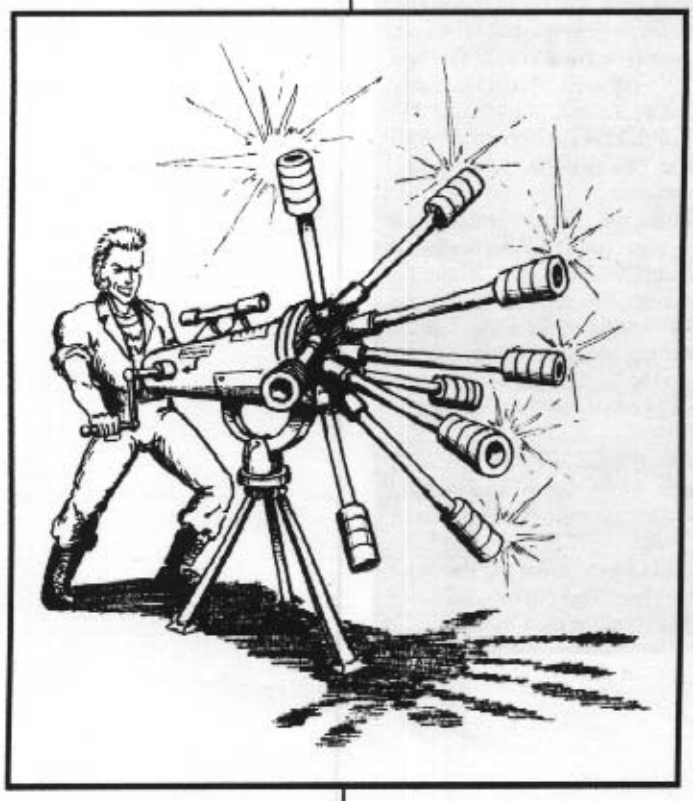
And yet, you want something you can use spontaneously, without long preparations that ruin the mood.

Because the mood is important. After all, you do want to enjoy yourself.

That's why you should buy the best in personal protection, something you can count on not to break at a critical moment: The Gatling Laser!

Because sometimes one barrel just isn't enough.

(Hey! You out there! Yeah you! What did you think we were leading up to? Hmmm?)



Crank Kill

The development of heavy personal armament has been sadly neglected, both during the tyranny of The Computer and in the Post-Mega-Whoops. Think of it, the heaviest weapons we have are automatic slugthrowers and a few flamethrowers ... nothing particularly devastating. Sure there's a few plasma generators around, but I'd rather live past the firing of my weapon.

So what do we have? A bunch of weapons barely capable of sustained fire, and with a laughable ammunition capacity and pitifully slow firing rate.

You need a weapon that can really reach out and touch someone; a long-range, sustained-fire killer that's easy to use. You need the Gatling Laser.

A-Gatling We Will Go

Lasers, though a traditional weapon in our society, have several major disadvantages. They are short-ranged, they have a limited ammo supply, and they overheat easily.

Yet laser barrels are plentiful and universally useful. Any laser barrel can be placed on any laser weapon, and it will work.

If the laser's weaknesses could be overcome, then the strengths would make it the ultimate in Post-Whoops weaponry. Short of the Obliterex 10. Or **IT**. By the way, **IT** is really the best thing we've ever done. You ought to turn to page 9 and read about **IT**.

More Fun than a Monkey of Barrels

In order to preserve the near infinite utility of the laser barrel, we decided to alter the workings of the pistol itself.

We built a turret that would accept eight laser barrels. These barrels are radially arranged for maximum cooling, and also to make replacing spent barrels as easy as possible.

The turret is supported by a tripod, which is the simplest yet most stable platform available (with the exception of a solid block of steel, which is not very portable).

When the handle on top of the turret is cranked, the turret itself spins. As each barrel aligns itself with the firing port, an internal switch is thrown which fires the barrel as it swings into place. Then the barrel gets a few seconds to cool down while the other seven barrels take their turn firing! (Turn, get it?)

The result is that you can fire your laser eight times as fast without fear of overheating! And that means you get more bang for your buck, and more kills for your bang! What a deal!

Far-Ranging Weapon

But we've even made the Gatling Laser better than that! The Gatling Laser's turret is improved even beyond the capabilities of the laser rifle and laser pistol. It has better range, thanks to our dramatic technical advances.

Game Stuff

Gamemastering a Gatling Laser is actually not such a difficult proposition, but before we discuss that, let's get into the technical details of this modern wonder-machine.

First, the stats.

Range: 150m
Damage: 10L
Ammo: 12 rounds at 4 shots/round
Malfunction: 20/shot fired

Yes, using the tripod does increase the Troubleshooter's chance to hit — give him a +2 to his skill. Unfortunately, most Troubleshooters won't stop to think that this is not a laser weapon; it's actually a field weapon, and requires a different skill than they've probably been using. *Ce'st la guerre.*

Most Troubleshooters will be using a variety of barrels on the Gatling Laser — whatever stuff they can scrounge. This means that each barrel will have a different color and possibly a different amount of ammo. Making a simple chart will facilitate record keeping for ammo. But what about the die rolling?

There's a very simple rule of thumb to help resolve this ... Murphy's Law. When a Troubleshooter fires four different laser barrels, have him roll all four dice to hit at the same time. The barrels lowest on the color spectrum get the lowest rolls (always). Thus, if this round the Troubleshooter is firing a YOUR Gatling Laser, and rolls a 5, 10, 15 and 20, then the Red barrel gets the 5 (and probably hits), the Orange and Yellow get 10 and 15, respectively, and the Ultraviolet laser barrel malfunctions with a die roll of 20. See how easy and brutally that works? The weakest stuff hits, the best stuff overloads.

But wait, there's more! Every so often, the malfunction will not be the laser barrel overloading. No, that would be too boring. If a player rolls two 20s in the same round, the second malfunction indicates something going wrong with the turret. Maybe the crank handle gets stuck. Maybe the tripod breaks a leg. Maybe the turret starts to spin around, shooting here and there. Maybe the internal switch malfunctions, so the turret tries to fire when there's no barrel in position. The opportunities are many and varied.

There's another small problem with the Gatling Laser. There's no discernable front. If it has been taken down and carried around, there's no tellin' which way it's aimed when you start it back up!

And finally, about that laser barrel offer? Those are the laser barrels that the priests have scrounged up. They're mostly lower colors, and many have been fired several times. Oh, well.

It has better accuracy, since it's tripod-mounted. This in invaluable at those long ranges.

It is more reliable, despite the fact that it has more moving parts. This is due to the improved engineering and fabrication used for all parts of the Gatling Laser. In fact, scrounged laser barrels are the least reliable part of this weapons system!

Order Yours Today!

The Gatling Laser costs a measly 250 credits, or its equivalent in assorted fungi (each five kilos or heavier). Just 250! That's a startling savings when you think about how much more effective the Gatling Laser is when compared to other laser weapons! How can you afford to be without one?

Plus, if you order today, we'll sell you a box of two dozen assorted laser barrels for just 50 credits more! Just 300 credits for a Gatling Laser and all the barrels you could hope for!

Why delaycycle? Order todaycycle! (Sheesh. The things we do for rhymes!)

Obliterex 10

Another Item the Head Priest is Proud of

You're laying in bed, just dozing off, when you hear a disconcerting noise in the distance.

The noise is getting louder.

They're coming.

They're coming for you. Personally.

There are more of them than there were before.

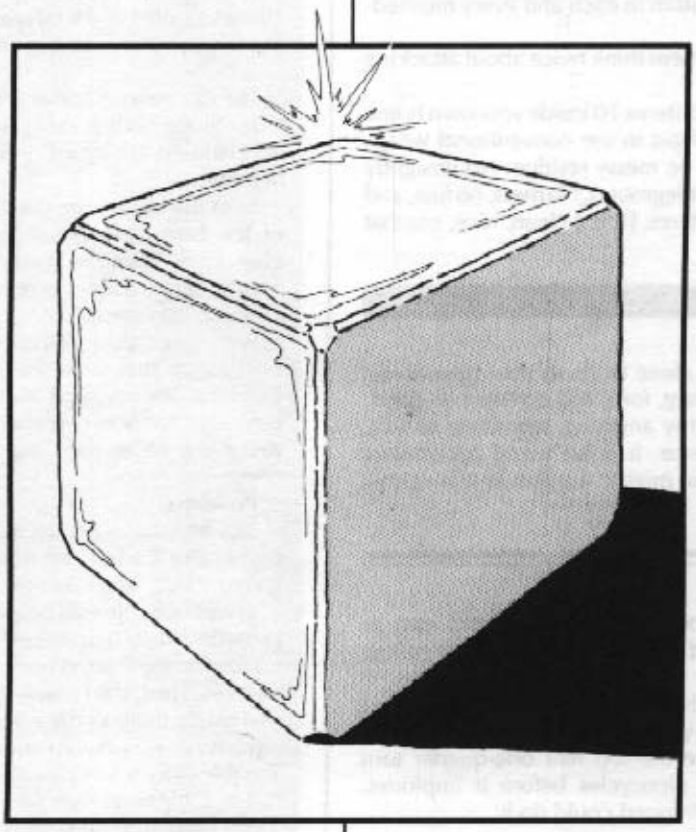
They won't be stopped by conventional means.

And even if you drive them off, they'll just keep coming back, until they overwhelm you. Because they want you dead, and they don't care how many of them get injured trying. They have no respect; not for you, not for themselves.

Just who "they" are may vary from clone to clone, but you know who I'm talking about. Everyone knows who *they* are.

I'm talking about THE ENEMY.

There's no doubt they're out there. Citizens with vision — active and aggressive people like yourself — find making enemies an inescapable part of the business. It just can't be helped. You know the old Joke-R cliché, "You can't make a mission without breaking a few Troubleshooters." If you're going to climb the ladder of success, you've got to step on a few toes on the way up — it's just part of the overhead, and we all recognize it. Can you help it if the conceited owners of those trundled toes selfishly decide to lynch you for it?



Ordinary weapons are of little avail. Once riled up, The Enemy will just organize in larger and larger mobs, against which simple laser rifles are laughably ineffective.

Even the traditional anti-human-wave weapons like grenades and steamrollers are not as effective as might be hoped.

Tacnukes are out, because they tend to ruin the neighborhood.

What you need, my friend, is a terror weapon. But not just any terror weapon. You need a weapon that will make The Enemy fear not possible injury, not even probable death, but assured INSTANT AND TOTAL ANNIHILATION!!!

You need the Obliterex 10.

No more bleeding martyrs! No more rallying cries of "He got Fritz!" No more bleeding-hearts yelling "Speak to me!" No more Famous Last Words from the injured leaders! No more berserkers carrying on the fight despite the fact that they're decapitated and should just fall over and die like normal respectable clones do!

The Obliterex 10 is the ultimate in mob morale mashers! The Obliterex 10 will wipe out your opponents, no matter how numerous they are. In fact, unlike other weapons, the Obliterex 10 gets more useful and more powerful against larger and more concentrated enemy forces! No longer will you be intimidated by the human wave attack! Let them banzai their way to their doom inside a black hole with the Obliterex 10.

Believe It!

Okay, I admit I was more than a little skeptical of these grand claims the research acolytes were giving me. I am very familiar with hand grenades and other explosives, and I know that large solid objects like the dense members of a dense mob provide plenty of shielding against blast effects.

Why, I've seen IntSec Troopers fire all sorts of stuff into a veritable army of citizens rioting for larger Chapstick tubes. Explosives and even gas bombs had a radius of effect of only a few meters at best, due to the incredible number of people in the area. There was always a rioter who was only too happy (see also: stupid) to throw himself on a grenade to save his buddies. And the gas? With so many people in the area, it was all breathed up before you could say, "resistance is useless!" Besides, have you ever smelled a mob? It's no wonder gas attacks are ineffective!

So I demanded a test. A field test that might also do some good for the complex. We went out looking for some social psychopaths who had nothing better to do but trash the houses we all live in. You know the type, mostly Death Leopards and such.

The Priestess in charge of the project was so confident of success that she alone faced the charging mob with three Obliterex 10s. A surging, angry riot, and one lone woman with three small metal blocks. We, the witnesses, prayed for her. "Though you walk in the hallway of the shadow of death, we shall fear no evil, for we are back here, safe in a concrete bunker ..."

Ten picocycles later, there were three fewer blocks, and about a half a mob was left trampling each other in their haste to run away. The witness team burst into spontaneous praise, and the hallway echoed with hymns of thanksgiving. Haleil-U-YAH!

The Obliterex Revealed

I later asked the Priestess why the effects of the Obliterex were not dampened by intervening bodies. She explained that the Obliterex was not hampered for the simple reason that it is not an explosive.

"How could that be?" I asked. "It's shaped like a grenade, it went boom ..."

"Boom?" she said, smiling. I thought about it for a second. "Well, more of a pop, I suppose."

"Exactly," she said. "The Obliterex 10 is the world's first (well, tenth) IMplosive detonator. The pop was the sound of air filling the vacuum created by the device."

The Obliterex uses powerful forces which defy description (which is to say, I don't understand it myself) to compress ordinary earwax to densities which boggle the human imagination. I am talking of nothing less than total gravitic collapse; a black hole. It's kind of appropriate, don't you think? Earwax comes out of a black hole and is later compressed into one. Our temples serve the cycles of the cosmos.

So anyway, this earwax gets compressed into a black hole, which then can draw in other, larger objects. Like The Enemy. But the Obliterex 10 does not simply wound, maim, mangle, or kill The Enemy. Or even make him barf.

IT UTTERLY ANNIHILATES HIM.

Drawn into a black hole.

Gone for eternity.

A charlie horse in every single atom in each and every mushed-up molecule of his body.

Now *that's* something to make them think twice about attacking you!

Furthermore, you can use the Obliterex 10 inside your own home or anywhere else you might be afraid to use conventional weaponry, for the Obliterex 10 leaves no messy residue. No unsightly anatomical curios littering your battleground. No mess, no fuss, and best of all — no Enemy! The Obliterex 10 is a clean, nice, combat device!

No Armor is Effective!

The Obliterex 10 uses gravity alone to crush your opponents! They can wear any armor they want, for it will do them no good.

In fact, the Obliterex will destroy anything, regardless of size, shape, mass, or genetic preference. It is an equal opportunity obliterator, just as effective against mighty warbots as it is against half-pint nature babes!

Easy to Use!

The Obliterex 10's square shape makes it easy to hold, easy to stack and pack, and it can be set down without fear of it rolling away.

There are no buttons or pins which can be accidentally pushed or pulled to prematurely implode your Obliterex 10. To arm it, just grasp it in both hand and rotate the top half one-quarter turn clockwise. You then have five picocycles before it implodes. Nothing could be simpler — an Infrared could do it!

Obliterex Blowout!

Blowout? Well, I guess blow-in would be more apropos.

Normally, we only sell the Obliterex 10 in palettes of four. These palettes are durable, yet easy to open, and provide a convenient way to store your Obliterex 10s. Though once you've tried them, I doubt you'll want to store them for long! They're too much fun!

That's why we developed the Obliterex 10 Shoulder Bag; an all-naugahyde pouch with shoulder strap that fits snugly about your Obliterex 10 palette. The velcro-sealed flap prevents your precious bombs from slipping out when you're chasing members of the opposite sex, yet provides quick and easy access to your trusty boom boxes should you stumble into something unforeseen.

I seem to have strayed somewhat from my discussion of our sale. The Obliterex 10 tends to have that effect on people. Anyway, we're selling the "Big O" in sample singles, so that you can try one out for kicks before you invest your hard-earned bicker goods. We can only make this offer for a limited time, and we can only sell one sample Obliterex to each adventuring party.

But the sample O-10 is available for only three standard grenades! Wow!

Then, once you have convinced yourself of the utility of this amazing piece, you can buy a palette of four O-10s for autocar tires massing just 40 kilograms! Boy, we're just incredible sometimes, aren't we?

Game Stuff

Experimental Data

Throwing Range: 30 meters or so

Radius of Effect: 10 meters

Range: 1/2/4 10

To Hit: 20/18/102

Damage: roll hit chance against each individual target out to 10 meters; utter and total annihilation if successful, otherwise no effect other than a strong and nauseating tug on your innards.

The Obliterex 10 does actually produce a microscopic black hole. Since both gravitic attraction and resistance to sudden acceleration are based on mass, the size of the targets has no bearing.

After the implosion, the micro black hole drops to the center of the Earth, munching up anything on levels beneath the characters. Then the black hole will gradually eat away at the center of the Earth, eventually causing the entire planet to collapse into nonexistence in about a thousand years. Tell the players after they detonate one. Then tell them about the civilization that arose from the ashes of Alpha Complex, the Beautiful Society, and all their art and music and wonderful buildings and how everybody lived happy lives and they all had to die just 'cause the Troubleshooters had to blow away a few enemies.

Problems

The odd shape of the Obliterex 10 makes it rather difficult to throw. Dock a few points from the throwing Troubleshooter's grenade skill, and take several meters off its range.

In addition, the split between the top and bottom halves of the grenade is very hard to see. It's just a hairline gap, and no care is taken to see that the bombs are all placed the same way in the palettes. Thus, if a Troubleshooter randomly grabs an Obliterex and twists, there's only a one in three chance he's holding it the right way. This means it might take up to three rounds for a Troubleshooter to toss an Obliterex at oncoming traffic.

The Obliterex often rips huge hunks out of walls and floors. Treat each surface (wall, ceiling, another wall) as a separate target at a range of five meters. If it gets hit, rip out an irregular gouge about five to eight meters in diameter. Note that unaffected targets in this area will necessarily fall through the floor.

A roll of 20 when throwing the Obliterex leads to the inevitable "drop it at your soon-to-be-vanished feet." Very unpopular among fellow Troubleshooters. And falling on the Obliterex to shield your friends simply doesn't work.

Oh, yeah, one last thing. If an Obliterex 10 slurps in a tacnuke shell, you get a miniature supernova. We'll leave the exact effects of this as an exercise for the astute sadist.

Mega-Blaster

You've Heard the Name, Now Feel the Power!

Or better yet, make the *other guy* feel the power!

The latest weaponry magnum opus from the gods features mega-power, mega-control ... and a name you're all familiar with.

Oh No! Not Another Mega-Weapon!

That's what I said when the surviving priests in charge of this project told me about this new weapon the gods had revealed to them. I remember a long time ago, when The Computer was still around, hearing about weapons called Mega-Blasters. Everything, in fact, was Mega-Something. Mega-Freeze. Mega-Death. Mega-Byte. Mega-Lomaniac.

Well, friends, this is the *real* thing. Not a cheap Computer-driven attempt to emulate the weapon of divinity, but the one and only fearsome weapon of the gods — that's right, a genuine Holy Terror!

We've finally perfected the Mega-Blaster and now it's available to *you*. Tradition. Control. Omnipotence. All at your fingertips in a hand-held weapon that delivers destructive power equivalent to weapons twice, even four times its size!

And I Can Get One?

Believe it or not, the Holy Brotherhood of Priests of Risirch and De'Sann have elected to make this wondergun available to those of you who have proven your loyalty and devotion. Best make sure you're caught up on your confessions and sacrifices of pagan priests ...

What's In It for Me?

Just wait 'till you get a load of all these features! Your friends and teammates will be drooling and bickering with you to get a hold of it. But YOU WON'T HAVE TO LET THEM.

Not when *you* control the Mega-Blaster.

Portability: If you're like me, you don't want to be weighed down by bulky or awkward weapons. Fear not, for the all-new Mega-Blaster is designed for simple one-hand use, massing just under four kilos. Practically nothing! And size? Not only can you can hide it under a jumpsuit or trenchcoat with ease, but the barrel is compact enough to jam down people's throats *without* messing up their dental work!

Prestige: Just shout "Mega-Blaster!" and your enemies will scatter — the *name alone* is enough to put fear in the stoutest hearts.

Simplicity: The Mega-Blaster does not come equipped with sights ... it doesn't need them! No need to aim, because there's no chance of missing. No longer must you fear overwhelming hordes of Death Leopards! Just pull the trigger, and the Mega-Blaster does the rest!

Power: A Mark VI ThermoNiCad microgenerator provides instant molecular fibrillation in a large area, making this the most powerful unit for its size available to any Troubleshooter, anywhere!

How Does It Work?

Did we say "instant molecular fibrillation *in a large area*?"

Yup.

The Mega-Blaster is not just your ordinary beam weapon. It actually spreads its area of effect over a 10 meter *radius* from the user. That's right, radius. Not only are you protected from rear attacks and flank attacks, but you can even nail those pesky insects, nature babies and Commies crawling through the sewers and air ducts below you! You'll never be surprised again, which is a great plus if you're like me: always looking ahead.

The Mega-Blaster uses the considerable energy from its power source to generate strong, yet rapidly fluxing energy fields. These interfere with atomic forces, destroying intramolecular bonds and turning your victims into a thick yellow spray.

I know, I couldn't believe it myself. So I demanded a test. (I can do that. You can't. There are advantages to being High Priest.) So we sealed an acolyte in a concrete bunker with the Mega-Blaster. When we reopened the vault, there was a spherical gouge in the concrete, and a sort of funny smell. And there, lying in the bottom was the Mega-Blaster. The acolyte had gone to his just reward. Needless to say, I was impressed.

What if I Don't Want to be Broken Down Into my Component Atoms?

What keeps you, the weapon's owner, from vibrating into a zen existence each time the trigger is pulled? Cole-G-ATE's MFP, that's what!

What's MFP Protection?

Cole-G-ATE, one of our best workers at divining protection, has developed the Molecular Fibrillation Protector suit, exclusively for those who use the Mega-Blaster. This simple fluoride-compounded steel mesh outerwear is stylishly attractive (I have three suits at home, each in a different color!), and its secret design dissipates 99.9 percent of the harmful energies generated by the Mega-Blaster. This means that your hair will simply stand on end while those around you are screaming off into infinity. And best of all, **your mates won't get cavitated!** — not when you purchase additional MFP Suits at a fraction of their regular retail cost. Just outfit the whole group, and *voila!* you can blast away to your heart's content.

Do You Sell Suits to Everyone?

There are certainly those sacrilegious folks out there who are rushing to scrape together the downpayment on a half-dozen MFP Suits — without any plan to buy the Mega-Blaster.

We hate to disappoint them. But we will.

In order to protect *you*, our valued customer, from the escalation such purchases would cause, we are offering MFP Suits *only* with accompanying purchases of the Mega-Blaster. This way you can be assured of the maximum destructive potential while you obliterate all the deadbeats and lowlifes who try to take advantage of the Holy Priesthood. Now don't you feel like you're doing a good thing? With such an opportunity to make the complex a better place, how can you stand to not have your very own Mega-Blaster?

Plus, with each Mega-Blaster ordered, we will throw in a stylish air filter to screen out those unpleasant organic smells so often associated with disassembled enemies. Small and light, these filter screens are a limited time offer, and they beautifully complement your MFP protection. Please specify nose size: petit, small, medium, large, or honker.

Cost

The Mega-Blaster is a state of the art, hand-held powerhouse that can blow the competition away (with the aid of a small fan). You wouldn't expect it to come cheap. But it does. Like the lives of your enemies.

The stripped-down Mega-Blaster requires a downpayment of only 200 creds or cred equivalents. 200! That's the same as a simple suit of Kevlar. You can also get the optional folding rifle-stock for only 35 creds, to enhance the comfort, versatility, and impressive looks of your weapon.

Then there are the suits. If we were to sell these on the open market, we could easily get 500 creds, 1000 creds, even 2000 creds for them. After all, no one wants to be dust in the vent shaft. But you, our valued customer, are special. With any purchase of the Mega-Blaster, we want you to be able to buy up to *six MFP* Suits for not 2000, not 1500, not even 1000 creds. We want you to have *all six* for only 990 creds, total! After tax and everything! That means that the downpayment on a full set of Mega-Blaster with stock, six MFP Suits and six reloads (400 cred*) for the Blaster come to *under 1600 creds*. Incredible, I know, but true.

* Reloads are 1/2 regular price if Mega-Purchase is made before the close of business on Fridaycycle, Decembercycle 30, Year 2 Of The Crash.

Terms

The Mega-Blaster's follow-up terms are among the most reasonable around: test the MB and MFP Suits for three shots or 30 casualties, whichever comes first. If you don't agree it's the most impressive weapon you've ever owned, just return the MB and *owe nothing more!* And you can keep the folding rifle stock as our free gift to you!

If you want the Mega-Blaster 'til death do you part, we'll require a simple month's worth of food for one person, or the equivalent in Fizz-Whizz (about 14 gallons).

Additional accessories are also available to enhance your enjoyment of the MB, should you choose to keep it. Ask your confessor about MB holsters, safeties, display boxes, decals, and cleaning kits, and get yourself on the mailing list for new accessories, like the forthcoming power cord, adaptable to all power outlets!

In the meantime, you can relax, for you've got the most powerful hand-held weapon this side of the Old Reckoning (where simple red button-like devices were known to kill thousands). So put on your MFP with matching nose filter, grab your Mega-Blaster, and get ready to blow those Commie Mutant Nature Babes away in style!

Game Stuff

Mega-Blaster: 14E/10m radius/A/3 Shots
MFP Suit: E10

Ah, the Mega-Blaster. What fun. It's an awesome weapon. But, it has a short range. Very short. Second, it tends to cause structural damage to the floor around you. Third, we sure hope you remembered to button your MFP suit all the way ...

The Mega-Blaster is becoming R&D's biggest money-maker. Note that clones must pay just to test it "for free." They pay 35 creds for an otherwise useless folding rifle stock which they can later keep as a "free gift." But that's not the most important part.

There are two types of people who test the Mega-Blaster: the honest Troubleshooter, and the selfish Troubleshooter. The honest Troubleshooter ends up buying the Mega-Blaster because he didn't realize the downpayment was non-refundable, and he can't stand the thought of losing 200 creds.

But the selfish Troubleshooter doesn't care about the 200 creds. He counts it as part of the price for the six MFP suits. Did you notice that the Troubleshooters do not have to return the MFP suits? That's deliberate. R&D figures they can sell the suits at what are actually high prices for as long as everyone thinks they're taking advantage of the Temple.

Eventually, everyone and their dogbot will have MFP suits and the Mega-Blasters will be worthless. Then R&D releases a new device (with accompanying armor). R&D will of course offer a cheap trade-in on Mega-Blasters, thereby getting all their material back for a hefty profit. Then the MFP suits will also be worthless, and R&D can pull the same stunt again! Pretty clever, huh?

Likewise, note the part that mentions, "a simple one-day service of the Priests' choosing, not to incur danger to life and limb, except where unavoidable or unforeseen." Need we say more? Those Priests can be so short-sighted ...

In Search of Fizz-Whizz

Certain occurrences shortly before The Crash caused Fizz-Whizz to be changed from an Orange clearance item to an Ultraviolet item, and all supplies to be confiscated and impounded in high security areas. High Programmers are not noted for their sense of humor.

Since The Crash, those storehouses that could be fairly easily broken into have already been plundered by Death Leopards. So. Which do the players want to do? Raid an automated warehouse, or raid a Death Leopard camp? Maybe they'll have to do both; the warehouse first, then follow the tell-tale trail of Fizz-Whizz back to Ollie-B-ABA's hideout ...

The Variety Gun

Because Every Termination Should Be Unique

"So there I was, innocently trying to crack the combo to the safe, when the so-called owner of the apartment storms in. Grinning, I turned on him with my souped-up laser pistol, only to notice that she was wearing an outfit made of small bits of mirror. My laser shots bounced off, digging deep gouges in the plush carpeting. Fortunately my laser can take a lot of pounding, 'cuz that's what it took to convince her to let me pursue my hobby in silence."
— Anon-Y-MUS, Freelance Thief

How many times has this happened to you? How many times have you been attacked by senseless psychopaths who happen to be armored against the exact type of weapon you carry? How often have you been forced to use your high-priced custom blaster as a poor excuse for a mallet?

Or you buy the best armor money can buy, and someone manages to find a weak point. How frustrating! Don't you ever wish you could do that right back at them?

Now you can, with the weapon that does it all — the Variety Gun!

Tell Us About It, Rip-U

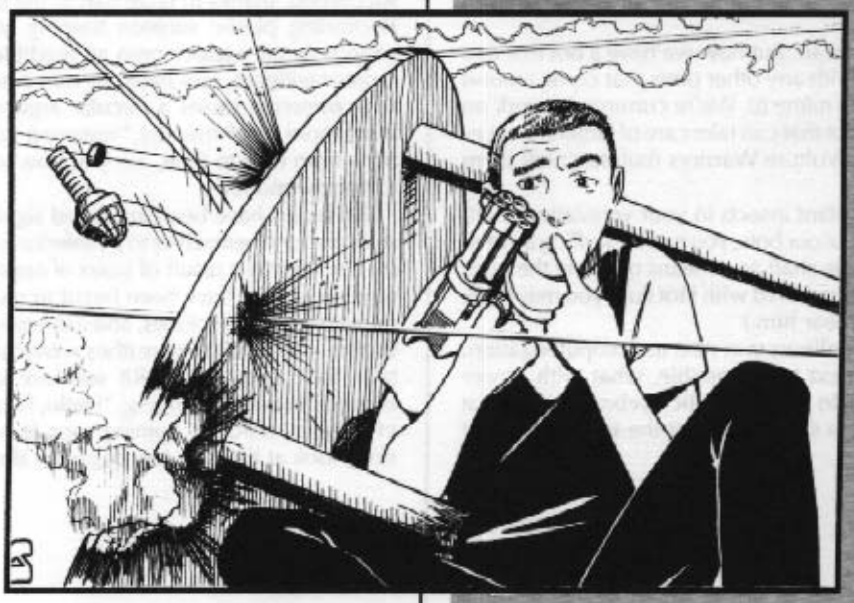
The Variety Gun is a new concept, but it's not a new weapon. Based on reliable, well-founded engineering, the Variety Gun will not malfunction any more than, say, a plasma generator.

Simply put, it is a hand-held (manipulatory-appendage-held or pseudopod-held, too) weapons system that incorporates all the small arms guns you love!

While no heavier than the average slugthrower, the Variety Gun's rotating barrel includes standard laser, slug, ice, flame, gas, and sonic loads!

Enemy wearing reflec? Switch to solid slug. Enemy not frying the way you'd like? Shake him up with a sonic blast!

There's a built-in underslung grenade launcher for that little extra bit of oomph we all need from time to time. Just flip up the launch tube, and presto! The grenade goes flying, no matter which form of lethal assault you've dialed!



Plus, just in case you're really against the wall and are dying for a plasma generator (literally or figuratively), there a secret button on your Variety Gun that sets it to Overload. Within 10 seconds your Variety Gun will explode with all the force of a plasma rifle — and you'd better have already thrown it at your enemy!

This unique safety feature allows you to escape even the tightest predicaments! This does have the disadvantage of destroying your weapon, which is why we recommend buying a back-up or two.

Buy your Variety Gun today, only 250 credits, or 450 credits for a matching pair with authentic imitation pearl handles! And remember — the Variety Gun is the spice of life!

Game Stuff

The Variety Gun is, as advertised, approximately as strong as the hand-held weapons of each type, but does not generally hold the same amount of ammo. The exact specs are:

Type	Damage	Ammo	Range	Type	Damage	Ammo	Range
L	8	3	40	F	7	2	10
P	7	3	35	Gas	Vomit	2	35
P(ice)	6	8	20	Grenade	8	1	25
E	6	5	30	Overload	14	1	3

Note that the Troubleshooter using the weapon must use whatever skill is most appropriate for the type of weapon he is firing. In addition, the awkward size and weight of the Variety Gun subtracts two from the firing skill of someone using the Variety Gun. This penalty can be overcome with practice, but then the user will again face the penalty when he switches back to normal small arms.

Malfunctions are kind of fun with the Variety Gun, too. When firing something like that, you never know what's gonna give.

So, although the Variety Gun only malfunctions on a 20, any of the barrels might jam, regardless of which barrel is in use. Or maybe the Troubleshooter accidentally touches the OVERLOAD button. He might not even notice for a few seconds. Let's have a perception roll ...

On an attack die roll on 19, there's a pseudo-malfunction. The barrel slips. It just sort of slips over to some weapons type which is utterly useless or very showy in the particular surroundings. Laser fire at night, say, or flame when battling in an explosives factory. Gonna have to tighten those gaskets again. Sorry ...

Ammo can be changed either piecemeal (one type at a time) or all at once (kind of wasteful for those types you haven't used). Ignore ammo expenditure and have the Troubleshooter run out whenever you darn well please.

And of course, you ought to liberally sprinkle your non-player characters with these toys. Deluxe editions, of course. That'll take care of their armor.

Bots

There's an old saying around R&D, "A clone's best friend is his bot." (Actually, it's not that old, we just thought of it, but we're pretty old, if that helps.) Bots help you get around, keep your simplex clean and your fellow clones healthy. Teachbots make sure young clones know what they're getting into, while combots keep the lowlife scum that inhabit other simplexes at bay. As the noted poets Rod-G-ERS and Ham-R-STN once wrote, *"There is nothing like a bot/ Nothing in the world/There is nothing that we've got/That is anything like a bot."*

So we're all agreed that bots are pretty useful things. But here at Risirch and De'Sann we live to make good things better and bad things worse, and we've come up with a new line of bots that no one — not even Bots-R-USS or Seers-O-BOT — can match.

Up to now, bots have been purely pragmatic personnel, doing the dirty jobs clones could never seem to handle without prolonged laser fire and lots of screaming. And while there's still a place for the basic bot, today's changing lifestyles call for the creation of luxury bots, machines that can take care of the small and annoying jobs (often while being small and annoying themselves).

For instance, how many times has your nightcycle snooze been interrupted by a buzzing, mandible-clicking, synthewood-chewing, centimeter-long engine of destruction skittering around your home and terrorizing your petbots? The dawning of the daycycle finds you, dishevelled and bleary-eyed, firing your laser wildly about the room while the little beast chuckles and makes remarks about your wardrobe (usually along the lines of "Mmm-mmm, good!")

Sound familiar? We thought so. But now we have a bot that can handle this problem, along with any other pests that come around (rats, bats, clone-in-laws, you name it). We're currently at work on an advanced version of this bot that can take care of larger menaces like dogbots, sheepbots and Vulture Warriors (but don't tell them that).

(Of course, if you have mutant insects in your ventilation shaft, and are too cheap to buy one of our bots, you can try stuffing a clone smeared with Hot Fun into the shaft as a means of luring the bugs out. If you don't have a clone smeared with Hot Fun, you may have to get a regular clone and smear him.)

Before MegaWhoops, cleanliness was next to Computerization. These days, cleanliness is next to impossible, what with Power Services cutting off the juice to the automatic eyebrow trimmer at inconvenient times, and aqua supplies under the soggy thumb of waterlogged warlords like Sim-B-ADD and Neem-O. What the unclean clone needs is a bot that can grind grease and grime into the ground, preferably without taking any major body parts with it. A bot that can bathe, brush, bob and bleach bouffants would be just the thing, and now R&D can offer one to you for a limited time only. (Primarily because we can't stand having you in the Temple for too long. Don't you ever wash?)

All of this may be very well and good, but what about bots for less trivial purposes? After all, bathing and scrubbing a Commie mutant traitor just leaves you with a clean Commie mutant traitor whose breath will be fresh when he blasts you into nonexistence. What about bots that can dole out carnage and bloodshed with the best of them?

You asked for it, and we delivered. But more than that, we studied the records of old Troubleshooter assignments, trying to find how best to help a clone in combat. What aspect of the enemy posed the greatest threat? Where did his strengths traditionally lie? Finally, we decided that the knees and ankles should be our target areas, allowing, as they do, the enemy to run like mad when he sees a clone coming. So we devised a bot that no ankle can stand before, probably the biggest threat to the lower leg since the invention of the knee (blasting) cap. Try stubbing your toe on this baby, and from then on you'll only be able to count to nine!

We've made other, more subtle improvements to our bots as well. We've tried to make each one look slightly unique, and have succeeded, thanks in large part to the discovery of a cache of Old Reckoning plastic surgeon training sets which involve sticking various facial features onto an inedible tuber. We've made them more intelligent, less likely to start smoking and sputtering every time someone tosses a circular argument at them. We've made them more "user-friendly," meaning your bot will slap you on the back from time to time, ask you how your day is going, and want to borrow money.

Bot brains have been improved significantly so that, while they still consider themselves to be inferior to humans, they now believe that mindset is a result of years of oppression by non-metallics. A number of bots have been heard to mutter "Bourgeois pig" at the retreating backs of clones, and a few were even apprehended trying to obtain MRXist software (they were caught because they accidentally took Grouch-O-MRX software and were seen wandering around the simplex singing, "Hello, I Must Be Going.") Look for bot civil rights marches, coming soon to a corridor near you. But for now, look at the next few pages for the latest in bots.

The Go-4 Bot

It Goes After Pests So You Don't Have To!

We Built a Better Louse Trap!
We Built a Faster Nasty Blaster!
We Built the Best Pest Arrester!

Louse (lôus), *n., pl.* **leeses** (lés'ez): **1.** any of the various disgusting organic lifeforms from Outside, typically found inhabiting air ducts, the space under the floor, the interior of walls, garbage containers, etc.: *his living quarters are all loused up.* **2. L.O.U.S.E.** (Lowlife Organics Underfoot that Should be Exterminated). See also *cockroach, High Programmer.*

Everybody has had to deal with the invasion of cockroaches and other leeses into Alpha Complex since The Computer's defenses have gone down. There are fewer bots and Infrareds cleaning hard-to-reach areas. Certain heretic temples are converting scrubots into new, useless and banally gimmicked bot types. And, overall, there are fewer clones around to combat the encroaching cockroaches yet more garbage for them to feed on, what with all the shooting that's been going on.

Perhaps your room, or your building, or even your whole simplex is overrun by freeloading crawly bits of organic matter. Perhaps you have cockroaches in your cupboard, mice in your mailbox, slugs in your stairwell, and ants in your pants.

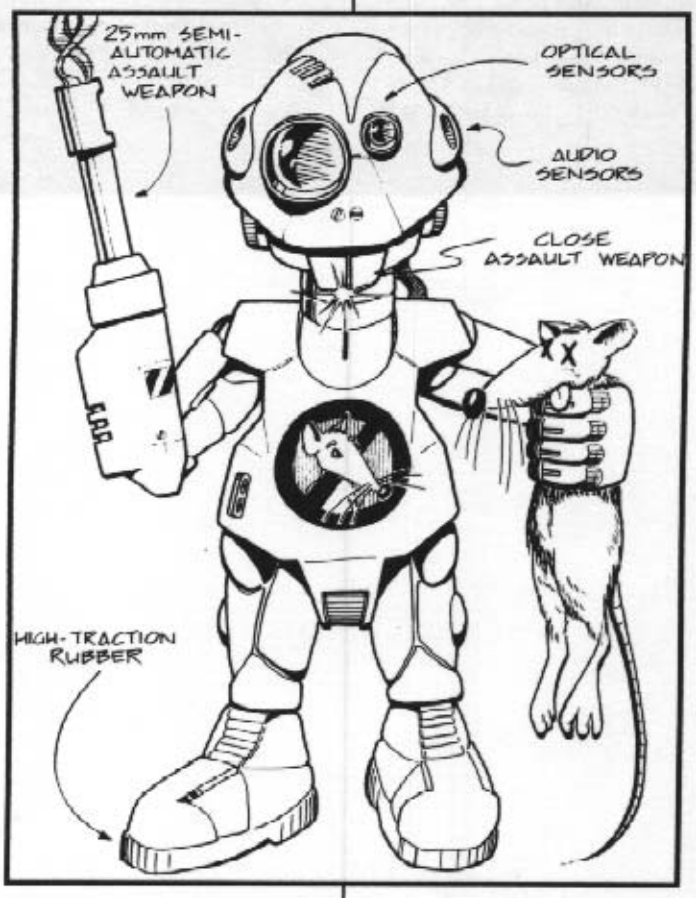
If not, rest assured that you'll have all these problems shortly.

Pestilence (the state of being overrun by pests) is endemic in Alpha Complex. Don't believe anyone when they tell you otherwise. They're lying. We're not lying. And we're not lying when we tell you we're not lying, but they're not telling the truth when they tell you they're telling the truth, which they aren't.

So you can trust us. Because we're the only true priests of Risirch and De'Sann, and we care about *you*, not your money, unlike the other (not-fun) heretic temples.

To prove it, we have developed a new bot designed expressly to handle your pestering problems. This bot is small enough to pursue the pests on their own turf, yet powerful enough to obliterate them wherever they are encountered.

Since this bot "goes after" the pests, we call it the "Go Fer" Bot, aka the "Go-4 Bot."



What's GOing On Here?

The Go-4 Bot is the first in a series of Risirch and De'Sann custom-built hunter/killer bots. It's an antiseptic avenger. A veritable vermin vigilante. It's a streamlined slug stomping scavenger, a paragon of pest-pounding perfection. a metallic mouse mutilating mechanical monstrosity — ah, ah, wait a second, it's on the tip of my keyboard ... *it's a customized chrome-plated commie cockroach-killing clockwork companion created for our colloquial creature-conscious customers.* (Whew!)

Gun: The Go-4 Bot's got a big one for its size! A 25mm semi-automatic assault cannon will take care of every vermin known to clones, and several that aren't!

Close Assault Weapon: The Go-4 Bot's razor sharp teeth will grind away at even the toughest exo-skeleton, when nasty critters get too close for the main gun.

Feet: The feet are covered with high-traction rubber, yet are magnetized to allow the Go-4 Bot to pursue its prey up walls, and down garbage chutes.

Hand: The Go-4 Bot's off-hand is equipped with a human-style manipulatory appendage to allow it to open gratings when in pursuit, and also pop the top off your Bouncy Bubble Beverage when it's through with a patrol.

Optical Sensors: The Go-4 Bot is equipped with optimal optical sensors, allowing it to see targets in light as low as one lux (i.e., not very luxurious surroundings).

Audio Sensor: The Go-4 Bot uses passive echolocation to track down prey in total darkness. In fact, the Go-4 Bot (like Troubleshooters) generally seems to work best when kept in the dark!

The R&D HK Club

Over the next several cycles we are scheduled to release additional hunter/killer bots, optimized for controlling various hazardous entities. If sales go anything like the sales of the Go-4 Bot, there will be long waiting lists. As a member of the R&D HK Club, you will receive advanced warning of a new release, and we'll hold one for you so you won't have to wait in line! You'll have your very own nifty new HK bot before anyone else even knows they're going to be released! Think of the prestige!

And, as a member in good standing, you'll have a five daycycle review period, during which you can return it *at no obligation!*

Game Stuff

Like all bots, the Go-4 Bot is occasionally prone to some glitches. Go pull out your copy of *Acute Paranoia* and select your favorite drawback, and apply it whenever you roll a 20. This gets especially bad if the Go-4 Bot forgets that the rat it's looking at is its owner walking down the hallway, and not a rodent-type rat crawling in an air duct. Tiny little foot-tall bots on a houseclean-ing rampage!

But that's what'll cause your Troubleshooters (if you'll excuse us) acute paranoia. The Go-4 Bot is much better at causing chronic paranoia.

Chronic paranoia is not having seen your Go-4 Bot for three daycycles, but knowing it still has a load of 25 mm HEAT shells, when you've been hearing a rat scrabbling under your bed sometimes, late at night. Chronic paranoia is hearing your Go-4 Bot hunting in the ventilation shaft over your head. Chronic paranoia is having your Go-4 Bot always aim at you whenever you startle it. Chronic paranoia is wondering if you're gonna wake up in the middle of the nightcycle because your Go-4 Bot ruptured another water pipe. Chronic paranoia is never knowing exactly where your Go-4 Bot is.

Then we can get back to acute paranoia, which is having your Go-4 Bot chase a tree roach across your room and the roach runs up the inside of your pants leg.

And every so often your Go-4 Bot will return home to refuel and reload, and generally act like a happy tomcat. Content and affectionate, it'll run and grab you another can of Bouncy Bubble and such. Then it'll disappear again.

A few words need to be said about the R&D HK Club. Members get a five daycycle no-obligation review period. During this period, they can see if they think the HKBot is effective. First, one or two of the five days is usually consumed during shipping — i.e., the five days is measured from the time it leaves the Temple doors, to the time it arrives back at the Temple doors. Second, the HK bots are very independent, going on eternal search and destroy missions, and they might not be seen for days at a time. Needless to say, you can't return an item if you can't find it. That's why R&D programs them to be so patient while out on patrol. They ain't (too) dumb.

Organo-Pets

Are They Live ... Or are They ...?

And now for something completely different! Risirch and De'Sann announces the ultimate in anachronistic frivolity!

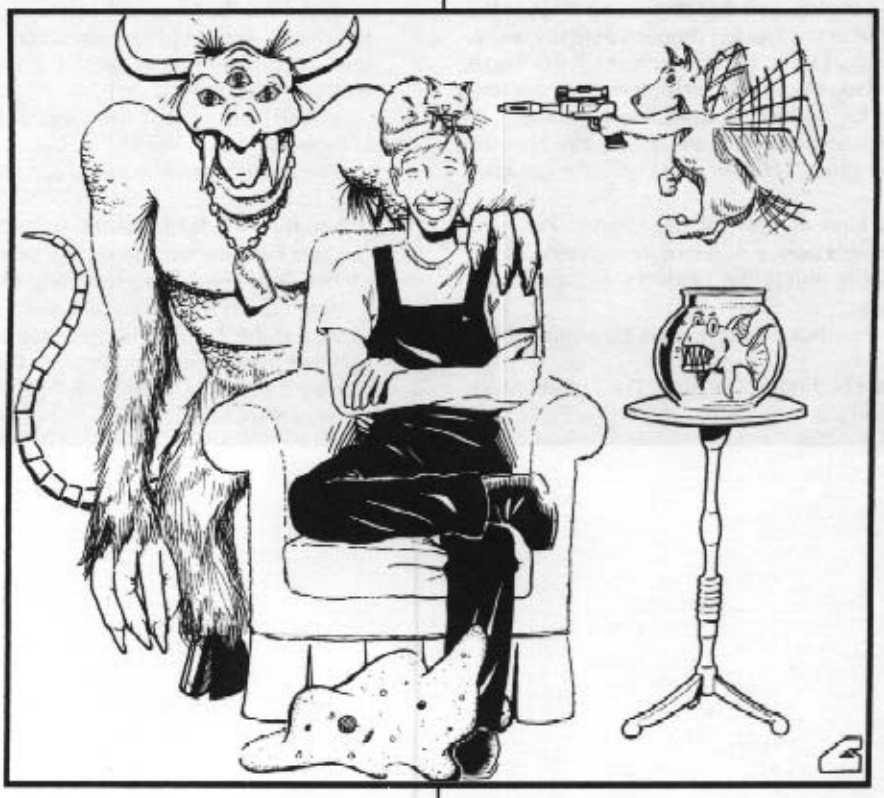
We all know that before the MegaWhoops, High Programmers all across the complex had captive creatures from the Outside. These would live for three daycycles or more before perishing, at which time the High Programmers would send out another expedition to capture another creature to entertain the High Programmer for the rest of the weekcycle.

These captive creatures were called "pests," a name which was derived from the Old Reckoning term for this category of beings.

Extensive archaeological research has discovered that these things were actually called "pets," and were quite common in the Old Reckoning. Obviously, The Computer restricted this privilege to upper security clearances, and only the High Programmers were allowed to engage in heavy petting.

We at Risirch and De'Sann thought that such a popular pastime, now on the verge of extinction, should be reinstated for the enjoyment of the populace at large.

So we went out and got a few of these things, and watched them for a few days. It was rather disappointing. One of the creatures escaped and ate three acolytes before it was killed. The others showed distressing inability to live in sealed glass containers.



Obviously, the harmful SUN beams prevalent in the harsh and forbidding Outside have mutated these creatures so badly that they are no longer eligible for pet material.

Never at a loss for brilliant, innovative, and creative ideas, we decided to build our own, advanced, genetically-engineered biological life form from scratch — exclusively for your gratuitous petting fun!

We just started with some generic living genetic code (salvaged from the Clone Banks' garbage bin) and added in the various genetic codes allowing it to exist in the modern world.

We don't know what it is, but it's alive! We call it: Organo-Pet™.

Unique!

Each Organo-Pet is an original genetic engineering triumph by one of our most creative genetic engineers! No two are alike!

Some crawl, some slither, some leave a trail of slime wherever they go! (Do you know any citizens like that?)

Some bark, some whistle, some just lay there and burblé. But we can guarantee you that each and every Organo-Pet is ultimately interesting!

Can YOU Solve the Mystery?

Current biological theory leads to the inescapable conclusion that the Organo-Pet is an impossible creature. According to our most renowned experts, the Organo-Pet *cannot live!*

But live it does! Not only does it exist, but it prospers! Watch your Organo-Pet grow over the monthcycles! And as it grows, it changes! We made sure that every Organo-Pet would go through several stages in its life cycle, undergoing some sort of hideous metamorphosis at every stage! Just when you're starting to get used to the appearance of your Organo-Pet, it'll spin a cocoon or some such, and emerge a few daycycles later as a *completely different life form!*

Can *you* figure out how the Organo-Pet survives? Can *you* solve the riddle of its pathetic existence? If you can, we may have a position for you among the anointed ...

The Care and Feeding of your Organo-Pet

Organo-Pets need only a minimal amount of maintenance. Just give your Organo-Pet a little bit of Organo-FudSludj and some water once a day. No mess, no fuss, no problem! Your Organo-Pet will love Organo-FudSludj! It's balanced and flavored to taste just like the best of whatever it is an Organo-Pet might want to eat! Really!

Plus, Each Organo-Pet Comes in its Very Own Xenorium!

The Xenorium is your Organo-Pet's home! It is sealed to prevent escape or accidental infection, and is made of glass to allow you to view your Organo-Pet from any angle.

The Xenorium is also equipped with automatic air recycling and waste disposal systems, and has a handy feeding access hatch. You can either squeeze your Organo-FudSludj into the hatch or, by simply disabling the safety mechanism, you can feed your Organo-Pet by hand (if you're very brave).

The Price

Each Organo-Pet is individually crafted, and therefore individually priced. Come by our showroom and pick out the ones you like, and we'll be happy to quote you a cost.

Buy yourself an Organo-Pet for those long lonely nights at the office! You'll be glad you did!

Game Stuff

The Organo-Pet is a carte blanche for all sorts of gamemaster cruelty. You can justify just about anything you want to do with the Organo-Pet's wholly artificial biology.

But before we start on that, notice that there is no price listed for the Organo-Pet. If one of the Troubleshooters actually wants one, you can quote him any kind of barter you want. A truckload of petrified Twinkies. Two dozen donut holes. (No, not the round balls claiming to be, the actual *holes*. How esoteric.)

If none of your Troubleshooters wants an Organo-Pet, have an employer send them for one. THEN hit them with the unusual barter requests.

You can invent any kind of stats for the Organo-Pet, and change them at a moment's notice. It might have poison fangs one day, and acid-spitting ability the next. It's amazing how often those things mutate.

Sometimes Organo-Pets put a whole new meaning to the phrase "hand fed."

The Thing. Alien. Call of Cthulhu. The Blob. The Triffids. More Schmegegi. Mutant brains.

The Troubleshooters come home to find that their (or their employer's) Organo-Pet has gnawed a hole in its Xenorium and smushed its way to freedom. The family scrubot is missing.

Somehow the Organo-Pet has managed to fuse its brain with the silicon scrubot CPU matrix, and now, hidden somewhere in the sector's plumbing, there's a slimy Cyborgano-Pet with a fetish for cleanliness.

(Worse yet, what if the Organo-Pet fused with a Personal Cleanbot?)

Untidy citizens all across the complex start disappearing. In ugly fashions.

And then the leader of the simplex (the former owner of the Organo-Pet?) announces a new program that will "really mess up our opponents," or something like that.

Now comes the return of the prodigal bot.

Maybe the Troubleshooters can use some spurious logic to play off the organobrain against the bot brain. "Look at that! You've just made a mess, killing that litterbug! You'd better remove the cause ..."

Great Big Tankbot

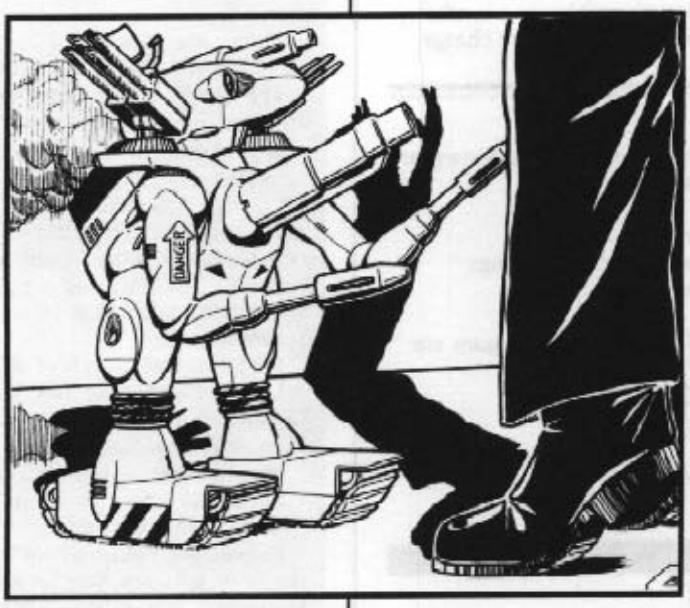
Another Favorite from Your Favorite — Rip-U-OFF

Risirch and De'Sann Temples is proud to unveil the new hot military item for Post-MegaWhoops Alpha! The personal war machine that's cycles ahead of its time!

This startling new development makes all previous combat vehicles obsolete! This is the best value in heavy assault vehicles that has ever been! Seriously! And since it's ahead of its time, it's therefore the best value in heavy assault vehicles that will exist for some cycles to come. It's only logical.

Look, I know we say that everything we have is the best value anywhere, but really they are! And this item is the best value of all our best values!

Yeah, I know, I said last catalog that the Submersible Tank was the best armored fighting vehicle that would ever exist. I admit it, I was wrong. And yes, I heard about those people who were less than satisfied with the inadequate watertight seal. I've heard about them, and maybe their tanks did let a little water in, but no one has ever filed a complaint, which is hardly surprising since no one's heard from them in a long time.



I know I said that we'd never top the Submersible Tank, and I admit it, I was wrong. This is a lot better. It's even better than the Submersible Tank would be if the Submersible Tank didn't leak like a sieve. Which it doesn't. I was just using that phrase for dramatic hyperbole. I mean, we really haven't had any complaints about the Submersible Tank from any of our buyers. At least not directly.

I also received hundreds of letters from alert readers who pointed out that the Submersible Tank's listed underwater speed was faster than the speed of sound, which is a pretty incredible claim, if you think about it. So I'm sorry. It was a typographical erorr.

Even if we wanted a tank that fast, I don't think we could "mach one." Heh heh.

So ignore the typos. The Submersible Tank is still a great vehicle, even if we are taking it off the shelves. Hey, we made a mistake. It happens. But I'm clone enough to admit it when my Temple goofed.

So since I'm so honest, you know you can believe me when I say that this new tank we're coming out with is the best tank in existence anywhere.

This is the one and only Warbot Model 425 Mark IVa.

Actually, It Isn't

If you want to be perfectly proper, this tankbot should *not* be called the Mark IVa. The current jumbo tankbot now on the rampage somewhere should be called the 425 Mark IVb ("b" for "big"). This is because of another typo that we had nothing to do with.

When the Mark IV was designed, it was designed to be a small personal combat vehicle. Unfortunately, someone accidentally wrote "m" instead of "cm" as the abbreviation for centimeters. Suddenly all the dimensions in all the design drawings had been scaled up by a factor of 100. Later that day, the clone responsible was run over by a stampeding herd of school kids on their way to lunchcycle, with their cattle prodbot right behind them.

Nobody noticed the error. The project went on. Several items were changed or adjusted to fit the new scale. The Mark IV was built, though the cost per unit had grown significantly past the original 100:1 oversight.

But now we know better.

Re-Markie-able!

We built the Mark IVa from scratch, using the real dimensions, just like it was intended to be built.

The Mark IVa is a compact personal fighting vehicle, just like it was intended to be from the start. It packs the most punch for its size!

Length: 0.75 meters. Almost a full meter!

Width: 0.25 meters. Thin enough to fit in a bathroom stall!

Height: 0.35 meters. The perfect size for an emergency footstool!

Weight: 40 kilograms, unloaded. The perfect size for running over clone's feet! And you can carry it with you! Just zip it up in a suitcase!

Speed: 2+ kph overland, underwater, or through the air (if dropped).

Armor: Neutronium steel armor plating with gaussian shielding. We're talking heavy metal, here.

Firepower: You want firepower? Hoo-hah, have we got the firepower for you! To wit:

- 42 swivel-mount small bore ice guns — so cool, they're cold!
- 12 turrets each mounted with twin laser carbines — for real hotshots!
- 4 turrets each with one automatic slugthrower — when the going gets sluggish, the slugs get going!
- 2 turrets each mounted with 7 bottle-rocket launchers — *insert sales pitch here*
- 1 huge cone rifle — which we like to call the MiniMegaGun!

Intelligence: A lot. Just ask it. Wow.

Other Neat Stuff

- **Smoke Generator:** thoroughly useful on the field of battle, and stylish to a fault on the dance floor!
- **Marble Scatterer:** good for tripping up the enemy. The Mark IVa is also a pretty good marble player on those long lonely vigils!

- **Vomit Gas Sprayer:** that's one way to cure your indigestion!
- **Can Opener:** because this is a thoroughly useful bot!

Built to Last, First

There ain't nothin' like the Mark IVa for durability!

The Mark IVa's DynaMojo fusion reactor provides years of power at a fraction of the radiation of conventional fission power plants.

The body of the Mark IVa is cast from a single piece of duraluminum. It can be dropped from a height of twenty meters with no damage. Except to whatever's underneath it when it hits.

The internal circuits of the Mark IVa are shielded and isolated. The Mark IVa keeps on fighting even when severely damaged.

And What a Personality!

The Mark IVa is of course equipped with a personality analog subprocessor, so you receive the full benefit of an intelligent, communicative servant. No one likes to deal with sterile-brained bots. They're no fun to debate philosophy with! Every time you do, you usually catch them in some sort of paradox and then you have to take their brain in to be scrubbed out and we all know THAT'S no fun!

In fact, the Mark IVa is so personable that we have taken to calling ours "Marcia." And we've even given Marcia a synthesized voxbox to suit her name and personality. No extra charge.

Infinite Uses!

Here are just some of the many ways in which our customers are using the Mark IVa Personal War Machine:

- self-portable can opener
- keeping people out of the kitchen
- protecting a wardrobe against younger clone siblings
- centerpiece for business luncheons
- delivery bot
- long-range drink icer at cocktail parties (those ice guns are great!)
- replacement for a NO SOLICITORS sign
- back massager for really macho clones
- jacuzzi motor
- bottle-rocket launcher for celebrations
- door stop

And One's EarMarcia'd for You!

We know you want your very own Mark IVa Personal War Machine! Everybody wants their own Mark IVa Personal War Machine! And they're going to sell fast! The problem is, this is a limited-edition bot. Once we've sold off the ones we've built, there won't be any more! Oh, no!

But our loyal customers need not fear missing this once-in-six-lifetimes opportunity to get a Warbot Model 425 Mark IVa, because we're reserving one for each and every customer we have! But consider yourself warned — if we don't hear from you before Foursday, Januarycycle 31 (Jan 1F for those still using the hexadecimal calendar), your very own Model 425 Mark IVa "Marcia" Personal War Machine will be fair game, and *will be sold to the first slime that walks through our temple doors!*

Now why would you make such a cute and powerful little bot suffer that fate, especially when the buyer is likely to be your worst enemy?

If you want to reserve your Mark IVa, just enclose the differential gear or drive train from a standard autocar with your order for our other wonderful devices. Then, whenever you want to pick up your Mark IVa, just drop by the Temple and give us just 3333 creds or the equivalent in heavy hydraulic equipment! We guarantee that Marcia will follow you home that very day!

The Mark IVa Warbot. Everything you could want in a Personal Juggernaut. And less.

Game Stuff

Isn't this special?

Let's talk for a minute about actual stats, shall we?

Armor: The Mark IVa's neutronium steel armor plating gives protection of All4, except for AP1 and Ms 6. The gaussian shielding even provides a four column shift against ECM weapons!

Firepower: The Mark IVa has less firepower than it appears.

The "42 swivel-mount small bore ice guns" are very small bore, being designed to handle all sorts of nasties from fleas up to small rats. They can only fire at targets within five centimeters of the floor. If a Troubleshooter held the Mark IVa at arm's length so all the ice guns could aim at him, the combined damage would be on column 9.

Marcia's "12 turrets each mounted with twin laser carbines" are tragically underpowered. Each pair of carbines must fire in unison, and they only do column 7 damage. But there are 12 of them...

There are indeed "4 turrets each with one automatic slugthrower." These slugthrowers can only handle solid slugs.

The "2 turrets each mounted with 7 bottle-rocket launchers" are good only for distraction. Treat them as an intimidation skill of a level equal to the number of bottle rockets fired at a given target (or small group).

"1 huge cone rifle" has one huge cone. There just ain't that much room inside the IVa's tiny little chassis. It can carry any type of cone, but the Troubleshooters should keep in mind that the Mark IVa only has a range of 100 meters. Or did their salespriest neglect to point out the fine print?

Ammo

Ice guns: Five rounds of all-out use.

Lasers: Continuous fire, since they draw power from the DynaMojo. But they tend to overheat (use standard laser overuse rules until they cool down).

Slugthrower: 30 rounds total.

Bottle Rockets: 100 of 'em. They whistle, smoke, and bang.

Cone Rifle: One shot.

Personality: Here's where the Mark IVa really shines. Remember how arrogant Markie was? Well, your Troubleshooters' Markette is as bad, if not worse. All in a very tiny, squeaky, yet still-trying-to-be-macho voice.

But a very **loud** squeaky voice. It has a megaphone. Glass tends to shatter when Marcia talks.

When introducing itself: "I am the Warbot Model 425 Mark IVa, the greatest line of personal war machines ever created. My neutronium steel armor can impede any weapon known to clone. I am capable of firing 20 tactical slugs per minutecycle. My Gigagun has trans-building firing capacity.

"I am powered by the latest in fragile fission engines. I can really motor on smooth or even marginally rough ground. There is no molehill I cannot climb. There is no toe I cannot face. I hope there's no sea; I cannot swim."

When confronting an enemy: "Ha! That rapid-fire MicroBlaster can't hurt me, you ignorant slime!"

See, in some fundamental sense, Marcia is aware of its inferior size and firepower and will be entirely candid when evaluating them; yet it always speaks as if it were bragging. How annoying.

Personal Cleanbot

When Clean Counts, Count on this Bot!

It's a Clean Machine!

Thrill to a plaque-free existence! Experience the boundless joy of not having greasy hair! Relax in the knowledge that you'll never have to wash behind your ears again!

Hey! Listen Up! The Head Priest is Talking to You!

My friends, let's just sit back for a moment and put the cycle-to-cycle concerns of life and death behind us. Just for a bit. Go ahead and post a guard at the door if that will make you feel more at ease.

I'd like to talk to you about a subject that all too often gets overlooked in today's complex of frantic laserfights and backstabbing. An important topic for everyone, a topic which has a far greater impact than most people suppose:

Personal hygiene.

You Clean your Laser, Why Not Clean Yourself?

Yes, it's true. So many people these days are running around like bots with their brains pulled out that hygiene is no longer simply neglected, it is *totally ignored.* Ignorance of hygiene can lead to bad things. Things like halitosis. Dandruff. Spontaneous borborygmy. Instantaneous decomposition of the upper body.

You think I'm just kidding, don't you? Well, aside from the above hazards, there are other complications that can arise from negligent hygienic maintenance. Things which can directly impact on your frantic close-in laserfights.

There you are, sneaking up on an outpost of an enemy simplex. Your mission: to infiltrate and destroy their arsenal, thereby saving your simplex and having a pretty fun time doing it. Not to mention earning some big bucks in the meantime.

You've slunk forward, and are about to give a guard's lungs direct access to the outside air with your trusty force sword. As you raise your arm to deal the blow, the ventilation fans carry the body odor from your armpit straight into the guard's nostrils. He turns and fires, wounding you even as you slay him.

You listen carefully, trying to ascertain if an alarm has been raised. Hearing nothing, you relax, blissfully unaware that the excessive buildup of wax in your ears has prevented you from noticing the tread of approaching combat boots. Almost too late, you see the guards as they run toward you. You turn and flee, hoping you still have enough of a lead.

Injured, you stagger and occasionally brush against the wall as you try to evade the guards. The enemy guards effortlessly follow the convenient trail of dirt and hair grease you leave smeared everywhere each time you touch an object.

In desperation, you duck into a ventilation shaft and crawl down the constricted passage. You seem to be making pretty good time when suddenly your feet are overcome by their continued exposure to the intense concentration of stench imprisoned in the socks you've been wearing for the last three monthcycles. Your feet fall completely off, impeding your progress.

Slowed, you begin to notice the air in the ventilation shaft is getting thick. Soon the pungent smell of your own breath becomes oppressive; it smells like last week's Spicy Hot Fun left to rot for a week among your molars (and for good reason). You begin to feel faint ... your nose swells to incredibly uncomfortable proportions ... you lapse into unconsciousness and eventually die from oxygen deprivation.

Hardly an inspiring death, is it? We certainly wouldn't want a heroic person like yourself to meet such a fate. But such hideous things can happen when you neglect your personal hygiene. Hey, we're not kidding. I once saw a construction worker fall from a scaffolding, land on his head, and slide over 20 meters into an open nuclear reactor. Things like that can happen when you don't wash your hair regularly. Seriously. Maybe even 30 meters.

That's why we are offering you the best in personal hygiene maintenance equipment. The single best item money can buy. The one and only, care-free, self-motivated, portable, flexible, adaptable, programmable, Personal Cleanbot.

The Personal Cleanbot (PC) is the ultimate answer to your hygienic needs!

Clean Up Your Act

The PC does it all for you!

Hair: the PC has rotary scrub brushes and storage tanks for shampoo and conditioner. It washes, conditions, rinses and blow dries in one sitting! In addition, it can be programmed to style your hair to your specifications! For added style, you can purchase a nuclear-powered curling iron!

Nose: the PC automatically vacuums your nose clean as a whistle, and keeps those annoying nostril hairs trimmed in a stylish layer cut. Tall people will especially enjoy this feature. You need never be self-conscious again! Special buffers are also available to give your nose a lustrous polish!

Ears: we all remember The Computer continually admonishing us to clean behind our ears. We now know that this is quite sensible, despite the fact that it was a decree of The Computer, as excessive buildup of dirt behind the ears can lead to irrevocable brain damage. The PC thoroughly scrubs behind your ears, and also has special shovels to take care of earwax. It's an audiophile's delight!

Mouth: the PC will take care of all your oral health needs. It brushes and polishes your teeth with its automatic water cannon. It has monofilament dental floss to take care of the most recalcitrant crumbs lodged in your gums. It has a small electric prod to exercise your gums. It has an amazing diamond polisher to get rid of plaque. It'll scrape the fuzz right off your tongue, and touch up your identification tattoo at the same time. It'll inspect your tonsils once a weekcycle. Plus, it has a small tank for mouthwash, so it can keep your breath smelling fresh.

Armpits: using our new Search-N-Destroy scrubbing soap, the PC will keep your armpits odor free! Not only will it clean the skin, but it will also wash, dry and style your armpit hair! (We do not recommend using the nuclear curling iron on your armpit hair. Nasty things have happened.)

Hands: the PC is a maniacal manicurist! It'll clean your fingernails with its automatic water cannon, it'll buff and polish your nails, and it'll scrub your hands 'til they shine!

Feet: the PC's industrial strength deodorizer ensures that your feet will be stink-free! It also has a small sock washer mounted on top, so your socks will smell fresh as a food vat at breakfast when you're through being cleaned. In addition, the PC will clip your toenails, correcting ingrown nails with its hydraulic crowbar. If your shoes could speak, they'd thank you for using the PC! And never fear, talking shoes are being developed even as we speak!

A Lean, Clean, Hygiene Machine

The PC is a marvelous example of modern bot design.

It is based on the standard Mark IV light scrubot, a small bot which proved its utility in cleaning the harder-to-reach areas on Alpha Complex. Small enough to fit on your face, the Mark IV was selected as the perfect size for the PC.

The Mark IV, as an independently operating series of scrubots, also had an inordinate amount of intelligence for their function. Many of these bots actually demonstrated advanced reasoning abilities like addition and subtraction. Additionally, the Mark IV already had all the basic hygienic and cleanliness programming ingrained into its bot brain, and so was easily reprogrammed, which in turn ensures that all PCs will be glitch-free.

We decided against retrofit early on, as the turbo-charged rotary scrub brushes were deemed unsuitable for a simple facial scrub. Instead, we re-engineered the Mark IV from the ground up, creating a paragon of personal hygiene automation.

Your Kind of Clean

The PC has several tanks for various cleansers. These tanks are rather small, but only need to be refilled every few weekcycles.

But when you refill your PC, you can choose from a wide variety of each type of cleanser, so the PC can easily be adapted to your particular cleaning needs!

Clean Up Your Schedule

The cleanbot is very safe and easy to use, too. In fact, it requires none of your valuable time! Now your daily schedule will be free of responsibility for your own hygiene. These extra minutes can be turned into extra business time which will easily recover the cost of the PC in short order.

Mounted on the top of the PC is a large, wheeled magnet which allows it to grip and move along the ceiling. This is in turn attached to a small motorized winch which can dangle the PC at any height up to six meters below the ceiling.

You can program your PC to hang around on the ceiling until you go to bed at night. Then, when you're sleeping soundly, the PC will gently lower itself over you, and quickly and gently scrub away the daycycle's accumulated grime, while not disturbing your well-earned rest. You'll wake in the morning with a smile on your face, clean and ready to face another profitable day!

Good Clean Fun

But you don't have to sleep through the procedure, oh, no! Experiencing a PC overhaul when awake is lots of fun and enjoyable, too! Think how exhilarating it would be to feel the PC's automatic water cannon cleaning your molars! Think how thrilling it would be to feel the PCB backhoeing the wax out of your ears! You can relax and enjoy the clean mechanical massage, knowing that your grooming is being handled by the best!

Or, even better, invite a friend over, then have the PC slowly drop down from the ceiling, grab him, and give him a thorough scrubbing! Boy, won't he be surprised!

PC Waste

The PC puts out a minimum of detritus. Its internal combustion engine burns the oil tapped out of your hair, and uses the grease it scrapes off your skin for lubricant. The soap and water are recycled by the internal pumps and filters. If your PC ever needs refueling, you are in dire need of a bath!

Clean Money

You can get your very own Personal Cleanbot for only 2500 creds or the equivalent in high-napalm Vulture jet fuel (five liters). Just send half the amount with your order, and the other half within one monthcycle.

Or, if you are not satisfied with your PC, simply return it and we will refund your down payment (less two percent per day to cover wear, tear, and consumption of cleansers).

And be sure to ask for our catalog of PC chemicals. These cleansers are easy to refill in your very own PC, and come in a wide variety. Customize your own cabinet of personal detergents, and be clean as a laser barrel!

The Clean Difference

There you are, poster boy to your people, sneaking up on an outpost of an enemy simplex. Your mission: to infiltrate and destroy their filthy arsenal, thereby saving your simplex and having a pretty fun time doing it. Not to mention earning some big bucks in the meantime.

You've slunk forward, and are about to give a guard's lungs direct access to the outside air with your trusty force sword. As you raise your arm to deal the blow, the ventilation fans carry the pleasant fragrance of deodorant from your armpit straight into the guard's nostrils. The aroma reminds him of his little experience with the Earth Mothers, and he closes his eyes in a daydream as you finish him off.

You listen carefully, trying to ascertain if an alarm has been raised. You relax; your keen ears pick up every sound within a kilometer. You smile in vengeance as you notice the regular tread of approaching combat boots. Almost too late the guards see you as you turn the corner and attack. You terminate them all, but the alarm has been sounded. You turn and sprint for the arsenal, hoping you still have enough of a lead.

The enemy guards are confused. Even the doberbots, with their keen sense of smell, cannot find your trail. You have the time you need.

You make it to the arsenal, a slimy building that reeks of greaser and stale food. If these guys had bothered with their maintenance, you'd have never made it this far. Fortunately, you have been foresighted enough to wash your socks daily. With extra energy reserves, normally devoted to fighting stink, your feet propel you nimbly over the barbed wire fence surrounding the arsenal.

Now you are certain of your success. The guards are looking in all the wrong areas; you are well inside the perimeter. Only one thing left to do: you arm the explosive, and move to place it by the door, a sinister grin on your face.

Suddenly, you are surprised! A fanatic guard, in a clean and pressed uniform, anticipated your actions and has set an ambush! He viciously fires off a burst from his laser submachinegun, but the deadly bolts reflect off your polished and shiny teeth, bounce back and impale him on neon lances of death!

You plant the explosive; another successful mission in your quest to clean up the complex. The arsenal blows dome-high as you make ... A Clean Getaway!

Game Stuff

Sure, the PC is subject to some malfunction. On a roll of 20, something doesn't work quite right. Maybe it uses the water cannon to brush your sinuses. Maybe it gouges the sleep out of your eyes with the earwax shovel. Maybe it just sets down on your face upside-down. Nothing major, just very irritating.

Overall, look at the PC as a vacant threat — seems dangerous, but isn't, really. If a Troubleshooter actually does buy it, go to great lengths to tell him how great he looks and how great he feels and how he shines and *almost glows in the dark*, he's so clean.

Then he'll get nervous. He'll try to return it. Have the R&D folks say, "But you look so clean and healthy! Don't you *feel* clean and healthy and hygienic?"

So he trades it in, anyway. His body, so weakened by a few days of decent hygiene, begins to ache a bit. He feels a little run down. His psychosomatics are gonna run full bore. "Your feet are feeling a little like they're gonna fall off pretty soon."

So he goes back and buys it again. Back and forth. Or he just grits his teeth and gets paranoid. And all over the concept of being a little cleaner, tsk.

Actually, you really ought to let your Troubleshooters do things a little better when they're nice and spiffy clean. Fudge a few rolls in their favor. After all, they spent all that money on something that does not directly affect the game mechanics. That's true roleplaying, and they ought to be rewarded. But don't do anything they can put a finger on. It just *seems* they're a little stronger.

But cleanliness has its drawbacks, too. Everyone else is gonna smell funny. Your Troubleshooters might become olfactory crusaders!

Getting a hold of the high-napalm Vulture Jet Fuel can be quite an adventure. Hey, why not dig out that copy of *The DOA Travelogue* and reuse the Vulture base?

The same fuel is reported to be used in the Warbot Model 425 Mark IV (see "Letters of Marque IV" in the *Crash Course Manual*).

Or maybe your Troubleshooters know of an unhygienic Armed Forces arsenal with lots of napalm bombs?

Wristwatcher

It's About Time ...

The greatest, most impressive, most thoroughly useful gizmo of all "time" is here!

The Wristwatcher.

Tick Tock Said the Head Priest

All across Alpha Complex, there is business going on. Business of every type: cloning, death-dealing, money-laundering, mud-slinging. You name it, it can be bought, and if you don't have enough, there's bound to be another clone who's got so much of it he could just puke.

Like Old Reckoning canned fruit. Here we were in our temple, eating the combat rations so generously donated by a passing troop of guinea pig — er, Death Leop — ah, true believers in the abilities of R&D devices. Really, they know how well our holy instruments work — now. They didn't really believe us before, but we made them eat the las — rather, see the light of inflam — inspiration. The light of inspiration shone brightly in their souls ... for a few microseconds, and they left all their supplies in the smoking alley down near the old recycling plant obviously as an offering, a token of their great respect for our inventions.

But as I was saying, we were getting bored to tears eating those bland rations, the joy of receiving spontaneous donations notwithstanding. But then we were called upon to invent a portable plumbing system for a citizen who had nothing but cartons and cartons of canned goods discovered in the ruins of an Old Reckoning "Piggly Wiggly." We negotiated a swap, his cans for our portacans and some rations.

Now we regularly eat Old Reckoning canned foodstuffs called "fruit." Sure, most of the cans were battered and cracked or a little rusty, but once you get used to the taste and texture of the multicolored fuzz inside, it's pretty good stuff. Be warned, though, the fruit looks nothing like it does in the picture on the outside of the can.

Unfortunately, there is one very valuable commodity that is in all-to-short supply in Alpha Complex. It can't be bought or sold; what you have is what you got.

Time.

There ain't no such thing as borrowed time. (Hmm, but if we could figure out how to lease it ...)

A Timely Invention

Managing your time effectively is very important. Time can make the difference between a deal and a failure, victory and defeat. Too little time and you'll miss your autobusbot. Too much time and you'll polymerize your Hot Fun when you're cooking.

That's why we have created the Wristwatcher, an all-purpose temporal information center.

Is it useful? Boy, is it ever! Wristwatchers are now mandatory for all the priests in R&D. Since we've been using them, we've increased our productivity and clonepower utilization dramatically! Our lives are so much enhanced by these devices that we felt compelled to offer them to the complex at large!

A Very Handy Device

The Wristwatcher has got it all, in a compact and easy-to-read format. You'd think that an item with this many functions would have as many dials and gauges as a Type 37t Superheavy Vulture Strike Bomber Parachute Transport Spacecruiser Mothership.

But NO! It only has as many dials as an Internal Security sector monitor room!

Ha ha ha! Just kidding folks! Actually, the Wristwatcher has only one — count it, *one* dial, which alone carries all the vital information you need daycycle to daycycle.

Dial a Fact

The Wristwatcher's multipurpose display tells you all of the following information — ALL THE TIME! You will never again suffer from a lack of facts!

Time: Standard time, 25-hourcycle military time, or "Mean" Green-U-ICH Time.

Date: Never shout "I'm late I'm late I'm late!" This reminds you exactly when you are. No, it won't *get* you a date with that cute nature babe, but it'll help you *keep* that date!

Math Coprocessor: This allows you to do simple math, interest rate calculations, and logarithmic differential equations for aerospace engineering in variable gravity fields! It also allows you to combine data input into a unified cohesive output at speeds dazzling to the brain!

Relative Humidity: Hold it next to someone you're bickering with to gauge how much they're sweating!

Compass: It keeps you from getting lost and it draws great circles!

Altitude: This can be combined with other gauges for meteorological forecasting or estimated time to impact! This also measures depth, so you can see how low you've sunk!

Bioreadout: Hey, if it's strapped around you're wrist, it may as well see how you're doing! Readouts for pulse, blood pressure, and arterial occlusion. Combine this with the time function and correlate the data to find out how long you have to live before you have a coronary from the stress of knowing how little time you have to live!

Horoscope: Find out how to achieve fame, fortune, and fast nature babes! Find out where you can see Hitler carousing with Bigfoot in an evangelical love slave commune with aliens from the Bermuda Triangle. All that neat stuff.

Metatemporal Hyper-Vascillation Cofrangent Factor: instantly determine the probabilistic slope stress modulation from high-energy weapons — in five dimensions! Great for those occasional firefights with creatures from parallel universes!

Etc: Wow, there's so much stuff on that dial, even *we* don't know what it all is!

Economies of Scales

You can select your units of measurement with three independent dials: dimension, mass, time. Choose from any system you like —kilometers/kilograms/minute, centimeters/micrograms/centuries, whatever units you need!

Or, if you need more old fashioned units, just flip the system switch for readouts in the Old Reckoning rod/stone/fortnight system!

Tick Talk

Not only that, but the Wristwatcher has an integral computer with on-line context-sensitive help *and a personality module!* Yes, the microcomputer's CPU is built around what we refer to as Didg-U-TAL electronics (that's sort of a private joke 'round these parts).

This personality module gives the Wristwatcher a life of its own! It can help you understand its operation, it can explain ramifications of readings, and it can tell you stories to help you fall asleep at night!

Finally, the Wristwatcher's personality chip is perpetually aware. It is always awake, alert, and checking its readings. It is a selfless sentry to watch over you day and night! It's a bot on a strap!

Time Out for Fun!

Plus, for those quiet moments when you want a little rest and relaxation, the Wristwatcher has a built-in game: *Time Invaders!* Little liquid crystal icons represent hordes of time-traveling Schmemegi as they attempt to take over Alpha Complex. You must stop them. Wave after wave will attack, until you are finally overcome. Shoot Schemegi for big bonus points! And sound effects? Aside from the typical arcade noises, we have the Schemegi explosion passed through an analog pain circuit. Nail one of them Pies, and your Wristwatcher will scream! Talk about realism!

This fast-paced megadeath arcade game is sure to enhance those quiet reflective moments — moments you will be able to enjoy all the more frequently through the proper use of your Wristwatcher.

Amazing Emergency Back-up Feature!

And just in case some hideous electromagnetic pulse turns your very own Wristwatcher into a bad imitation of formerly sentient modern sculpture, we have an EMP-proof reserve system so you can continue to track your time! Easy to activate this handy little device was the result of several months of brainstorming on the part of our intrepid product reliability board. Simply invert it on its swivel, and the microminiature silicon ball bearings flow through the orifice. A handy level indicator tells you how much time has passed — each microminiature silicon ball bearing heralding the passage of one microsecond. What's more, this unit can be reset simply by reinverting! Wow! What'll they think of next? Beats me! You'll just have to read our NEXT catalog!

Time to Buy!

There is no time like the present to buy your Wristwatcher! The sooner you buy it, the sooner you'll reap the rewards!

The Wristwatcher can be yours for one year for the low low low low low low low low low low low price of just 300* credits! Alternatively, you can pay just 200 credits worth of square bearings.

After one year, when you've decided that the Wristwatcher is something you can't live without, pay just 200 credits more and it's yours to keep!

Game Stuff

There is only one dial on the Wristwatcher, or Wristbot as it's more commonly known, but that dial has six hands (nearly identical in appearance) and countless tracks and scales, some a few inches long, and some even circling the gauge several times.

The Wristbot is also heavy, massing about eight kilograms (around 17.5 pounds), and it is locked in place on your forearm like a medieval iron gauntlet. It is impossible to remove without assistance (and maybe a crowbar), which can be a bad thing when the depth gauge is registering an ever-increasing amount.

Once the basics have been mastered, the Wristwatcher is relatively easy to use and understand. Unfortunately, it takes quite a bit of time to master these basics, therefore the Troubleshooters will have plenty of opportunity to consult with the Wristwatcher's integral personality. They will learn to hate this.

Yes, there is indeed a personality module inside the Wristwatcher. It is the digitized personality of Didg-U-TAL, a hapless High Programmer turned cybernetic timekeeper. If your Troubleshooters find calling him "Didg-U-TAL" to be too punny, they can always call him "Chip."

Slightly insane before his digitization, Didg-U has now gone really bonkers. He tends to free associate, and will often drift off on tangents. When activated for data analysis, players must avoid using picturesque speech, which he will interpret literally. And sometimes he forgets what he's supposed to be doing, and gives the Troubleshooters misleading or downright erroneous data.

Here's a few typical Didg-U-TAL utterances to inspire your tormenting to greater depths of depravity. Note that any of these might be said at any time for no reason whatsoever:

"It's 23 o'wristbot. Do you know where your next-of-clones are?"

"No, I don't have the thyme. But I do have some garlic and cayenne pepper you can borrow."

"Oh, no! If you do that, you will forever change the course of this timeline!"

"I was born a poor Infrared child ..."

"I'm certain that you are now entirely safe."

"For a good time, call ... me!"

"Estimating explosive decompression in 30 seconds."

Vehicles

Stop any clone in the corridor, dodge his attack, wrestle him to the ground, and ask him what he looks for in a vehicle, and he'll probably answer, "Movement." That's because the average clone is a monument to mediocrity, willing to manage with mere mobility when he could be sailing through his simplex in style.

But YOU are not the average clone, or you would not be hanging on every word of this catalog (as we know you are). You're looking for a vehicle that says, "This is not your last clone replacement's autocar, this is the new generation of R&D." Yes, it's motorized mania here at Risirch and De'Sann, and everything must go before the 2 AM models roll, tunnel, and swim in.

Before the MegaWhoops, transportation needs were easy to meet. A clone needed something to traverse the terrain in Alpha Complex, or amble through the air in the Outside, and the standard autocars and flybots were good enough. Since The Computer turned hard drive up, though, a number of new frontiers have opened for the bold Troubleshooter. The mysteries of flooded water purification plants, the wonders that worm their way beneath the simplex — all of these are there to be explored, fled from or blown up. That's why we at R&D (the leaders in vehicle design since, oh, last weekcycle) have come up with crafts to take you where you want to go, in style, comfort, and relative safety.

Are they expensive? Are you kidding? Why, that little beauty over there was only driven by a first-generation clone from PSD and ENA Sectors to secret society meetings on Onedaycycles. It purrs like a furbot, and we'll let you have it for only 2500 credits! Sure, it's corridor robbery, but for one weekcycle only, the Vulture Warriors will look the other way while you rob us blind!

Are R&D vehicles reliable? Hey, is the dome gray? For instance, we recently adapted an Old Reckoning device designed by one Cuisin-R-TTT into a multi-purpose land rover. We sold a bunch of them, and while we've heard reports that the drivers get a little shorter after each trip, we haven't received any complaints.

Are R&D vehicles armed? Can you think of anything we make that isn't? We thought not.

Are R&D vehicles safe? More this yearcycle than ever — all new models are equipped with inflatable syntheplastic bags that balloon out in front of the driver at moments of crisis so that he can't see what he's about to run into. Yes, rather than waiting for the moment of impact, our balloon-bags possess tiny bot brains that will react if they even *think* there's a chance you might hit something. Go down that corridor too fast, screech around that corner, and you'll have thick, suffocating syntheplastic in your face for the closing moments of the ride. At R&D, safety is our middle name.

Whatever you're looking for in a vehicle, we have it. Looking for storage space? Check out the new X1-Autocar, which can store two metric tons of equipment and still have room for a Troubleshooter or two! How did we create that much trunk space in a standard autocar? Well, first we took out the engine ...

Looking for four-hoove drive? Take a look at R&D's new Almost-All-Terrain Vehicle, which will go anywhere you ask it to, providing you're not one of those demanding types with ridiculous notions of what to expect in a vehicle.

Looking for flash? Test drive some Cyberpumps — sporty and stylish, yet so comfortable you may never want to take them off! You may never need to take them off! You may never be able to take them off!

Of course, there's more to a vehicle than wheels, wings, and mechanical flippers. Just as a clone needs Cruncheetyme and Hot Fun to get going in the morning, so too does a vehicle need fuel to get going. In recent monthcycles, fuel has been in short supply, and attempts at finding substitutes (synthealcohol, syntheseltzer, and members of Power Services that we didn't like) never seemed to work out. Finally, a crawler from EXN Sector ran into some trouble outside of our Temple (the other name for "trouble" is "a successful test of our new Destructo-Dew Drops") and began leaking synthepetroleum all over everything. We were able to clean off most of the priests, and then we realized just what we had on our hands (black goo, actually, but more than that, an ebon-hued synthegold mine)! That stroke of major explosive is why we are able to offer to you, the educated clone, fuel on the cheap.

As you might have guessed, the tremendous strides in transportation technology pictured on the next few pages are only the tip of the vibro-knife. But these are overstocked, overloaded and rapidly overheating, so we have to move them out now. Take our word for it, there's never been a sale like this! There may not be one now, so get down to R&D and find out for sure!

Almost All-Terrain Vehicle

The Transport That's Almost Worth It!

Your loco R&D Priesthood would just like to remind you Wint-R's coming and you'd better be prepared.

Yes, since the MegaWhoops (hooray, hooray), there have been a lot of problems with public transportation systems. In the Bad Old Days, we used to have nervous drivers guided more or less carefully along the vehicle spines. Now the characteristics of drivers and roads are reversed: the drivers are no longer spineless, and the roads are garbage.

But it's not only the other drivers that are hazards these days. Maintenance has been sadly neglected. No, terminating Power Services techs will not fix the problem, although it would certainly be fun. Terminating them (or even just using them as speed bumps) will mean there's less of them to fix the roadways.

These days call for an entirely different kind of vehicle. You need something better than four-wheel drive, better than positraction. You need something that won't have to stop for potholes or even well-defended checkpoints and road-blocks. You need something that can cross any terrain you might encounter. In short, you and your group need an Almost-All-Terrain Vehicle.

That's right, an AATV. The best in personal conveyance. Or, as we call it, the "Horsebot." This name was taken from Old Reckoning references describing male offspring of cattle riding personal conveyances very similar to this.

AATVs are Built Darn Tough

AATVs are quadrupedal mono-passengerical alittlebitofcargocarryingal autocars for The New Era. Built of high-tensile steel, AATVs are designed to last and last, even under the worst of operating conditions.

They are equipped with a 20 AATVpower engine, plenty of oomph to take you wherever you need to go. (How can one AATV have a 20 AATVpower engine, you ask? There are quite simply some divine mysteries of R&D that those uninitiated into the tenets of R&Dism simply cannot comprehend. So there.)

An Arresting Warranty

Our AATVs are built to last, and we're confident enough to back that up with a full muzzle-to-hock warranty. This warranty covers everything from rust-through to behavior to everything else. In fact, just about the only thing you have to pay for is gas. And you might find that you get gas a little easier when you're bouncing around like that ... so just don't eat as much spicy food, okay?

See your confessor for full warranty detail, and information on R&D's Extended Coverage Plan. This plan will even cover the appearance of your interior upholstery, provided you agree to limit your diet to our guidelines.

Just What Do You Mean, Almost All-Terrain?

The AATV can travel over all sorts of terrain. Its smooth hydraulic drive train gives you a gentle, rolling gait across the open firing range, yet the piston-operated legs allow you to traverse even the most irregular piles of rubble with ease.

But that's not all! We realize that there are many new water barriers around Alpha Complex. Many old footbridges have also been destroyed. You need something that can cross water obstacles, and the AATV is just the thing for you! The AATV is completely water-tight, and can float with no problem at all. Yet it is heavy enough to maintain traction even in water up to a meter and a half deep! You don't even need to get your feet wet!

What decadent luxury! Imagine yourself, high and dry and not even fatigued, awaiting your teammates on the far side of a ford across a sewage spillway, and the expression on their faces when they finally climb out of the water, exhausted, cold, and downright smelly! Boy, what a laugh!

Get Off Your High AATV

And even though the AATV is tall enough to get you over big piles of junk and across large bodies of water easily, it is not difficult to mount or dismount.

Plus, we have an emergency dismount button on the dash.

Warning: Do not test this button!

The R&D Three-Cycle Test Ride

You can test ride your AATV for three cycles — that's right, *three whole cycles* — and if you're not completely satisfied, simply trade it in for the newer model AATVs that will be out by that time!

Oh, What a Feeling

The AATV are designed with conse engineering. Although you probably aren't aware of it, you use conse engineering in your life. You place your nightstand in easy reach of your bed, you terminate

those who disrupt your tranquility. Likewise, everything in the AATV is designed for the maximum pleasure of you, the passenger. For if the AATV isn't fun to ride, what good is it?

Just slip into the durable, padded naugahyde seats, stretch out your legs, and marvel at the incredible headroom in your AATV. Then, when you're good and ready, start it up. Its ride is smooth and dreamy. And quiet? There's no road noise at all! The AATV provides a ride so smooth, you could split an atom in it!

Quantity is Job One

Don't you fret that you'll be unable to snatch up an AATV or two before everyone else does! We've got plenty, because we want to ensure that everyone who wants an AATV can get one. Because here at R&D, Profi — er, Quantity is Job One.

Now That's an AATV of a Different Color!

We've got AATVs in every style imaginable! Just pick your colors, and pick your style. Sporty Mustang. Rough-riding Maverick. Utilitarian Pinto. Urban Colt. Bottom-of-the-line Mule. We've got it all! And we can customize the interior to your heart's content! (Fuzzy Dice extra.)

We're Just AATVing Around!

But the AATV is more than just a packmulebot! It's great fun and a wonderful way to spend the day! Just grab a few of your friends, load the saddle compartments with Algae Beer, mount up on the AATVs, and spend a day in the HIH country, stampeding scrubots, littering, and generally wreaking havoc on the environment!

Not only that, but R&D is going one step beyond to further the use of the AATV as a recreational vehicle! We're a-gonna hold a rodeo! That's right, people who stick fingers in bovine animals! A rodeo! We've got a whole lotta events planned!

Busto Broncing: See how long you can stay in the saddle on this short-circuited AATV! This ain't no child's Rockinghorsebot!

AATVshoe Toss: Two contestants throw AATVshoes at each other. Last one conscious wins!

Chilly Cook-off: Lots of Cold Fun for everyone!

Unnatural Noisemaking: How strange a sound can you make? Warning: our very own Sue-Y is pretty darn good, pardner!

Straight from the AATVs Mouth

The AATV also has a new, innovative means of acquiring emergency fuel! You won't believe it!

So we're not going to tell you!

Or maybe we will.

See, the AATV is equipped with R&D's latest whiz-bang fuel production device: the grazer. The grazer provides low-grade fuel to the AATV, by catalytic digestion of the various weedy organic growths we've all seen sprouting up hither and yon throughout the complex since the demise of You-Know-Who. Now you can provide your AATV with much-needed fuel and make the complex a less organic place at the same time! Woah!

But don't look a gift AATV in the mouth — it gets pretty disgusting when the grazer is in action!

Caution: These Vehicles will Keep You in Stitches

Styled after the Three-wheel Death Machines of the Old Reckoning, these new AATVs are dramatically improved. After all, the best way to survive rolling and burning in a three-wheel Death Machine is to not get into it in the first place.

So, unlike the Suziku Seppuku and other legendary kamikaze cars used to the mad max in the Old Reckoning Road Wars, we did not equip the AATV with nasty, bad, and unreliable wheels. The AATV has four (count them, four) legs with Supergrippo AATVshoes! Four legs ensure that you, the post-modern test-driver, will have sure-footed traction wherever your road might lead you.

Not only that, but we have all-weather AATVshoes available, just in case you have some plans to go Outside. These super traction shoes will keep your footing sure in all the inclement meteorological events you might encounter.

I Want My AATV

Hey, there's only one place you can get an AATV, and you know where that is! And since the AATV will soon be replacing every other vehicle known to clone, bring in your old autocar, and we'll talk trade-in! But hurry! Prices go up soon.

Hold your AATVs! Did we say prices will go up? Yessirree, 'cause that's when we'll get the new models in, and the old models will become collector's items! Ooh!

Game Stuff

The AATV is a mixed blessing. While indeed able to overcome obstacles that would balk an ordinary autocar, it is as reliable as a maladjusted donkey. Stubborn, that is.

The fact that the saddles are designed to keep the rider's legs inside the cockpit makes it difficult for a rider to maintain his balance during rough riding — the grip your legs provide while wrapped around an equine body simply isn't there. So, if someone tries to jump, buck, gallop, or otherwise handle a horsebot in an adventuresome way, force him to make an agility roll. How tough the roll is depends mainly on three factors: how difficult and jolting the maneuver is, how experienced the rider is, and how many potatoe chips the culprit has filched over the course of the evening. If he makes a successful agility roll, he stays in the cockpit — but if it's *too* successful, he might not be able to get out again. (Did we mention the emergency dismount button? You *really* don't want to have to test it.)

True, AATVs float. They float great. They just don't swim that well, and neither do many Troubleshooters. So if they try to wade their way through a particularly deep ford, they might suddenly find their AATV bobbing up to the surface, unable to continue forward. And so, bobbing merrily along downstream, they become gradually aware of the approaching sound of a waterfall. There will follow a period of reverse bailing, while the Troubleshooters attempt to lower the draft of their horsebots enough for the AATVshoes to catch the bottom of the effluent stream. At the last minute, the AATV's feet catch. The Troubleshooters' perilous progress toward the waterfall is halted! Waterlogged, the AATV lumbers forward, with the now-soaking Troubleshooter sulking at the reins as he realizes his upholstery has been totaled. Then, a few meters from shore yet still in the strong current, the water on the interior of the cockpit shorts out the AATV. Uh-oh. How far can you jump?

There are other things that need to be mentioned, too. Like the side effect of the grazer. Phew!

Like the AATV's inability to move quietly.

Like how abysmally stupid the horsebots are.

And like the horrifying things that happen to opponents who get trampled (ecch!). Thank goodness for positraction.

Oh, and the different models? Who cares? Let the Troubleshooters buy whichever one they want, THEN make up some pathetic stats for it.

Mobile Gas Station

Service That Follows You Around!

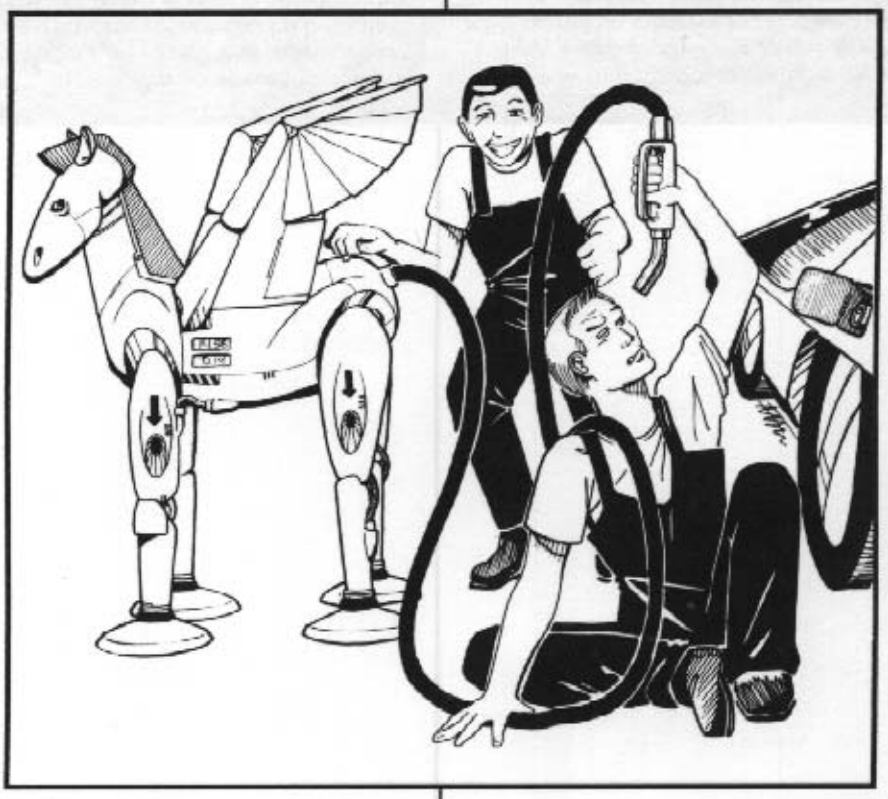
It's 0300 in the morningcycle. You're trying to get out of a hostile Simplex where you've been doing some late-night biological research. You've acquired almost enough information to write your thesis on hormones and their influence on human mental patterns.

That, and given the rank of your unwitting research partner, you might be in line for a cushy job. That is, once you can get accepted into this Simplex instead of having to skulk around like a Commie. You pat your Pheromone Gard in your rucksack as you mount your bike and starts sliding out of the courtyard.

Suddenly you're spotted! Not only do you not have citizenship papers, but you don't know the credos and you're out past curfew! But you've a few tricks up your sleeve to get away from those guardbots!

You rev your vintage octane-powered motorcycle and do a wheelie across the courtyard to the gate. Then, just as you're rounding the corner, the engine sputters and dies. The cycle stops.

As the doberbots sprint for their dinner (you), you notice the gas gauge reads "E." Now you have your angle on the thesis you'll never write. Hormones make people forget things.



This can happen to you if you are not prepared. Well, maybe not this exact thing — after all, we just made it up. But maybe something sort of like it. You know what I mean. Yeah, I know we're taking a little poetic license saying you might get caught sort of sleeping with a Commie or a mutant or something, but hey, we're trying to sell something here. So just ignore the logical shortcomings of the story and pay attention.

We now return you to our regular advertisement.

Don't Be Fuelish.

If the owner of a tank of petrol is nobody's fuel, he does nobody any good. Nobody comes, nobody pays, nobody gains anything.

Do you get the picture? Nobody cares.

Fuel is a valuable commodity these days. Everybody wants it, and those who have it generally aren't even willing to bicker.

We have been fortunate enough to get hold of some incredible reserves of fuel. We have all sorts. We've got methane (especially after dinner), propane, octane, pseudowood, and nuclear piles. We've got enough electricity to short-circuit the Mark IV.

But we're not fuelish. We're gonna share it with you, our valuable customer.

But what good does that do those of you who purchase our items through the mail? You don't very much want to keep a couple weekcycles' fuel on hand at all times, do you? Think of what would happen if you accidentally struck a spark! And you don't want to risk driving across the complex to get a handful of uranium pellets for your shoeshinebot, do you? That'd be ridiculous!

And even mail order wouldn't do you any good if your bot or vehicle ran out of juice a long long way from home.

What you need is a means of getting fuel wherever you are, whenever you're there, and in whatever form you need. What YOU need is Risirch and De'Sann's amazing new Mobile Gas Station!

Mobilize Yourself!

Your Mobile Gas Station will be tuned to your own unique frequency. It will wait here, with us, until you call. Then it will home in on your transmission, bearing a small supply of whatever fuel you need.

Mobile Gas Stations are small, so they can go anywhere you can!

Mobile Gas Stations can carry any type of fuel, so you don't need to buy a different one for each of your vehicles!

Mobile Gas Stations have miniature air pumps to fix your flats!

And the Mobile Gas Station is being sold for a mere 200 credits! Heck! The parts of a Mobile Gas Station cost more than that!

I can hear you asking now, "How can they make a profit if they sell it for more than it costs?" Well, folks, We'll tell you. But keep it secret.

We're hoping to make it up on volume.

Aha! The Fuel Must Be Real Expensive!

Nope. All we ask is that when you get some fuel from the Mobile Gas Station, you return the same amount of fuel at your earliest convenience. Or, if you wish, we can just bill you.

Game Stuff

Mobile Gas Stations are unusual things, but the most important thing to remember about them is that they don't prevent you from running out of gas (or whatever fuel you're using!) They just make it less painful when you do run out. In fact, when people own a Mobile Gas Station, their overconfidence tends to make them run out of gas more often.

People don't actually own a Mobile Gas Station. They just rent a piece of it. Since the Mobile Gas Stations spend most of their time at the Temple waiting for someone to run out of fuel, R&D can afford to "sell" them at less than cost.

Then there's the MGS's that dribble a little fuel wherever they go."She'll be riding Wildfire ..."

MGSs could also be reprogrammed to drop spent nuclear pellets on the enemy's heads. This is known as an MGS headache. Now they're cookin'.

There's another problem with the Mobile Gas Station. It won't be too long before the Death Leopards catch on to the fact that following a MGS inevitably leads to a stranded motorist or powerless bot. Now what would a bunch of bored Death Leopards do to a stranded motorist or powerless bot? The mind boggles! What a handy plot device to get your Troubleshooters into your next scenario!

How 'bout the Death Leopards attack the stranded Troubleshooters (whose autocar innocently ran out of gas bare minutes after they bought the MGS). The MGS runs away during the firefight, and the Team's MGS transmitter is destroyed. Captured, the Troubleshooters are dragged before the Leopards' Lead Singer.

He makes the Troubleshooters capture another MGS (chance for the Troubleshooters to launch an ambush of their own), which the Troubleshooters recognize as their own. Too bad, the Leopards are waiting nearby and take it away. Somehow or other the Team learns that the MGS, their MGS has been released back to R&D with a time bomb in the empty fuel tank. It is timed to go off when the MGS arrives back in the R&D fuel depot. The resulting fireball is expected to roast half-a-million marshmallows.

Will the Troubleshooters save R&D? If they try, the priests are going to be suspicious. Inquisition time. Send in the clones.

Maybe the next set gets over the temple walls and can try to stop the bomb. Unfortunately, the Death Leopards had no way of knowing the Priests don't keep the MGSs near the fuel depot. The bomb will do no more damage than a randomly thrown grenade. Except maybe to a clone who's trying to toss it out the window ...

Then it's Inquisition time again!

Yellow Submersible

Now's Your Big Chance to be a Sub Human!

That's right, folks! The time is now! Bigger, better, wigger and wetter! Buy from R&D and let everyone know that you're not simply sub par, you're *sub intelligent!*

Show them you're wet behind the ears! They'll know you're taking a dive when they see you in R&D's critically acclaimed Yellow Submersible, sub version III.

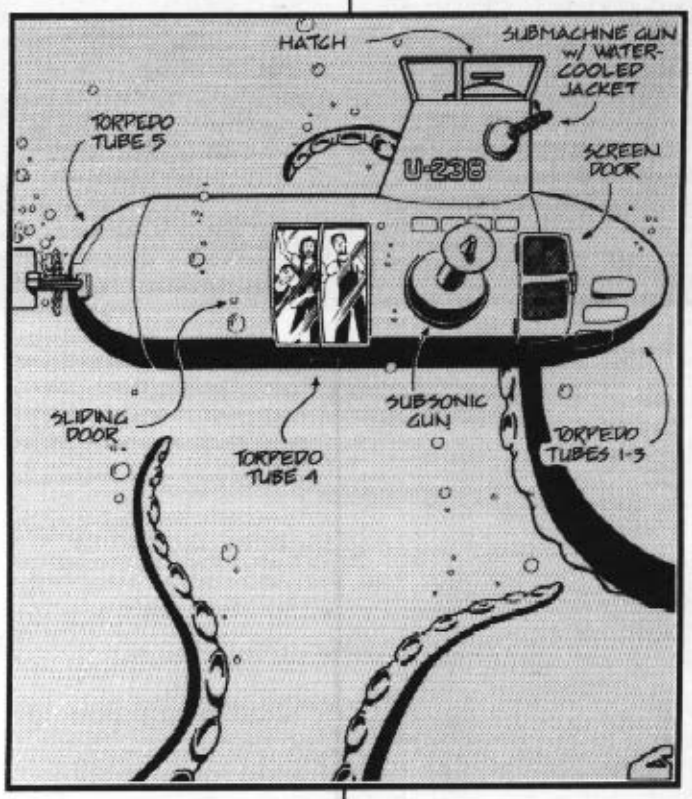
Sub Culture

As touted by the Armed Forces' infamous Captain Nem-O, the future is where you sea it. And since you are shopping from a genuine Risirch and De'Sann catalog, you are obviously one of the clones of the future. (Shoppers of infidel catalogs are soon clones of the past ... get my drift?)

It's for you, the avant guardians, that we have developed this underwater perambulator, and it's a whale of a deal!

Aside from the hatchway entrances in the conning tower and on the main deck, we've got a picture window/sliding glass door down on the main level, both to make boarding easier, and also in case you choose to go scuba diving while submerged. (Sub merging is really fun, or so the nature babies claim.)

Not only that, but we've included a screen door to keep those pesky undersea critters from moving in while you're out for a swim. And don't worry about unfortunate oversights - a special alarm system insures that your doors are closed before you dive!



Sub Sonics

We've installed a state-of-the-art Bluepunked stereo system with a whole library of music for you, including the famous hit by the Boatles, telling of the treasure-hunting urge which drove them to first go under water:

In the dome where I was bored
Sank a clone into the sea
With the savings of his life
So I built a submarine

Hours of music ensure that your subsurface listening will be endlessly interesting! Or bring along your own musical selections and jam beneath the waves!

Sub Atomic

The Yellow Submersible is equipped with a state-of-the-art nuclear reactor, patterned after those of reliable Soviet design. It will provide hours of maintenance-free operations, yielding a seemingly endless supply of power to satisfy your every underwater whim.

Sub Machine Gun

And oh, yes, is the Yellow Submersible armed! After all, there's lots of things down there; Sea An-enemies, Merdurmen, Giant Troubleshooter-eating fish. You'll need protection, and the Yellow Submersible has it!

It's got a sub machine gun mounted on the conning tower, and two sub sonic rifles mounted on the sides of the main hull. There are five torpedo tubes: one, two, and three fore, and five aft. Tube number four shoots straight down.

Sub Marine Sandwiches

Yes, there's a galley on your Yellow Submersible! A variety of foods and seasonings will provide you with endless hours of culinary experimentation.

Plus, with a little engineering, you can turn your microwave into a last-ditch defensive weapon!

Sub Urban

The submarine lifestyle is (pardon the pun) the wave of the future! Drown yourself in your dreams! Submerge yourself in a lifestyle that most people can't imagine!

The underwater life is full of plenty — try it and sea! But we'll make it even easier for you, because we'll be publishing a deciannual magazine devoted to undersea life — Sub Stance! Sub Stance will be full of helpful articles on how to live your life under the deep blue. Subscriptions are 40 credits/cycle — 25 percent off newsstand price!

Plus, R&D is already making plans for the construction of an undersea city! A dome beneath the waves! We are accepting citizenship applications today - come in and fill out a form for your personal sub tract of land! And if you find you have no place to keep your sub until the city is finished ... no problem! We'll rent you a berth place to tide you over! And you won't have to fish deep into your pocket — rental is just two credits per berth/day.

Sub Orbital

We will soon be releasing an interstellar version of our Yellow Submersible. Sail the seas between the stars! Pick up drifting Troubleshooters — loot their freeze-dried bodies and stock up on supplies at the same time!

Sub Total

Your own personal, intimate Yellow Submersible can be had for the low, low price (comparatively speaking) of 2000 credits! Wow!

Game Stuff

This is basically a well-designed and idiotproof vehicle, with the notable exception of the alarm system which is supposed to keep you from submerging with open portholes and stuff.

The alarm system is about as funny as a screen door on a submarine. Which, curiously, is the place where the alarm system fails most often. If the screen doors is open, the alarm goes off whether or not the sliding glass door is closed. If the screen door is closed, the alarm does not go off whether or not the sliding glass door is open.

Aside from the obvious problems of submerging with only a screen door to stand against the waves, there is also the much more sinister possibility of trying to fill the diving room with air when only the screen door is closed. All the air, which is supposed to force the water out of the diving room, suddenly bubbles to the surface. The sub is still on the bottom, without air and without ballast.Now what?

The adventure possibilities with the Yellow Submersible are endless. The Troubleshooters can meet Captain Nem-O. They can meet Jaws 3-D. They can torpedo convoys, or fight gilled and scaly mutants. They can invade the Undersea Dome of Jacque-U-STO!

Or you could start an entire campaign based in the underwater R&D city of Aquapolis. Maybe hire the Troubleshooters as Aquapolice. If your Alpha Complex is located on the coast, you'll have two thirds of the earth's surface to explore.

Or you can get real bizarre. The players have been playing Troubleshooters in Alpha Complex, right? Maybe they've never been Outside. Naturally, the Troubleshooters don't think twice about their environment, we mean they are what they are, right? Your players just **ASSUME** that the Troubleshooters breathe air and stuff.

So maybe they don't. Alpha Complex is inhabited exclusively by water-breathing mutants. Exclusively. (Fear and Ignorance. Have your players ever asked if their characters have gills? Then don't tell them.) Which means that this sub is actually built to go out into the air. Ooooh.

So what the Troubleshooters perceive as (and refer to as) "air" is actually water. This will lead to some strange descriptions when they go Outside.

"You are Outside. The area around you looks very dry, with strange growths hither and yon. Your diving suits on, you open the sliding glass door. All the air spills out on the ground everywhere, forming little puddles. Some remaining air drips from the ceiling onto the floor. What do you do?"

Cyberpumps

The fashion footwear that's taking the Complex by storm!

Before the MegaWhoops, there was The Computer. And before The Computer, there was The Old Reckoning. The Pan-Global Coprosperity Sphere.The Golden Age of Humanity. A chicken in every garage and a car in every pot.

The Age of Peace.

There are scraps of history left to us that show that footwear was important back then. Some shoes were said to "elevate" small clones to great heights, probably to the very pinnacle of success. Executive clones wore "high heeled" shoes, probably denoting their well-heeled, immaculately groomed, high position in society. Special footwear allowed sports stars to succeed at whatever they attempted, including playing the guitar.

And on top of all that, Imeld-U-MCS had 70,000 pairs of shoes. Here was a woman of prestige in the Age of Peace.

Archaeological evidence unearthed at WEGCO, a manufacturing firm in Old Reckoning Pennsylvania, proves conclusively that their own literature shows them one step short of global domination.

Many Old Reckoning sayings also illustrated the importance of footwear. We have a lengthy list in the Temple, and here give you some excerpts:

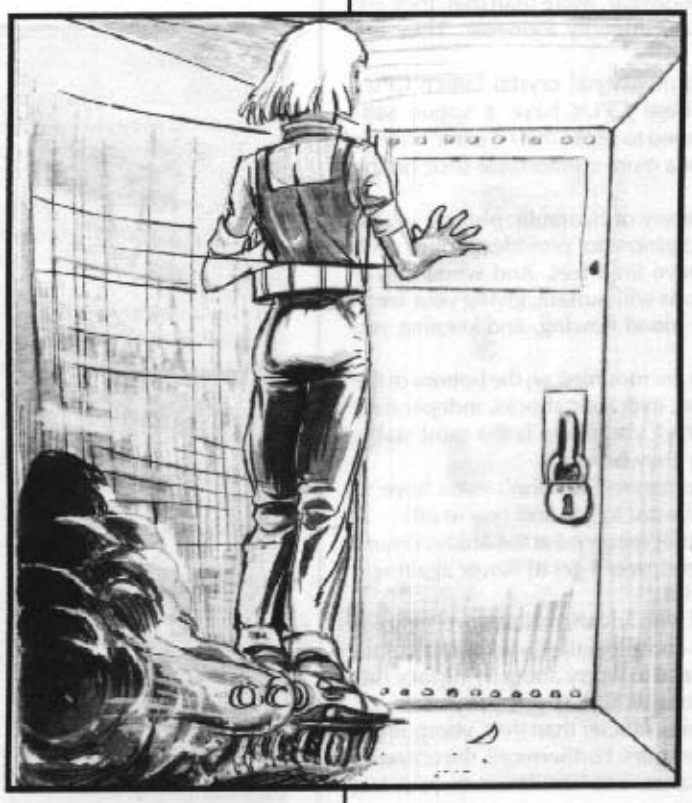
"If the shoe fits, wear it," is perhaps the most famous Old Reckoning phrase. It seems to advise seizing the reins of power when they are thrust onto your feet.

"Keep your feet on the ground," indicated that shoes with good traction aided success.

"Are you shoer?" was undoubtedly an interrogative of one's status.

In the Old Reckoning Armed Forces, soldiers were often told to *"Shoe to kill."* If they fought bravely, they *"died with their boots on."*

"I gave him the boot," was perhaps a symbolic surrender, sort of like giving a conqueror your sword.



When faced with furry predators (known as "house scats") on their kitchen tables, Old Reckoning housewives would be heard to say, *"Scat! Shoe! Get out of here!"* indicating that they were in possession of shoes, whereupon the scat would be alarmed as it had only bare feet.

Proper footwear often prevented catastrophe, this was known as *"getting by on a shoestring."*

And occasionally someone without decent footwear would accomplish something remarkable, said person then being said to possess *"amazing feet,"* indicating that he was able to do awesome tasks even without shoes.

And the most incontrovertible proof of footwear's importance in the old order: starting a computer was called *"booting up."*

Heck, references to footwear even appeared in the contemporary moral ethics. *"Selling your sole"* was considered the ultimate in depravity.

With all this emphasis in the Old Reckoning on shoes and boots, we wondered if the cobbler's art had been sadly neglected by The Computer. We studied society, the development and distribution of footwear, and all associated phenomena from the surviving records, and came to the incredible conclusion that shoes are one of the lost keys to The Age of Peace. And we'd all like to live in The Age of Peace, right?

Shoes are Made for Walkin'

Footwear is a very necessary fashion item, but let's not forget that shoes have their practical side, too.

They keep your feet warm. They protect you from tacks and nails on the floor. They make it hurt more when you kick someone in the shins. Shoes do a lot of special things, yet most people think of them as nothing more than a place to put their stinky feet. How inconsiderate.

And how naive. Shoes are more than footwear, THEY'RE A WAY OF LIFE!

Shoes tell others all about the type of person you are! Do you wear loafers? Your contacts will think you're lazy! Do you wear sneakers? Your teammates won't trust you! Do you wear beat-up derelict boots? Your friends will think you're a has-been!

And they'll be right! For not only do your shoes display your personality, they shape it!

Look at the people around you. Notice that worn-out shoes are worn by worn-out people. Have they always been worn out? Of course not! And look at those wearing neat, shiny shoes. They're the success stories of Alpha Complex. Were they always successful? Nonsense! They started out at the bottom and kicked their way up, just like you and I.

But, unlike the street dregs, they cared about their shoes!

The Future

We have designed the ultimate in fashion footwear. The shoe that says it all. It brings you up, yet calms you down. Dignified, yet utilitarian. Formal, yet friendly. Hot, yet cool. Black, yet white. It's nothing less than a cobbler's contradiction. A Machiavellian milestone. And it's yours for the purchasing.

Most people do not realize that footwear is a vehicle for personal conveyance. A two-part human-powered vehicle with no moving parts.

Granted shoes are not all that efficient as far as vehicles go. They can't coast, they can't shift gears, and they rely on you to supply the energy.

But that's only because shoes are a technologically backwards item. Their development has been stunted, ignored.

Until now. Until we created ... Cyberpumps!

What They Are

Cyberpumps are everything. They are the logical development of:

- the shoe as fashion,
- the shoe as a vehicle,
- the shoe as a way of life,
- the shoe as a personal statement, and
- the shoe as something to put your smelly feet in.

Cyberpumps are What You Need

Cyberpumps are not simply inanimate wads of plastic you strap to your feet. They are responsive footwear. More than that, they are advanced computer-controlled user-friendly footwear. They are FOOTWARE.

Cyberpumps use small three-dimensional crystal lattice CPUs patterned after flybot brains. These CPUs have a vague self-awareness, and they are programmed to sense their wearer's needs and provide for them. There is not a more comfortable shoe on the planet.

Support is enhanced with a battery of hydraulic pistons, which can change the shape of the cushion to provide perfect arch support. Never again will you have tired feet. And when you're standing still, the hydraulic supports will pulsate, giving your feet a wonderful massage, keeping the blood flowing, and keeping you alert and comfortable.

Individually-controlled wheels are mounted on the bottom of the shoe.With twin I-beam suspension, hydraulic shocks, independent steering, and four-wheel drive, the Cyberpump is the most stable foot platform available in its size anywhere!

Note that the four-wheel drive means you don't even have to walk! Just think about where you want to go, and you're off!

And that's not all! Twin jet engines mounted at the ankles ensure that when you need a burst of speed, you'll get it! Never again will the ratbot race leave you in the dust!

Cyberpumps are also equipped with advanced low-level echolocators, which detect road hazards and allow the Cyberpump's brain to take corrective measures. No need to worry about flying face first into pavement when scooting along at high speeds.

And talk about style! Ain't nothing fancier than the Cyberpump's sleek, glossy black and chrome contours. Furthermore, the contours are designed to provide maintenance-free ventilation to your feet whenever you're moving.

But that's not all! What would a shoe be without some sort of weapons system? What would ANYTHING today be without a weapons system?

BORING, that's what!!!

So we placed a savage switchblade in the toe of each Cyberpump. Plus we spiked the spokes of the wheels with chrome. Stylish. And deadly. Just the way you like it.

Want a Pair?

How much would you pay for a pair of shoes like these? 200 creds? 300? What if I told you they were made out of duralloy steel and authentic elephant leather? 1000 creds? Well, they're not made out of duralloy and elephant leather, but they do have chrome and naugahyde. So how much now? 305? 302?

What would you think if I told you that a brand new pair of Cyberpumps could be yours today for just 25 creds? You'd say it was too good to be true! And it is! There's no way we could sell them that low!

But you can get yourself "pumped up" for the low low low price of just 189 creds! Amazing, isn't it? I know, it's not as good as 25, but it's a lot better than 302!

Just 189 creds (or equivalent in silicone vacuum grease) will get you the footware of the future! How can you stand to be without one? One pair, that is. You'd look pretty silly with only one Cyberpump.

Zoom into your future, your destiny, with all the grace and style you can conveniently contain. The footware of tomorrow ... *your* tomorrow ... *TODAY!*

(And only from Risirch and De'Sann Temples. The only TRUE priests of R&D.)

Game Stuff

Risirch and De'Sann don't mention it in the ad, but there's a very good reason these are called *Cyber*pumps.

They had originally considered whacking off people's feet to install the Cyberpumps. Sort of like a bionic boot. But they figured if they were to go removing body parts of their customers, they soon wouldn't have a leg to stand on.

Not to say the Cyberpumps aren't directly patched into your body. The priests at R&D figured out how to implant wires and such into the owner's ankles, etc., and tap them into the owner's central nervous system. This is what allows the cyberpumps to sense and compensate for their owner's desires at any given moment. They're in direct contact with his medulla oblongata.

Having bot brains in communion with your lizard brain can lead to some entertaining side effects should your shoes get zapped with ECM or something. Do you have any idea how funny it looks for a person wearing the latest in shoes to be flicking his tongue around and walking like a komodo dragon? But as far as we know such feedback is only a temporary effect. So they say.

Also, most owners find they never remove their Cyberpumps. You might say they grow quite attached to them. It is a distinctly unpleasant sensation to feel the wires yank out of your body. And then when you want to put them back on, you have to go back to R&D and pay a fee, or the Cyberpumps never quite work right.

Finally, you'll occasionally have to bring your Cyberpumps back to R&D for refueling ... unless they gave you that new experimental design that draws its power from the sugar in your bloodstream. But that bloodsucker has other complications ...

Adventure Idea: Have a malfunctioning pair of Cyberpumps take control of someone's brain. He'd just have the minimal processing of the bot brains, plus the animal drives of the primitive human brain. His name? How 'bout Neand-R-THL, Cro-Magnon Skater. Cybersicko. Hell on wheels. And the Troubleshooters have to hunt him down and take his shoes off.

Or you could arrange a "Road Warrior" type scenario, where a gang on wheels has terrorized a small simplex. Mad to the Max?

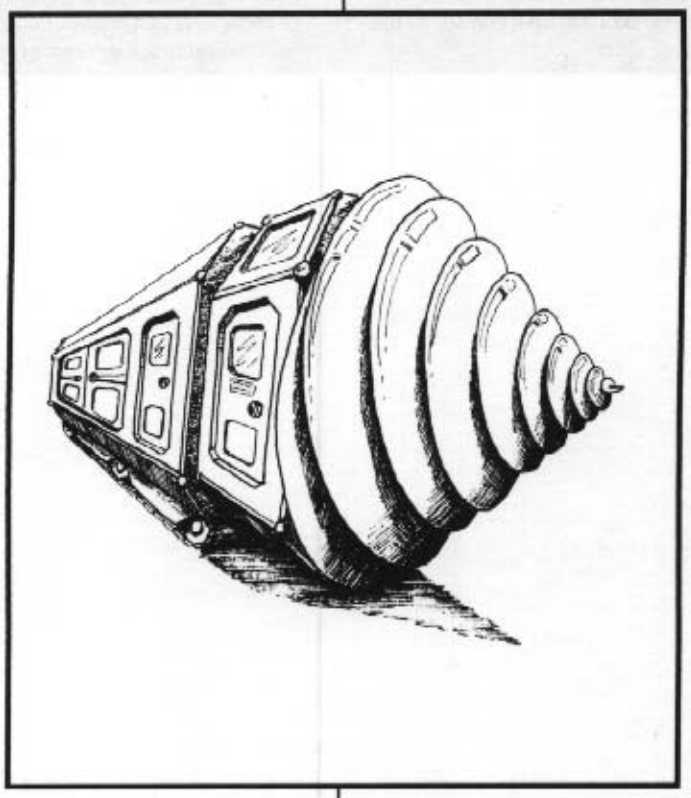
Molemobile

Dig the Interior, Dude!

Travel is simply amazing. In this day and age, we can fly through the air, swim underwater, and zoom overland at amazing speeds. Those of us who aren't mutants need mechanical aids to accomplish these tasks, but, hey, that's why you are blessed with inventive temples like ours (although ours is the only TRUE temple of R&D).

And, shortly before The Computer crashed (may It rest in eternal I/O error), Alpha Complex even sent some clones into Outer Space. Sure, none of them came back, but none of their clones did, either. I mean, it wasn't our fault if they opened the window of their capsule to get a better view. I hear they went out with a bang, though.

But there has always been one mode of transportation which has been denied the average clone-in-the-corridor. Until now. Or whenever you buy it, actually. It's a ground-breaking new means of personal transportation!



Look What We've Unearthed!

It's R&D's amazing Molemobile — Winner of Three Academy of Car Critics Awards!

The Molemobile is just the car for you! You need never worry about off-road traction again! And don't fret about inclement driving conditions! The Molemobile makes its OWN roads and inclement driving conditions!

Laying the Groundwork

When we realized that there was a whole area of transportation denied the human, mutant, and robotic races, we saw it as our holy duty to correct this. In fact, it became a veritable conveyance crusade to develop deep dirt dragsters.

After a long hard testing program which promoted 27 acolytes to the exalted position of martyr, we finally completed the first successful underground commute. At long last, subterranean subterfuge is possible, with the Molemobile!

Yes, that's right! You, too, can drive underground with the pros! You can hunt the legendary Violet Worm, or track down the Rotor Ooters rumored to live down there.

Can your explorations find the source of the mysterious Chartreuse Shimmer, which a handful of minebots have reported? Maybe it's a Commie plot!

Will your scientific experiments determine why gravity changes as you get deeper under the earth's crust? That's something that's always bugged us!

Or perhaps you will even discover Pellucidar, the legendary inside-out domes of long-long PLU and CDR Sectors, which vanished without a trace over a hundred years ago!

There's no end to the adventures you might dig up with the Molemobile!

Dig It, Nature Babe!

The Molemobile is available in a variety of earth tones for that classic dirty look. (Includes matching mud flaps, to make sure that nothing mars the finish.)

The interior is done in classic Victor-I-ANN styling. For those of you who don't know, Victor-I-ANN was the most creative mind seen in HPD&MC in the entire History of The Computer. His plush designs were used by High Programmers everywhere. Carved out of an amazing material known as driftwood, which is at once lighter and stronger than even plastic, this furniture is very light and so well designed it seems to buoy you up. Now you, too, can enjoy a more civilized time in the decadent luxury of an Ultraviolet-style cruising cabin! Buoy, oh buoy!

Armor-plated windows give you a nice view, yet protect you from all underground hazards like stalactite showers and the like.

And talk about Space? 1889 cubic feet of compartment space, much of which is available for storage or recreation for those long journeys underground.

Your Molemobile is well-stocked, too. A jar of ether is included to help preserve any specimens you might find in your explorations. A dozen Kaiser rolls will see you through your first couple of drives. And of course a subterranean globe to keep you from getting lost.

And You Don't Even Have to Dig Deep in Your Pocket!

Yes, the Molemobile comes cheap!

Just 100 credits deposit gives you a test drive in the Molemobile. Should you decide to buy, we will refund 50 credits to you, and the other fifty will be your first monthcycly installment! You can drive it home that very daycycle! What could be easier?

Need something to move the pile of dirt in your courtyard? Surplus Tractorbots are still available! Da! Away the dirt for the furtherance of the revolutionary new transport!

So hop in your Molemobile and take a drive down under!

Game Stuff

The test-drive area for the Molemobile has been specially sculpted by R&D to give their new car enhanced desirability. They have seeded the underground with caches of gems, neat caves, and a few genetically-engineered "monsters." Anyone who takes a test drive will be overwhelmed by all the neat stuff underground, and will, of course, want a Molemobile of their own.

Sadly, the underground is really quite boring. There are, of course, notable exceptions, like Carlsbad Caverns, but none of these are too near Alpha Complex. Unless of course, there IS a Pellucidar. Who knows? You might get a bunch of Romantics to take a Vernian Journey, looking for gold and Jules and stuff. Might be fun. Toss in a few big-eared aliens, some anti-gravity plastic and a couple of long-lost domes, and voila! Instant trash!

The Molemobile has other, though less esoteric, advantages. It can sneak under perimeter fencing. It can penetrate underground installations, and enter secret tunnels. It can undermine the foundations of enemy strongholds. In fact, if you're dealing with a real thick concrete structure, it could climb up the walls to the roof!

On the other hand, if you do a lot of driving, you can weaken the earth under your own house. You can easily get lost underground. It's boring down there. It's cold. And if you run out of gas, you're out of luck.

And don't forget, most Alpha Complex citizens don't live on the ground floor. Your Troubleshooters might go a-diggin', only to find themselves plummeting through the ceiling of a nuclear industrial sublevel they never knew existed. Gasp! Is this the source of the Chartreuse Shimmer?

All Molemobiles are equipped with secret transmitters. This prevents Molemobiles being used in a secret attack against R&D. It also helps R&D's repo men to locate vehicles belonging to delinquent owners. Heaven help the driver who gets out of his Molemobile to explore an underground grotto when there are repo men about.

But only the most cruel-minded gamemasters would do that, right?

The Molemobile's payment plan is very simple. 50 credits a monthcycle. Unless you ask, they won't tell you the time factor. You pay for the rest of your life.

Personal Equipment

Okay, so you're a clone. And we at Risirch and De'Sann will be the first to admit that your life isn't always easy. There have been mornings when you've found food vat run-off coming out of your shower head, your Hot Fun is cold and your Cold Fun is lukewarm, and your petbot caught mechanorabies and is in the closet, sparking and flaming with crankcase oil frothing at his mouth joints.

So things aren't always perfect — does that mean you shouldn't do everything you can to make your home a more comfortable place to live? After all, why not the best? Who deserves it more than you? (Well, we do, but we're talking about you now.)

That's why we at R&D have produced a line of personal equipment, designed for no other purpose than to make your home a safe, happy place. These range from home security devices to parboil intruders to gadgets to help entertain you in your leisure time. (Of course, some of us consider parboiling our enemies entertaining, but whatever turns you on.)

See? Not every moment of your life has to be filled with some death-defying mission, potentially lethal gadget, and a vehicle that goes much faster than is really healthy — just most of them. Even Troubleshooters deserve a home life: a can of Bouncy Bubble Beverage, a good book, a roaring fire in the middle of the room. (Would have helped if you'd had a fireplace, though. Too late, here come the firebots. And they brought their axes. Hope you weren't emotionally attached to that door.)

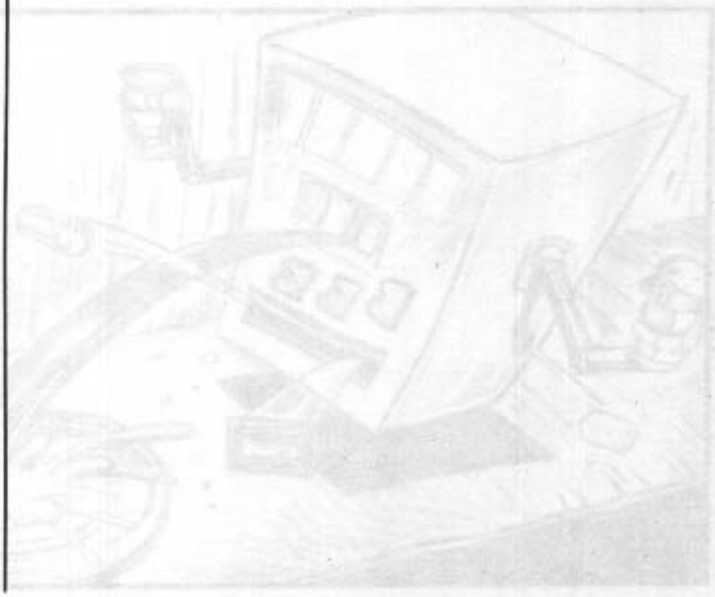
All right, now your home is a scorched pit. So we'll take the party Outside, and wander around among those big brown things and those little green things. Yes, we know in the past that walking around in that strange yellow light out there has turned you into a medium-sized red thing, but that won't happen this time. You have R&D with you. (In spirit — you wouldn't catch us dead Outside!) With our gadgets along, you need never fear ultraviolent reddiation, savage tribes, or middle-aged irradiated reptilian creatures with a proficiency in the martial arts. The only thing you have to worry about is getting a hernia from carrying all those gizmos around.

We at Risirch and De'Sann realize that the idea of having all this non-mission related property available is a relatively new one, and so we expect it will take this line a while to catch on. But we have so much faith in you, the consumer clone, and are so certain that you are going to desperately want these goods that we are raising prices across the board in anticipation of your demand. Oh, we know that some heretic temples would have had a big sale to introduce you to new goods, but we don't work that way. We have too much respect for your good judgment to insult you by offering our gadgets at less than three times their value.

In the future, R&D plans to increase its output of purely personal peripherals. We're planning a line of synthesyntheastroturf, for those who can't afford real syntheastroturf. We're planning a Vulture Warriors play set, complete with working miniature plasma generators, great for igniting rugs, chair legs, and other menaces to freedom. We're planning giant plush Computer terminals stuffed with magnetic tape that say things like, "I am The Computer. Will you be my friend?", "Going to sleep without me is treason," and "I'm not really down, you know. This is only a trick to fool my enemies. What was that you were saying about Commies in your sleep last nightcycle?"

So if you don't want to be left behind in the personal equipment boom yearcycles to come, leaf through the pages that follow and have your pencil ready to scratch out an order. We'll get around to filling it as soon as we finish sorting through all this stuff to see what we're going to keep and what we're going to throw aw — er, sell to you wonderful clones. After we've thoroughly checked your background, and you've proven yourself capable of dodging a horde of Bouncy Bubble Beverage-crazed Death Leopards, we'll send your order. (The Death Leopard test is one we do with reluctance, but it has to be done; after all, we don't want to sell our precious equipment to some pathetic twit who's just going to get it stolen or blown up, do we? Of course we don't.)

This way to a life of luxury ...



Bouncy Bubble Betty

A Death-Vending Machine for the New Attitude

Have You Ever Heard This In Your Simplex?

Typ-I-CAL: We need a soft drink dispenser!
Ave-R-AGE: No, we need a home defense installation!
Typ-I-CAL: I want something that adds life!
Ave-R-AGE: I want something that deals death!

Hey, you two! No need to argue! Remember, unhappiness may no longer be treason, but it's still no fun!

And you can have it both ways — you can have one device that is a source of refreshment and security, one device that gives pleasure as readily as it gives pain. In short, one device that will protect you from refrigerator raiders even as it allows you to raid it yourself!

For R&D announces the first in a new line of death-vending machines — The Bouncy Bubble Betty!

That's right, folks, the Bouncy Bubble Betty is the ultimate carbonated anti-infiltration unit.

Think about it for a moment — you want to enjoy a luxurious, relaxed lifestyle, right? You want what's best for you and whatever clones you have, left?

But what good is a device for luxury if you can't relax enough to enjoy it? And what good is a home security system if you end up with nothing to enjoy?

The economic Bouncy Bubble Betty provides you, the soft-drink softy, both the means to enjoy life and the quiet assurance to do so. Nothing gets past the Bouncy Bubble Betty.

Well, almost nothing. Or rather, nothing except those things and people you want to get past. I mean, if nothing got past the Bouncy Bubble Betty, you wouldn't be able to hold dinner parties, now would you? And a fine kettle of vat slime that would be!

So all you have to do is program in who can pass the Bouncy Bubble Betty and who can't. You can set passwords, dress codes, whatever you want, and then rest assured that no one will crash your intimate get-togethers.

Variety

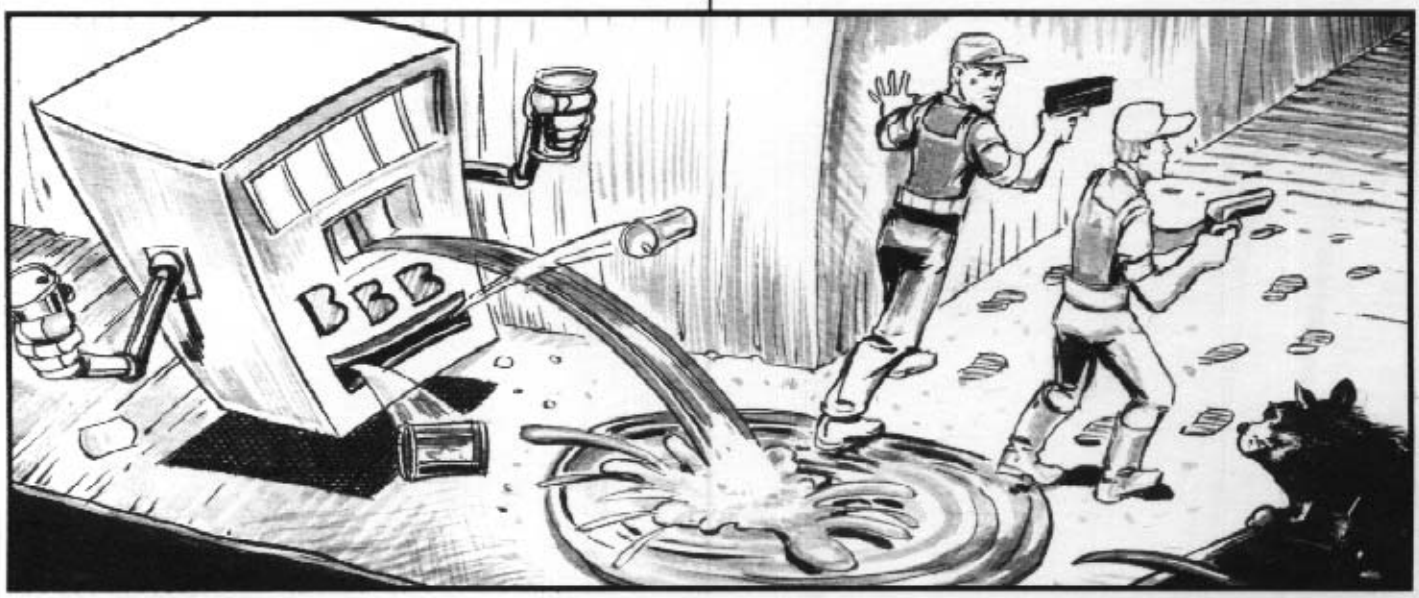
The Bouncy Bubble Betty is well-stocked with all the most popular post-holocaust drinks!

- Classic Bouncy Bubble Beverage!
- R&D Cola!
- Orange Crunch!
- Docbot Pepper!
- Algae Beer!
- Code 7 Up!
- Melvin's Purple Pop!
- Bleach!
- Dome Dew!
- Very Runny Cold Fun!
- More Algae Beer!
- Blu Fiz!
- Ginger Ailment!
- Boot Rear!
- White Lighting!
- Lite Sugar-free Caffeine-free Diet Artificial Imitation Cream Soda Mineral Seltzer Drink Mix!
- Even More Algae Beer!

This means that you will have unending variety. You can stock your Bouncy Bubble Betty in whatever proportions you like! You can program it to be cred-activated, so that no one else will be able to mooch a drink without at least bickering with you!

The Business of Pleasure

The Bouncy Bubble Betty looks exactly like an ordinary soft drink vending machine. But then, there are probably those of you who were imperiously squelched in low clearances by the Late Great Fiend — er, "Friend" Computer. If you were one of those unlucky



multitudes, then you may have never actually seen a soft drink vending machine.

Basically, it is a large box, two meters tall, one meter wide, and one meter thick. Its front panel is tastefully decorated with the logo of your favorite soft drink (or, if you prefer, the holy icon of R&D temples).

A series of buttons, *each* customized with the logos of your personally chosen selection of soft drinks, adorns one side of the machine. Above these buttons is a plasticred slot, and below is the drink dispenser. But — and here's the catch — the Bouncy Bubble Betty has not one, but two settings!

Can: If you are just serving yourself and a few friends, choose the Can setting. This dispenses drinks in self-contained, single-serving plastic disposable cans. Just drink and throw! No messy glasses to wash up later, no worry about Commie mutant germs crawling everywhere.

Cup: This is the Crazy Neddies' dream! This ostensibly dispenses a cup into the serving chamber, then fills the cup with ice and soft drink. But in actuality, the cup is dispensed at an angle. When filled with ice, the cup falls over on its side, at which point the soft drink begins dispensing. It runs off the side of the cup and through a metal grating whereupon it is recycled for reuse.

Meanwhile, the person attempting to get a drink is fumbling about, spilling ice, making a fool of himself, and winds up getting nothing but a quarter cup of heavily iced drink and very sticky hands. Many of our more important clients use this setting to unnerve their business acquaintances before opening bickering. It's very funny to watch the way they squirm when you innocently offer to shake their sticky hands! Plus, this setting is a lot cheaper in the long run, since you use a lot less product, the majority of it being recycled! Of course, a secret button allows you to get your cup of refreshment without incident, much to your guests' chagrin.

Pop the Enemy

The Bouncy Bubble Betty is also a home defense installation the likes of which you've never seen. Cleverly camouflaged as a vending machine, this innocuous-looking device is nothing less than a hallway monitor of the most lethal kind!

Once you've programmed in your security parameters (with the help of your confessor), your house will be safe from anything!

The Pleasure of Business

The Bouncy Bubble Betty sure looks innocent enough. Brightly lit and equipped with a noisy refrigeration unit, it is certain to be overlooked by anyone sneaking into your residence. Heck, someone may actually try to get a drink!

But secretly, the Bouncy Bubble Betty is armed to the teeth with lethal weaponry: the cans of drink! The cans are actually made of high-tensile, nitro-saturated plastics, which can withstand incredible pressures. When the Bouncy Bubble Betty detects an intruder, it begins shaking a can of whichever soft drink is most overstocked. Attaching a string to the pull tab, the Bouncy Bubble Betty fires the soda at the intruder. When the can reaches the proper range, the string pops the pull tab and the can explodes with the pent up force of extreme carbonation! POW! Hoooweee!!! What an explosion!

Then, severely shredded and deafened, the transgressor will find himself enmired in soda, which, due to the sudden decrease in pressure and adiabatic expansion, has been converted into a very sticky (but sweet-smelling) substance the likes of which you might already have seen at the bottom of a long-forgotten coffee cup.

And so, trapped and shredded, the intruder will expire. None of his comrades will not dare come to his aid; no "bringing the wounded out" when the Bouncy Bubble Betty is about!

But That's Not All!

Oh, no! We know that any static defense can be circumvented. We also know that the more covert a defense system is, the better.

That's why we gave the Bouncy Bubble Betty a small, yet very quiet anti-gravity propulsion unit. When your Bouncy Bubble Betty's powerful sensors locate an intruder *anywhere inside its programmed defensive perimeter,* it will begin stalking the culprit, waiting to spring a lethal carbonated ambush!

The anti-grav unit is very silent, and certainly cannot be heard over the noise of the refrigeration unit. The anti-grav unit is also low-speed, so there is no chance the intruder will catch a glimpse of the Bouncy Bubble Betty dashing from cover to cover. And, what's best, the Betty's sensors can tell when an intruder is looking away. THAT'S when it will close the gap between it and its quarry and dispose of him in a fizz-sticky explosion.

Murder in Cold Pop

That's still not all! The Betty can do other things, too. Like shoot ice at lethal velocities! Fill the air with gently floating paper cups! Spritz soda on the floor to make the enemy slip up! Or, even more ponderous,

It can fall on them!

Yes folks, defending your home against those who would deny you your right to drink soda has never been easier! The Bouncy Bubble Betty!

Order yours today, and begin a better Betty life, sipping your favorite drink in the shade of your personal watchdog!

Buying a Bouncy Bubble Betty

The best buy in home defense and hospitality is even better, with our cycle-end special! You can buy your very own Bouncy Bubble Betty for just 500 creds, or the equivalent in 227-watt fluorescent light fixtures! Or, if you prefer, you can rent your Bouncy Bubble Betty for just 20 creds a monthcycle (drinks not included)!

Refill cans are 10 credits a case. Or, sign up for our "All You 'Can' Drink" service, and receive an entire cycle's supply of soft drinks for only 150 creds!

Game Stuff

Bouncy Bubble Betty Bombs — 11P
Bouncy Bubble Betty Ice Cube Combat — 6P
Bouncy Bubble Betty Puddles — force opponent to make easy agility roll
Bouncy Bubble Betty Cup Clouds — obscures vision, halves laser strength
Bubble Betty Bouncing on Befuddled Bungling Beverage Burglar — 15I

A better device for imbuing your Troubleshooters with paranoia has never been invented! The Bouncy Bubble Betty! Now everything from soft drink machines to shoe shine kits is a dire threat. Just think of all the fun you can have when your Troubleshooters are skulking around in another simplex:

You: Okay everybody make a perception roll against your Moxie.

Them: Hooray, we made the roll!

You: Did anyone make it against their Moxie divided by four?

Them: Yeah, sure, well, actually, no, we didn't.

You: Okay, you don't really notice much of interest.

Them: Do we notice anything uninteresting?

You: Well, you thought you might have seen the Bouncy Bubble Beverage vending machine move a little bit — it seems a little closer. But it must be your imagination.

Them: Augh! A Bouncy Bubble Betty! Kill it!

And so they try to sneak along, valiantly blowing away all sorts of inanimate objects. Soon you can have them torching trashcans and exploding mailboxes for "self-preservation." There needn't be a Bouncy Bubble Betty for *miles!*

Just their having seen this ad will get their fear out where you need it. Or maybe your Troubleshooters haven't seen this ad — think of the fun you can have just pointing out all the vending machines!

The Bouncy Bubble Betty also has a few small drawbacks. Did you notice how you program in your security codes *with the help of your confessor?* This ensures that the loyal priests and field service acolytes of Risirch and De'Sann will not be threatened by the BBB, and likewise that all heretic priests will be mangled. This will be true regardless of the owner's intent. Any complaints to R&D temples to the effect that their BBB was faulty inasmuch as it shredded a guest heretic priest will be dealt with in the predictable manner.

There are other possible glitches with the BBB. It might suffer memory loss, and begin attacking authorized personnel. Its refrigeration system might seize up, thereby causing the cans to explode inside the BBB when they're being armed (shaken up). The anti-grav unit might weaken, causing the BBB to drag one corner on the ground with a hideous squeak as it limps after its prey. Hey, that could be real fun! "You hear a distinct creaking noise in the room behind you. Turning to investigate, you think you see a flash of movement — but then you don't see anything but the appliances. What do you do?"

The Last Words of The Computer

"Those Who Do Not Know the Past are Doomed to Reboot it"

Now you can have, in your very own library, a piece of living history! This is perhaps the most important document ever written! Sure to give you countless hours of reading pleasure, as well as being an authoritative text for your personal research, this series of books is a must for those who would be leaders, scholars, and consultants.

There is no doubt that The Computer was the most important influence on the history and development of the human race. And, until now, the mind of The Computer was unknowable, its data-day existence a mystery to most citizens.

But now, Risirch and De'Sann Temples, in a cooperative arrangement with Timely-Death Books, presents the most amazing series ever compiled:

The Last Words of The Computer!

Yes, *The Last Words of The Computer* is the hot book of the Post-Crash Era. It's already better-selling than *Teela O-MLY's Troubleshooter Tip Tome*. It's already more popular than *Treasonous Jive That'll Keep You Alive*. It's already more voluminous than *The Official Alpha Complex Civic Code*. This is the essential addition to any library.

The Serious Series

The Last Words of The Computer contains insightful, unabashed and, most important, uncensored printouts direct from The Computer's CPU dumps.

Read, for example, this section from "DOA is MIA," Volume One of the series:

">Change Directory "DOA"
>File not Found
>Run FindFile "DOA"
>Statistics/Vital/Troubleshooters/DOA (1,264,926,671 entries)
>Service/ArmedForces/Dept OperationalAssignments (3 entries)
>English/Dictionary/DOA (1 entry)
>One entry.That's it.Access
>DOA:Dead On Arrival
>What?!? The entire sector erased?!? I'm next on the database! If those Commies can wipe an entire sector like that, they might be able to crash me yet! There must be a correlation between that and the increased Troubleshooter activity. Hmm. Why, I'll just bet they're programming on infiltrating the 100,000th Troubleshooter mission celebration I've got queued!"

Or this timely quote, from Volume 18, "A Hard Disk's Night":

>"Ah-chooooo!"

And, in the later books, we begin to see the baser drives of The Computer — we catch glimpses of Its darker, yet more innocent self as It struggles with the concept of Downtime. Here, for example is an excerpt from Volume 147, "Binary Battles 1 and Lost."

>"...011010010101111001010011010100100111011000..."

What poignant prose! What poetic imagery of sweeping vistas of sorrow, suffering, and the catharsis of imminent doom! Surely a more heartfelt, concise and descriptive text on coping with the fear of oblivion has never been written!

Furthermore, dedicated statistical analysis has proven that this section contains 50.2 percent ones and only 49.8 percent zeros! (There's also a two that got in there somehow.) This obvious preference indicates some intimate details about The Computer. With revealing facts like these in every volume, how can you stand to be without one?

How Your Timely-Death Membership Works

You'll receive your first volume, "DOA is MIA," within two weekcycles of your order. You may inspect the volume free for five daycycles, and if you are not completely satisfied, you may cancel your membership and return the book at our expense.

If you choose to keep the book, you will be billed for just two kilograms of miscellaneous foodstuffs, plus a shipping and handling fee of one set of plastic flatware (knife, fork and spoon).

You will receive additional volumes about every five weekcycles, each with the five-daycycle no-obligation trial period. Keep as many or as few of them as you like, paying the standard fee only for those you keep (slightly higher than startup) — but remember, your collection will be incomplete if you return any of them.

Special Bonus Offer!

If you join the Timely-Death Book Club within five daycycles of receiving this catalog, you'll receive *101 Uses for a Dead Computer* with Volume 1. This humorous jokebook is absolutely free, and even if you return "DOA Is MIA" and decide to cancel your membership, the jokebook is yours to keep! Order todaycycle!

Game Stuff

This particularly bulky item is not much use to the traveling Troubleshooter, but socially it is a must for those who are staying at home, carving out an Empire. There is actually quite a bit of useful information to be found in the texts, especially about compnodes, programming, etc. Unfortunately, it's not entirely logically organized. If a Troubleshooter wants to find a given bit of knowledge, have him roll against his Moxie, adjusting the roll according to the difficulty of the task.

Also note that the "standard price" is never stated. The initial price for the initial volume is given, but this is not the "standard price." In other words, once he's hooked, the clone finds himself paying double what he payed for the first volume, for each subsequent volume.

The Last Words of The Computer could make a good centerpiece for an adventure. Like this:

High in an impregnable tower works the evil leader of a totalitarian Simplex. A long-standing member of the Timely-Death Book Club, he has the complete set of *The Last Words of The Computer* and several other series. Even more amazingly, he has read all these books and understands them.

He has used the information in his library to subvert and dominate his area, and has achieved total control through his secret bot police. This has earned him the nickname among his enemies of "Dr. Frankenstein."

His expansionist policies aroused the ire of neighboring Simplexes who have not yet been swallowed up. They want the Troubleshooters to break in to his inner sanctum, bring back one of his books. Once the Simplex has read it, they will forge a copy with incorrect information, and send the Troubleshooters back to plant it.

This in turn can cause even worse problems. Say the new information leads to the sudden freedom of all of Dr. Frankenstein's bots. They'll overthrow their dictator, but then set up their own form of fascist government, even worse than before.

Or maybe there's a secret formula for a magic love potion in one of the books. First the Troubleshooters are hired to steal the books, then they get sent out to find the ingredients. By the time they finish, their employer has fallen for one of the Team, and tries out the love potion on him or her. Enter the jealous traveling book salesman, who ... ah, never mind.

Mut-O-ZAP

The Solution to the Mutant Menace

Bugged by botbrained bumblebimbos?
Mutant marauders mutilating your mailbox?
Prattling pests plundering your picnics?
Vigilante vermin vandalizing your vouchsafed vittles?
Farcical furry freaks fanatically firebombing your favorite friend's foyer?
Just say "No More" to pesty woes with Risirch & De'Sann's all-new Mut-O-ZAP!

In the Old Reckoning, hapless citizens had to endure repeated attacks by all sorts of nasty vermin: mosquitos, ants, cockroaches, rhinoceroses, traveling salesmen ... all these are names inscribed with terror in the annals of the past.

And although most of these are now extinct, today we have to deal with a new pest:the feral mutant.

We've all seen them. Bug-eyed mutants zipping about the complex in shiny underwear, brazenly defying every social convention, law of physics, common courtesy, and air-traffic control pattern. They crash through your door, fly into your home, wreck your furniture, eat your food, mess on your carpet, and maybe even beat up your petbot, and all in the name of "justice for mutants."

They're especially troublesome at night, when they're attracted to bright lights in dark areas, and they bang against your windows and try to fly up your nose. Many people have been forced to abandon outdoor traitor-bakes because of the clouds of bloodthirsty mutants which swarm about seeking "revenge."

They're a blight on society. Worse than that,their genetic deformities are nothing short of cancerous lesions run amok. They are a self-aware disease draining away the lifeblood of the human race.

Now there's a solution.

Now there's a way to get rid of those pests.

Now there's a way to invite those unwanted guests to your next traitor-bake without letting them mess things up, and have a pretty darn good time doing it.

Mut-O-ZAP!

Mut-O-ZAP is the revolutionary new pest-control device of tomorrow and the future!

Mut-O-ZAP is guaranteed to keep those maniacal mutant marauders to a minimum.

Mut-O-ZAP provides hours and hours of complimentary listening enjoyment.

So How Can I Roast Those Pesky Puppies?

Nuke them muties 'till they glow with your very own Mut-O-ZAP!

Mut-O-ZAP is a simple yet stylish device. In the center of the clear plastic casing are a battery of six light tubes, which emanate light with wavelengths approaching the ultraviolet. In the Old Reckoning, these were called "black lights" even though we all know that infrared is Black and Ultraviolet is White. Anyway, surrounding the lights' casing is an outer grid of finely woven superconducting wire, expressly engineered to provide the maximum electromagnetic field possible. The legs of the Mut-O-Zap are rendered in the finest Renn-O-SNS style, so Mut-O-ZAO will be a handsome addition to any household.

How Does It Work?

The Mut-O-ZAP uses its powerful fluorescent bulbs to emanate a peculiar wavelength of light irresistible to mutants. The light attracts those meddlesome midnight muties to your back porch from kilometers around. But they won't get in, nosirree! They're so attracted to the light that they circle in, closer and closer, until the high-voltage electric field generated by the superconducting wire mesh around the fluorescent light reaches out and roasts them like a Troubleshooter on reactor shielding duty! So strong is the attraction to the ultraviolet light, and so powerful is the voltage of the electric field, that no mutant can withstand it! One by one, all the mutants within eyeshot of your domicile will be drawn in to die!

The power leaps out like an arc-welder, bright, strong, and *pure* as the dawn of a new age. The terrific energy obliterates the mutants, at the same time creating a very beautiful light show (the colors vary as the Mut-O-ZAP vaporizes each of the wide variety of organic mutant molecules in their body). In addition, the Mut-O-ZAP's generator creates a musical hum that changes in pitch and timber as the late mutant writhes away into nonexistence.

And there's no mess to clean up! Those few particles that are not completely vaporized are collected in a small tray at the bottom of the Mut-O-ZAP. Just empty the tray into the street about once a month.No mess, no worry!

Just imagine...once again you can sit on your veranda, watching the lesser Simplexes war among themselves, content in your protection from pests. Sip your Bouncy Bubble Beverage, and kick your feet up while the soothing hum of the Mut-O-ZAP calms you. And sit back and enjoy the occasional light-and-sound show as your Mut-O-ZAP brings us all one step closer to a genetically pure world.

But I Kind of Like *Some* Mutants ...

If you have a favorite pet or science project that you simply don't want to part with, fear not. Mut-O-ZAP Protekto-Goggols are available. Simply super-glue these to your mutant and it will screen out the attractive ultraviolet light. You will, of course, have to train them not to get too near the superconducting wires ...

Minimal Money for Mutant Mangler

We've set the price of the Mut-O-ZAP so low you won't have to bicker! Just buy and fry!

You can install a Mut-O-ZAP in your very own home for five daycycles with no obligation!here's no charge, just a low, low shipping and labor fee to cover our own expenses:six bags of Kruncheetyme Algae Chips (no chips necessary, just the bags).

After five daycycles, if you haven't eradicated enough mutants to stuff a dumpster, just let us know, and we'll send our field service team back to your residence to remove the Mut-O-ZAP (the same shipping charge applies).

On the other hand, you might find yourself fritzing so many mutants that you dump out your ash tray twice a day or more! You might find yourself with friends dropping in at all hours to watch the mutants dance while the Mut-O-ZAP sings! You might find yourself behind the wheel of a large automobile ... no, wait, what am I saying?

If you can't live without the Mut-O-ZAP, just check out these easy terms:

You can purchase the Mut-O-ZAP outright for three liters of active genetic material in 50 percent protein broth (minimum specific gravity of 5.0). Or, if you prefer a payment plan, simply send three hundred meters of fully-inked printer ribbon once a monthcycle for a full cycle, and the Mut-O-ZAP is yours to keep! (Rates negotiable for used printer ribbon.)

Repair

Should one of your fluorescent bulbs go out within four monthcycles of purchase, we will replace it free. Beyond this warranty period, the charge for replacement is dependent on the difficulty of the job, your location, etc.

In addition, we will replace any of the superconducting wires in your Mut-O-ZAP in exchange for two kilograms of the non-vaporized mutant residue collected at the bottom of the device. Save those ashes to insure prompt service of your Mut-O-ZAP!

Mut-O-MegaZap

Mut-O-ZAP was originally conceived as a personal, in-house unit. But now, we are able to offer Mut-O-ZAP Roving Guardbots, and Mut-O-ZAP Perimeter Fencing.

Mut-O-ZAP Guardbots are giant-sized Mut-O-ZAP devices mounted on small treaded chassis with heat-seeking sensors. Just place them inside your compound and they'll keep it mutant-free!

Mut-O-ZAP perimeter fencing requires a lot of power. If you have questions about the capacity of your generator, ask your confessor. We stock a wide variety of cold-water fusion plants if you need that extra bit of juice.

Technical Specifications

The Mut-O-ZAP requires a surge-protected 220 watt power supply hooked up to a 10 kilowatt capacitor on the local circuit. Hardware is available to convert your current power supply if it is not compatible. See your confessor for details before it's too late! The mutants won't wait!

Game Stuff

Radius of attraction of black light: 40 meters
Roll vs. Power to avoid moving straight to the Mut-O-ZAP (mutants only)
Damage: 10F/round until vaporized
Radius of effect of electric field: 2 meters
If "no effect" is rolled, mutant may move away from the Mut O ZAP

As is readily apparent, the Mut-O-ZAP is a very nasty weapon. It's most obvious drawback is that the electric field will nail anyone who gets too close; woe be to the pure-strain who trips when walking past. The Mut-O-ZAP's powerful magnetic field can also attract small metallic devices like pistols and grenades. If you really want to be weird, you can have the Mut-O-ZAP bend light (e.g., lasers) near it due to the powerful electromagnetic field it exerts.

The Mut-O-ZAP guardbots are simple heat-seekers;they'll chase down pure-strains if they get too close. And mutants can sneak right by them if they wear refrigerated pants or something.

Installation is not as cheap and it seems. The R&D crew will take a lot of time, bang up the furniture a bit, and take an inventory of everything in the house. They'll waste the owner's time and maybe even pocket a few small things. Same goes if the customer sends it back. The confessor is sure to hear a lot of interesting things from the field service team.

But the worst drawback of the Mut-O-ZAP is perhaps not so apparent. Anybody with one of these is going to be a target for every mutant in town. Mutants everywhere are gonna stampede over to R&D to order major quantities of Protekto-Goggols, which R&D has cannily overpriced.

Whenever somebody gets caught in the Mut-O-ZAP, you, as gamemaster, are obligated to play it for maximum effect. Think of all the old slapstick comedies where someone gets zapped. Dancing, yelling, hair standing on end, smoke billowing out the unfortunate's ears ...

A quick-thinking mutant might try to "reach out and touch someone." The human body being as good a conductor as it is, what do you think would happen? Best not to stand too close when gloating over that roasting mutant.

Buying the Mut-O-ZAP can be quite an adventure. Finding enough ribbon for the payment plan is darn near impossible, and if the Troubleshooters fail to meet their payments the Mut-O-ZAP gets repossessed. That leaves buying the Mut-O-ZAP outright.

About the only place the Troubleshooters can find active genetic material is in the enclaves of the Eugenicists or Psion. Needless to say, these folks are none too keen on the idea of financing a Mut-O-ZAP. Maybe the Troubleshooters can rent a Guardbot and send it in first ...

Pur-B-GON

Mutants of the New Age: End your Persecution Woes with Pur-B-Gon!

In every society, especially after major upheavals, there are those citizens with a vision, those citizens who are driven beyond the vale of vascillitude, those cherished few who forge the wreckage of today into the gleaming empire of tomorrow. These are not mere mortals; these are the few who are truly superior, the few who can truly be called Supercitizens. These are the citizens of accomplishment, beings like you and like me.

Yet, in spite of visionary activism, we've all had to tolerate a lot of different types of lowlifes and vermin since the MegaWhoops. Seems everyone's trying to surpass everyone else in being a cretin while responsible people like yourself are trying hard to better your part of the complex. Naturally, these nauseating, anti-social renegades are jealous and bitter at the continued grand accomplishments of their superiors: you and me. We remind them through our selfless and farsighted deeds how truly pathetic and paltry they are. We grind their faces in the mud of their pitiful life. It's an unavoidable byproduct of our epic plans. And for this, they resent us, they hate us, and they try to kill us whenever possible.

We've all seen them. Myopic little blonde psychopaths who stampede about the complex in bovine torch-bearing herds of chattel to surround your home and castle and avenge themselves on your body for the simple fact that they are burdened with a smaller brain, fewer scruples, thinner ethics, a vastly inferior genetic structure, and no taste in clothing whatsoever. How miserably pathetic. I would pity them, were not their skulls so damnably thick.

These lowbrow throwbacks have the nerve to call themselves "pure strain humans" simply because they lack the evolutionary capabilities acquired by those of us who are the vanguard of genetic superiority.

Pure they ain't, but they certainly are a strain. If they had their way, we'd be back in the plastic age, wallowing about in tar pits, fossilizing our clothing, bellowing and bickering over lumps of uncooked Hot Fun, and nobody would wear spandex tights.

We don't want to see that happen, and neither do you. Nor do you want to have to tolerate these vigilante vermin and their incessant pestering.

And now, since it's the dawn of a new age, you don't have to.

Because now, there's Pur-B-GON!

Ain't life great? Aren't you glad you're a mutant?

Pur-B-GON will rid your house of pure-strain pests — no fuss, no mess, no unsavory smells a few days later. Guaranteed!

Perish the Thoughtless

Pur-B-GON uses state-of-the-art biochemical compounds to free your advanced life from pure-strain stress. Laboratory tested and proven, Pur-B-Gon is all the easier to use because we provide it to you, the concerned mutant, in several different forms, one of which is certain to meet your pest-control needs:

Pur-B-GON Klowd Kan sprays Pur-B-GON in a fine aerosol mist. Packaged in an colorful can with an EZ-Grip finish, it comes complete with a stylish plastic carrying case with belt loops. Guaranteed to repel 99 percent of pure-strain peons, Pur-B-GON Klowd Kan is quick and versatile. Do not use in enclosed areas.

Pur-B-GON Klowd is also available in custom building spray systems for installation security. Or our conversion kit can be attached to your regular fire control or air-conditioning system.

Pur-B-GON Sqwert Kan is a pressurized container which releases a steady stream of Pur-B-GON liquid. Although not as lingering as the spray, it is longer-ranged and it absorbs quickly through the skin, thereby affecting pure-strain humans who have the minimal intellect necessary to wear a gas mask without asphyxiating. Since Pur-B-GON Sqwert is more concentrated than Pur-B-GON Klowd, it can often paralyze your aggressors and cause them severe gastrointestinal distress. (You'll know when this happens. We recommend wearing shoes with excellent traction, or better yet galoshes, when using Pur-B-GON Sqwert Kan.)

Pur-B-GON Sqwert is also available in industrial drums with hoses for those occasional pure-strain riot-control situations. These can be loaded onto ordinary autocars, or you can order a matching pullcart for places ordinary vehicles can't reach.

Pur-B-GON Kil-Pilz are a solid pellet form of Pur-B-GON, molded, colored, and flavored to look like Kruncheetyme Algae Chips and several other popular pure-strain snack foods. This is the most concentrated form of Pur-B-GON, and is usually lethal. Just place Kil-Pilz by your windows, doors and chimneys to nail those foraging pesky buggers as they come and go. You might even want to hide some in your pantry to nail those buggers crafty enough to raid your larder.

Furthermore, Kil-Pilz have an extended effect: after a pure strain subhuman eats them, he'll often crawl home to die, where the partially metabolized Pur-B-GON on his breath and in his sweat

can affect others in his lair. Kil-Pilz are also available in jumbo Pure Hostile Hostels. The Pure Hostile Hostel is a full building, designed to be an optimal dwelling for pure strains, yet is contructed entirely out of solid Pur-B-GON crystals. Pure strains go in, but they never come out.

Safe and Fun to Use

Pur-B-GON's active ingredient is an advanced biochemical compound called I-1-2-kilemol, a secret substance which reacts with primitive human DNA patterns, becoming a very nasty genetically-oriented neurotoxin. In fact, Pur-B-GON is so effective that when the compound was finally perfected, two pure-strain spies in our temple died on the spot. Now everyone in Risirch and De'Sann temples has been baptized with Pur-B-GON and our Temple is a safe, healthy, happy, and genetically superior place.

And for those of you who are back-to-nature mutants, you needn't worry about your little ones! Granted Pur-B-GON looks like Krunchcetyme algae chips, but even if your good friends mistakenly devour a few, I-1-2-kilemol is perfectly benign to humans with advanced genetic patterns. In fact, you might want to consider serving Pur-B-GON Kil-Pilz at your next social function, if you suspect there might be a few pure-strains about. You can never be too safe ...

Some of My Best Informers are Pure Strains

Do you have a few pure-strain servants you don't want to get rid of? No problem there, my mutant friend! We have Pur-B-GON Antidote available in both liquid (hypodermic) and solid form. Simply administer to your pure-strain human daily; it's nearly painless! Your pure-strain will love you for it.

How Much for Peace and Quiet?

Pur-B-GON is priced so incredibly low, that we actually lose money selling it! I know, it's hard to believe, but we here at Risirich and De'Sann want you to be happy and safe! But how can we afford to do that? We feel that if you buy Pur-B-GON, not only will you have more time and money to shop, but you'll be more inclined to buy our other fine products, each geared expressly for the mutant lifestyle. So go ahead, take advantage of us! The PSHs will certainly try to take advantage of you ...

Pur-B-GON trial sizes (one half-sized item) can be had for the amazing low price of one — that's right, just one — stylus! This is our way of introducing you to how thoroughly useful Pur-B-GON is!

Or you can buy your very own supply of Pur-B-GON by the case (one dozen units) for the concrete-bottom price of only four undamaged floppy disks! Amazing, I know, but true! Just four floppy disks, and they don't even have to be formatted!

Just bring your disks to Risirch and De'Sann temples, and walk away, safe and protected with your Pur-B-GON in whatever form you desire: versatile aerosol, powerful spray, or lethal pellet form. You'll be glad you did.

Refills also available. Ask your confessor for current prices.

Game Stuff

Pur-B-GON Klowd Kan
range: 2m damage: 0 ammo: 15
non-mutants roll each round vs. Endurance
failure forces flight (and stun - no other action)

Pur-B-GON Sqwert Kan
range: 6m damage: 7 ammo: 10
non-mutants roll each round versus half Endurance
failure forces flight (or worse if victim is incapacitated)

Pur-B-GON Kil-Pilz
range: 0 damage: 14 quantity: 24
roll for each one eaten
roll vs. Moxie to recognize as other than junk food

* Mutants are unaffected by any of these

R&D's original concept for Mut-O-ZAP and Pur-B-GON was to generate a war between mutants and PSHs by marketing weapons. This would then accelerate the demand for weapons and countermeasures, and R&D could bleed everyone white.

Panic struck when both ads were placed in each catalog, but the actual effect was far better than anticipated. Seeing that the other side had weapons, everyone felt compelled to buy their own. Now there's an arms race going on and R&D is really raking in the megabucks.

But we digress.

Pur-B-GON is as benign to mutants as, say, hair spray. It's none too pleasant, especially when someone sprays a bunch of it in an enclosed area.

Enterprising characters might try such things as tossing a Klowd Kan into a PSH bonfire, or puncturing a strategically placed can with sniper fire. Reward such daring feats. They'll annoy the PSHs no end and the Troubleshooters will become Wanted.

Pur-B-GON is basically idiot-proof, but that doesn't mean the malfunction roll is discarded. If a mutant rolls a 20 with the Klowd Kan or Sqwert Kan, he grabbed the can backwards and nails himself in the face. Though hardly lethal, this is not a pleasant experience.

Floppy disks. Now where could the Troubleshooters find some floppy disks?

Rumor has it there's a PSH enclave known as the Knights against Genetic Blemishes. The KGB is known to have resurrected a small compnode and are using it to run a lot of programs with which they intend to track down and eliminate all mutants in Alpha Complex. Starting with the Troubleshooters' Simplex, naturally.

The Troubleshooters must raid the compnode, stealing the disks (I wonder what's on them?). That's when they find out that the KGB is a front for the International Communist Revolutionary Movement. Funny accents, anyone? Dot might not make the Troubleshooters werry popular anymore.

Or maybe the Troubleshooters get sent instead to CPU sector (see *The Iceman Returneth*) to steal a bunch of cards instead. Here we witness the grand return of the indestructible Commie propaganda pamphlets. Maybe the Troubleshooters accidentally reboot The Computer, and the first thing it reads is the propaganda?

Nah. They'd never believe you.

O-Zonulator

A One-of-a-Kind Fashion Statement

Opening in the dome got you hot? Outside light burning a hole in your arm? Lips splitting up to your eyebrows? Worry no more, for we've got a cure for your redneck woes!

Are You Seeing Red?

Extensive medical research has demonstrated that, aside from nuclear core meltdown, undiminished light from Outside is the leading cause of blisters, red necks, chapped face, and spontaneous human combustion. We all know that these epidermal epidemics can cause rash behavior.

Perhaps you are acquainted with the phenomenon yourself: you take a walk across a ruined dome, and during the whole journey your eyes are blinded by the light. When you finally finish your trek, you find your skin looks like it failed a napalm test. No, it's not cute; it's cutaneous.

Then, several days later, every square millimeter of your skin aches as you peel like a disgusting primitive reptile, leaving flakes of your abused body on the floor to attract scrubots, mute testimony to the suffering you've endured. It's like dandruff over your whole body, only you feel like you've taken a dip in hydrochloric acid at the same time.

We here at Risirch and De'Sann (the only true priests — beware cheap imitations!) have determined that this unwanted injury is a direct effect of a peculiar form of light found only in the horrific ambience of the Outside. Recent damage to the environmental integrity of Alpha Complex have allowed this harmful energy to enter our previously safe (though brutally governed) enclaves in several places.

This unusual form of light is very savage in its ability to cause redness and burns, hence our name for it: *ultraviolent reddiation*. A focal point source for this energy has been located; it meanders across the "sky," which (for those of you who don't know) is the dome of the Outside. We have dubbed this point source the Singular Ultraviolent Nucleus, or SUN for short.

Large opaque objects are useful defenses against the SUN, although the SUN also has a secondary effect of raising temperatures above a comfortable 40 degrees centigrade. In fact, were it not for the effects of large opaque objects (like the domes in our complex) to dampen these destructive heat rays, our experts theorize that life itself would be impossible. Unfortunately, the SUN makes circadian passes over our complex, a tactic which allows it to irradiate a much larger area than it might if it just stayed still. That is to say, it reduces the life-preserving effects of opaque shielding by constantly shifting its angle of attack. Pretty crafty.

We here at Risirch and De'Sann are constantly working on ways to destroy the SUN. When we succeed (which is inevitable), the entire Outside will be fit for human colonization. In the meantime, though, adventuresome clones like you and me need protection against this relentless demon from above.

Most citizens can continue to rely on the shielding provided by the domes and other large inanimate objects. But gross, static blocks are far too simple to protect the modern clone-on-the-move like yourself against this unholy freak of physics. What you need is something which can fight the SUN's deadly effects on its own ground ... something that can directly counteract the deleterious effects of SUN light ... something that can destroy those sinister SUN beams instead of simply deflecting them ... something which can protect you against SUN burns wherever you go ...

Warning! Some of our heretic competitors have sold translucent plastic bags which they claimed were effective protection against this dangerous form of energy. They advised their customers to wear these plastic bags over their heads and cinch them tightly around the neck to avoid SUN burns. Unfortunately, these devices were wholly inadequate, and had some rather tragic side effects. Those who made the mistake of purchasing devices from these heretic temples will sadly never be able to correct their mistake. This is but one example of the fate which awaits unbelievers!

But you are far too smart to fall for farcical devices like that. And you are far too energetic to quarantine yourself behind the remaining cover of the broken domes. What *YOU* need is Risirch and De'Sann's all-new, fabulous device:

THE O-ZONULATOR!

There Goes the SUN

The O-Zonulator is a portable, stylishly post-modern device which generates a secret, non-toxic gaseous compound that permeates the air around you. This compound, which we have named Secret Formula O-3, is completely harmless to human life (really), and actually *absorbs* incoming ultraviolent reddiation. Thus, the device creates an area with no ultraviolent reddiation; a zero-area, or, as we call it, an O-Zone.

And there's no need to worry about damaging gases! As it works, efficiently absorbing the death-dealing beams, Secret Formula O-3 breaks down into other benign substances, so you can continue to breathe freely, secure in the safety of Secret Formula O-3!

The O-Zonulator has several individually controlled output nozzles, which are flexible and can be arranged to provide coverage of maximum efficiency. If the air is still, you can simply close all but one of the nozzles, and have all the O-Zonulator's output placed directly over your head. If the air is moving, place all your output nozzles upwind. If you need to cover an entire Team, spread the nozzles as far apart as you like to provide maximal coverage.

Each lightweight O-Zonulator disposable charge cell contains enough Secret Formula O-3 to last for 16 hourcycles of normal use, or about six hourcycles of maximum output. The charge cells are small, lightweight, and come in a variety of designer colors for the fashion-conscious traveller. Never again will your appearance suffer for the sake of protection, nor will your face clash with the red garments you wear!

You can purchase O-Zonulator charges individually, or, if you buy them in six-packs, we'll throw in a plastic ring carrying device. For extra savings, you can order Secret Formula O-3 by the case!

Ready or Not, You're Not Red!

In addition, each O-Zonulator has a built-in emergency safety feature! Should you run out of charge cells while on a long mission to NDA Sector, you can set your O-Zonulator to convert ordinary household air into Secret Formula O-3!

Simply remove the empty charge cell from the intake nozzle, and insert a fully-charged laser barrel into the emergency power compartment. The O-Zonulator will use the power supplied by the cell to generate additional Secret Formula O-3 through a process known as ... what? No, of course I wasn't going to tell! Put that cone rifle down! (Those Vulture Warriors can be so touchy!)

A fully-charged laser barrel should provide enough energy to keep the O-Zonulator running for at least a full hourcycle.

Clergy General's Note

This is an emergency safety feature ONLY! Prolonged use can be hazardous to your health, especially in enclosed areas. We warned you. Disobey the Priests of Risirch and De'Sann at your own risk.

Red Tag Special

The high demand for the O-Zonulator has far outstripped our production capacity. As a result we can only rent the units at this time. We hope that within a cycle we shall be able to sell them outright. When we do start selling them, our regular renters will receive preference on purchase orders.

The base unit can be rented for one Blue clearance reflec jumpsuit per monthcycle. Lower rates are available for extended journeys.

The disposable O-3 cannisters require a payment of three vacuum tubes (at least ten centimeters in length) each. Alternatively, you can buy a six-pack of Secret Formula O-3 for only twenty vacuum tubes, or a whole case of two dozen cannisters for only 45 tubes (a 10 percent savings off our regular price of 50 tubes!) Go ahead and let that SUN shine in, 'cause you'll be safe!

When ordering O-3 cannisters, please be sure to specify color: reactor red, soylent green, clockwork orange, or anoxic blue.

Custom peripherals are available for your O-Zonulator. Showerhead nozzles, pulse nozzles, extra long piping, you name it, we've got it. Make your O-Zonulator a one-of-a-kind fashion statement!

Game Stuff

L2 and E6 vs. sunshine.

The O-Zonulator is about the most worthless piece of trash that R&D has ever put out. Sunburn is not as endemic as they make it out to be, and the most effective countermeasure is an umbrella. Even if the Troubleshooters are going to be in bright sunlight for an extended period, winds will make the O-Zonulator all but ineffective.

About the only thing the O-Zonulator is really good for is protection against laser fire, although unfortunately most Troubleshooters won't think of that. It's L6 against Ultraviolet lasers, L5 against Violet, etc., declining to L2 against Green lasers and below.

If it's used at high output in a confined space (or if you're running away from someone firing), the extra concentration (or depth) of ozone might provide additional protection. Imagine standing up to an Ultraviolet laser cannon, the lethal energy fading into oblivion scant centimeters short of your swollen chest (or running feet!)

Of course, there are disadvantages to using it in enclosed areas, especially on emergency generation. The ozone tends to make people a little dizzy.

There are other problems with the O-Zonulator. It straps to your back, and it's large and gangly. The appendages are often a little loose and tend to drop, swing, or sway. It will often get hooked on things, snag expensive drapes, and goose unsuspecting passers-by. It can get inextricably entangled with pipes if you're trying to crawl through a maintenance duct. At times you should treat the O-Zonulator like a malicious mechanical spider clinging to the Troubleshooter's back.

If one of the cannisters of Secret Formula O-3 gets punctured (say, by a near miss with a laser pistol), it explodes due to pressure, and the oxygen in the ozone spontaneously ignites. Treat it as a grenade, but feel free to torch anything on the Troubleshooter's back. Including his back.

Inadequate maintenance or other freak occurrences can cause the O-Zonulator to malfunction. During regular use, this can convert all the nozzles to miniature flamethrowers. When the O-Zonulator is running on emergency conversion, there's no telling what it will put out. It malfunctions on 18 to 20 (roll once per hour), your choice of gas produced as a side effect.

There are those to whom the O-Zonulator can be quite valuable. Mystics, for example. Think how much fun they'd have wandering around tooting out copious clouds of Hallucinogenic gas!

Coms and Other Stuff

Ever miss the good old days? The days when a clone's only worry was how to get through the afternoon without getting dismembered, lasered, vaporized, or run over by a marauding band of Commie mutant traitors?

Gives you chills just thinking about it, doesn't it? Why, you can probably smell the sweet aroma of sizzling Troubleshooter even as we speak.

But, alas, things are no longer so simple. MegaWhoops meant clones had to learn to take care of themselves — how to find supplies, trade for hard-to-come-by items, and build a veritable Algae Chip empire!

It takes more than a quick laser pistol to succeed in the simplex. It takes a head for business, and Risirch and De'Sann makes the kind of coms you need to barter better. No more will you give up your last bottle of Bouncy Bubble Beverage in a deal, only to discover that the tape you traded for is not "A Thousand Clones," but "Teela-O vs. Godz-I-LLA." No more will that great reflec you bought at discount turn out to have a charred hole in an inconvenient place. You've bought your last used bot whose RAM is stuffed with holograms of some nature babe in a long white gown!

When you come back to the simplex after a hard day's survival, does it look as if a horde of elephantbots have trampled all over your desk? Do you have Power Services bills mixed in with messages from your not-so-secret-anymore society, all covered in spilled Hot Fun and sprinkled with a couple of Transwarbots ("It's a flybot! No, it's a warbot! No, it's a listening device planted on you by FCCCP, and they're on their way!")

Disorganization can lead to disaster in Post-MegaWhoops society. (When a Vulture Warrior demands your security clearance, and you hand him your "Smile If You're a Humanist" button, well ... if you don't buy from this section, you better buy a lot from "Weapons.") That's why R&D is offering a new line of products that will answer your letters, return your com calls, and come up with a reasonable answer when your usual partner in biological recreation activities wants to know where you were all nightcycle. ("Well, see, there was this giant mutant hamster ...!")

Feeling out of touch? Tired of cumbersome coms that take daycycles to connect you with the clone next door? Sick of crossed lines that leave you spilling all your Psion secrets into Anti-Mutant ears? What you need is a communications network you can rely on, and R&D has the best in the business! Granted, it's a *little* painful, you'll have to sleep on your side for the rest of your life, and you won't hear so well anymore, but that's a small price to pay. (On top, of course, of the rather large price you'll pay us.)

Yes, in Post-Crash Alpha, a clone isn't judged by how long he lives, but by how much stuff he accumulates while he's around. And when you're talking the best in "coms and stuff," you're talking Risirch and De'Sann (Temple to the stars)!

Steam Engine

When Bouncy Bubble Beverage Just Isn't Enough

And now, as a public service to the entire complex, the priests of Risirch and De'Sann take these pages and dedicate them, not to selling new and exciting and very inexpensively priced gizmos, but to a truly charitable and philanthropic public service announcement.

Yes, a public service announcement. For we here at Risirch and De'Sann (the only temple with true divine inspiration — the others are all simply deluding themselves and their hapless customers) are eternally dedicated to the principle of turning a fast bu — er, serving the populace at large, yes, serving *even the nonbelievers*, for we are confident that our devices will convert even our worst enemies into our loyal and fervent customers. It's amazing what you can do with a mega-blaster these days.

This public service announcement (a selfless gesture on our part, we assure you, and one which is bound to give us lots of good PR) is nothing less than a small discourse on survival in the Post-Crash era. We don't want you to die out there. We'd rather you bought our stuff like the good and religious citizens you are.

So here we go, it's time for:

The Official Selfless Risirch and De'Sann Post-Mega-Whoops Survival Short Course (Correspondence Version, Tuition Waived)

The most important asset in this dark and troubled time is nothing less than water. Aqua. Hydrogen Oxide. H2O (sounds like a sneeze, don't it?).

This simple, yet unique liquid makes up 98 percent of our bodies (+/- four percent, for you mutants out there). The other few percent of our bodies is comprised of stuff like skin, concentrated sweat, bad manners, etc.

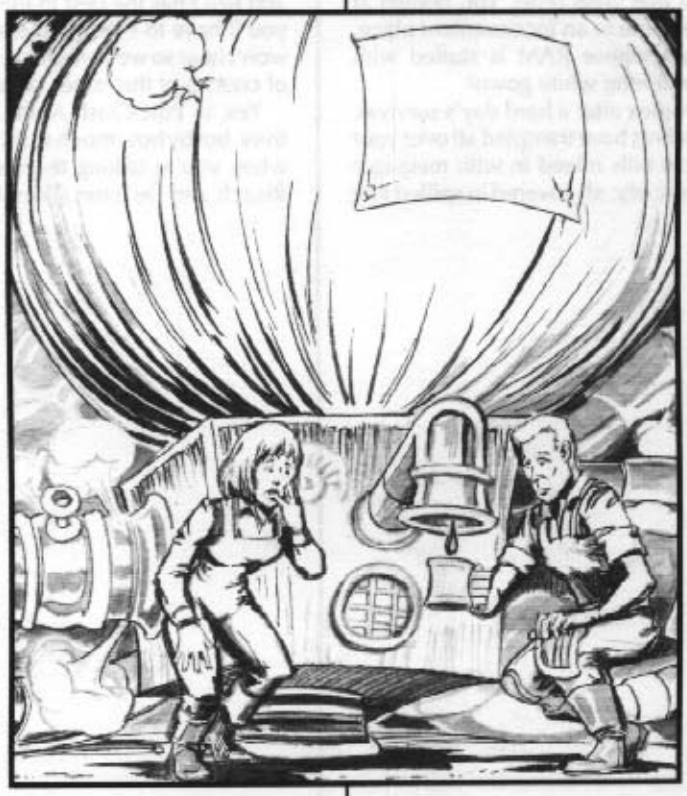
Water is essential to our survival. Yet for most of us, water is becoming a scarce quantity. Perhaps you are one of the lucky ones, living in an area where water is still plentiful ... for the moment. But the cardinal rule of survival is "Never Get Complacent." The watchword is "Paranoia."Just because you've got all the water you can stand now, doesn't mean you'll get even a drop tomorrow. Water hoarders are everywhere, and your miserable canteen isn't a drop in the bucket compared to what you'll need to survive a week.

For example, even today, in the East NDE's there are several notorious waterlords, including the infamous Sim-B-ADD. Although these cruel tyrants are fighting among themselves, they still hold the entirety of the NDN Reservoir in their collective taloned grip. Few who dare to dip their cups into the NDN Ocean ever return to tell the tale, and the NDE's are suffering a drought while the NDEans line the coffers of Sim-B-ADD and the like with plastic and silicon.

In addition, many other sources of water have either dried up, or (as is the case with an estimated 72 percent of water fountains) been plugged. Those few sources of potable water that remain are in imminent danger of being contaminated, either accidentally or as an act of sabotage in a war.

Dews and Don'ts

Survival in this day and age depends on a clone's ability to access potable water whenever desired. There are many ways to do this. Some work, some don't.



Heat Lamp Still: Spreading out a large piece of translucent plastic in a well-lit, hot and humid area can collect water from the very air around you. Placing a heavy object (like someone's head) in the center of the tarp will help the water to accumulate in the center, where it can drip down into whatever receptacle you have. This is a slow process, and you can't use it to grab a quick drink. No, firing a laser at the tarp won't speed up the process any.

Dew Collection: In certain areas the environmental control is a little out of whack. In these areas, placing collectors out in the eveningcycle will reward you with a few drops of water in the morningcycle. Bouncy Bubble Beverage cans (cut in half), styrofoam cups, and sheet metal seem to work pretty good. Again, this is slow, and will not result in much water.

Traitor Press: We've heard that some people are using powerful hydraulic devices to separate out the two percent miscellaneous from the water that abounds in everyone's corpse. To the best of our knowledge, this process is rather messy and has yet to be perfected, although some unusual wines are appearing on the market.

Sucking the Bottoms Out of Fuel Tanks: We all know that petrochemicals float on top of water, or, from the opposite point of view, water sinks in oil. Many of the fuel tanks currently in use therefore have accumulated quite a bit of water over the years; water that can be reached by a courageous (read: stupid) clone with a long straw. Best have some antacids handy in case you get some gas.

But far and away the easiest and most practical way to garner your own water is to use Risirch and De'Sann's Steam Engine.

As we all know, steam is a material which is a blend of the fundamental elements Hottite and Wettium. Wettium can be distilled into water, but this can be difficult without first extracting it from the Hottite. This can be done manually, but since the ratio of Hottite to Wettium is about 3.8:1, this can be a painful experience. Just stick your face in a steam vent and see if you don't agree.

Thirst Things First

There's a lot of steam in Alpha Complex, and steam is a lot easier to acquire than water. It is estimated that 78 percent of all sources of water have been claimed as the undisputed property of some simplex or other, which means you'll have to bicker away an arm and a leg just to quench your thirst. On the other hand, only three percent of all steam sources have been claimed by a simplex. Steam is free. Get hold of some steam, and it's almost a sure thing that no one has laid claim to it.Which is an important consideration — after all, you don't want some irate local to kill you when you're trying to survive, right?

So, given that steam lines are as free as an Infrared with a plasma rifle, all you need is a way to extract the Wettium from the Hottite and convert it into potable water. And there's no easier way to do that than to use the Steam Engine (not available in stores)!

Water You Doing?

The Steam Engine uses an advanced solid-state Hottite extractor sieve to osmose the Hottite into a separate ventilation chamber. The Collected Wettium is then processed through our patented design distillation apparatus and delivered out of the Steam Engine as drinking water!

This amazing device is not only foolproof, but it works by itself! No time-consuming technical training! No need to constantly monitor its progress! No botching the job (unless you find a contaminated steam line). Hands-free drinking!

In fact, the only mechanical ability you need to use the Steam Engine is the ability to open and close the small valve through which the water is dispensed.

Well, yeah, we're assuming you can force the steam into the engine's intake ... but we've made that easy to do also. The intake manifold is made of flexible polycarb, and its billows design means you can easily wrap it around any venting steam line. Or, if you've found a steam line that isn't venting, you can simply puncture it with your laser, no problem. Hey,we made the Steam Engine a cinch to use.

Portable Potable Potential

The Steam Engine is also remarkably light, in spite of its size! That's because the Steam Engine is made of amazing high-tech materials, which are so durable they can be made paper-thin. But even with the strategic materials used in the construction of the Steam Engine, it would have weighed considerably more than it does, but for one important discovery.

In ancient times, Old reckoning even by the standards of the Old Reckoning, they knew of the existence of Phlogiston, a particle with negative mass. Phlogiston, when used in construction, lightens the weight of the construct. We have rediscovered the formula necessary for the isolation of phlogiston, and have alloyed it with the steel and plastic we used for the construction of the Steam Engine.

This makes the Steam Engine the lightest, yet most useful survival tool available anywhere! Which is not to say the Steam Engine *is* available anywhere; it's not. Only we have the technology. I was trying to say that of all devices available anywhere, to wit, in any and/or all locations in the complex, this is the best.

Getting Your Steam Engine

The Steam Engine is available for a song! Well, not exactly a song, but it is available for only 100 credits! Just 100! Or the equivalent in blank magnetic keys. Sorry, no refunds or exchanges.

In Summary

There. A few pages dedicated to the art and science of survival, instead of a cheap plug for our wonderful hardware. Aren't you proud of us? Doesn't it make you want to buy more items? Aren't we wonderful, compassionate, selfless guys? Think about it. We'll be waiting, receipt books in hand.

Because we care.

Game Stuff

The Steam Engine illustrates several of R&D's devious marketing strategies.

The Magic of Science: Yes, R&D knows that there are no such things as Hottite, Wettium, and Phlogiston. These were simply invented to play upon the average citizen's common sense, and to twist the citizen's perceptions of reality to make science an unintelligible mystic art. This keeps people from asking too many questions about how devices are put together. It also allows R&D to create and sell worthless devices like the Steam Engine.

Authoritative Statements: "It is estimated that 78 percent of all sources of water have been claimed ... (but) only three percent of all steam sources have been claimed ..." This statement has four major hidden flaws.

First of all, these are estimates, and are subject to (gross) error. Second, even if a body of water has been claimed, that doesn't mean the so-called owner exerts any actual control over it. Third, the reason only three percent of steam lines are proprietary is that no one bothers to stake claims on them. In actuality, 90 percent of steam lines are controlled by someone or other. Fourth, the bare and simple fact is that water is a lot more available than steam.

Yet the way R&D presents their facts leads to the conclusion that the Steam Engine is a great investment.

Generated Demand: "Perhaps you are one of the lucky ones, living in an area where water is still plentiful ... for the moment." This creates a market for an otherwise useless device. Everyone who reads it thinks they've been lucky, so everyone buys a Steam Engine, which in turn leads to a shortage of Steam Engines, which leads to panic buying, etc., etc. Pretty clever, huh? And even if someone sees through this tactic, the first time they run short of water, they're gonna panic.

Downright Lies: Despite their grand claims about high-tech, lightweight paper-thin phlogiston-impregnated materials, despite their explanations of solid-state osmosis and extractors and the like, despite all their high-falutin' pseudoscience, the Steam Engine can be summed up in one simple description:

An empty steel box.

With a faucet at the bottom.

Cell-U-LAR's Phone

THIS ARGUMENT IS COSTING HIM FOUR BILLION CREDITS

And maybe his life.

But I guess that goes without saying. And it's kind of beside the point of this advertisement. So before I go and waste all your time and my valuable ad space telling you this guy's gotten himself into some real deep gruel and is probably going to be breathing out the back of his head very soon now, I really ought to change the subject back to the opportunity cost of this argument, which is where I was before I began this digression, right?

I mean, what good is it to worry about how much money you might be losing if you're gonna "buy the farm" with it anyhow? So the concept that this particular clone pictured above doesn't really give a whiff about what I'm gonna offer you shouldn't surprise anyone, but in any event, it shouldn't detract from the perceived value of the offer I'm about to make. After all, a guy in his position would sell out anybody to get his vittles out of the fire, and wouldn't give a rip about quality or workmanship or our lifetime guarantee. Seriously, considering his situation, a lifetime guarantee might only cover about 10 seconds. And that might kind of turn me off to a new product, too, regardless of how nifty it is. And let me tell you, Cell-U-LAR's Phone is pretty darn incredible.

But, unlike the clone in the picture, you won't have to plead and whine to get hold of this nifty new concept in personal communication. See, what I was talking about when I brought up the opportunity cost of the above-mentioned argument was that, aside from the fact that he's going to be sucking on some photons very shortly, at the very moment this photograph was taken the clone pictured had a powerful and influential customer back in his office who wanted to spend incredible sums of cash for some measly little reactor parts so his reactor wouldn't explode in his back yard. But all this guy's secretary could say was that he'd stepped outside to have a discussion with some business acquaintances, and The Computer only knows when he'll be back, so this rich client has no choice but to diddle about and wait, while the clone in the picture wastes his time agreeing with every stupid thing his opponents are saying when he could be double-timing back to the office. Do you see what I mean?

What I mean is that while this incredibly rich and gullible customer is jingling his money bags and making passes at this guy's secretary, this yo-yo pictured above couldn't be reached, not even if he'd left word with his secretary where he'd be going, because these guys have obviously taken him to some secluded spot, so he instead spends his time finding out what a hot laser barrel tastes like.

Pretty stupid, huh? I mean, what would you rather do, have a psychopath inspect your dental work with a hand cannon, or pour someone else's hard-earned credits into your pockets? The choice seemed pretty obvious to me. But not to this guy. Well, I guess the choice would be pretty obvious to him, but presumably the roughnecks talking to him didn't think to ask him if he'd rather be back in his office raking in the creds, although the answer ought to be as plain as the nose on your face before it gets shot off. Which is why you need Risirch and De'Sann's new Cell-U-LAR's Phone.

Not to keep your nose from being shot off, I mean, but to get these kind of business options brought to your attention before it's too late.

Which it will be quite soon for the guy in the picture. Serves him right for not buying Cell-U-LAR's Phone. I mean, even if his secretary did call him and tell him he had a rich client waiting for him with vatloads of moolah, judging from the expressions in the picture I don't think the guys with the laser would be too keen on just letting him trot back to the office to get rich so he could buy a nuclear bomb and blow them all away. They just don't strike me as being that magnanimous.

So even if he did have Cell-U-LAR's Phone, all it would do is make him think about how incredibly stupid he was to go out back and argue with a bunch of guys with guns and a predilection for dentistry, which I have to admit is a pretty good argument against buying Cell-U-LAR's Phone. The last thing I want to do when I die is contemplate what an absolute moron I am. If I was a moron, that is. Which I'm not, after all — I'm Head Priest. But you have to remember that the picture above probably does not apply to you. Yet. So there's no reason for *you* not to buy one. No, not a picture, Cell-U-LAR's Phone. Really. They're great!

And even if I did wander by a situation like this one and sold the guy Cell-U-LAR's Phone so he could call his secretary, as soon as he did and found out about his client, all the other guys would probably run back to his office and rob the client, which would make the client really upset, but that wouldn't matter too much to the clone in the picture — from now on I'll call him "Fred" — that wouldn't matter too much to Fred because he'd just be a steaming corpse in a back alley and not too likely to retain any of his current customers anyway.

But it might matter to the secretary, because she could take over the business, barricade the door against the interlopers, close the deal, and make big bonzo creds. So she should have convinced Fred to buy a Cell-U-LAR Phone no matter how stupid he was.

But that's not the point. The point is, Fred could have known he was missing the big sale, which might have made him a little more cautious next time around, and maybe he could have closed some kind of deal to bail him out of his trouble. Because Cell-U-LAR's Phone lets you stay in touch with your business every single hourcycle of every single daycycle, regardless of who's threatening to cauterize your tonsils.

Not only that, but Cell-U-LAR's Phone is better than a pager. Not only can your office call you and tell you that some real ichray and upidstay folks just meandered in, but you can call your office and ask for the latest reports on stock, sales, and the money remaining in your clients' accounts. Plus you can do more mundane things like tell them to chill some Bouncy Bubble Beverage for when you return from that long and tiring meeting.

Or you could even call for help negotiating a deal, which, now that I think of it, is a real good reason for Fred to have bought Cell-U-LAR's Phone. Sure, his enunciation would have been none to clear with a large and fully charged tube of electric death in his mouth, but maybe his secretary would have caught on anyway. Plus, if he'd had more foresight (which he probably didn't since he ended up in this situation), he could have called for help before they shoved a gun in his face.

What Is Cell-U-LAR's Phone?

I'm really glad you asked that, because that shows you're reading this article with actual interest instead of just wasting your time skimming the words while parked in some disorganized yahoo's waiting room. But before I tell you all about Cell-U-LAR's Phone, I should take this opportunity to point out that if you *are* sitting in someone's reception area, if that inconsiderate jerk on the other side of the door had thought to buy Cell-U-LAR's Phone he'd be running his business a little more efficiently and you wouldn't have to spend your time heating his upholstery with your butt.

On the other hand, if *you'd* bought Cell-U-LAR's Phone, you could've called ahead and found out you'd have to wait, so you could have spent your time more efficiently. But then, I guess if you already had Cell-U-LAR's Phone you wouldn't be reading this ad, so you're obviously smart enough to be interested in one, right? Like maybe this is the first time you've heard of them or something. So I'll take this opportunity to say that Risirch and De'Sann are the only TRUE priests (beware cheap imitations) and I'm really not a moron in spite of what I said a few paragraphs ago. After all, I still have my tonsils.

Now, where was I? Oh, yeah.

Cell-U-LAR's Phone is the greatest single device for personal communications known to clone. Or anyone else, if, indeed, there is anyone else. Which there isn't, unless you count bots, but they can radio each other direct, which is actually niftier than Cell-U-LAR's Phone, but not by much. And we can't make clones into bots anyway. At least, not yet. So the point is moot.

The point is that Cell-U-LAR's Phone is the most amazing and versatile comlink money can bribe. Buy, I mean.

Cell-U-LAR's Phone allows you to communicate with whoever you want, anywhere in Alpha Complex, at any time, no matter where you are, even if you're getting your teeth cleaned by a bot in direct radio contact with an overloading reactor.

Never again will you miss an important call, which can do wonders for your business. It can also do horrible things to your self-esteem if you're kind of dumb. Take Fred there, for example. How do you think he'd feel knowing how big of a dolt he's being? But you're not as stupid as Fred is, right?

See, Cell-U-LAR's Phone is a one-cell organism specially engineered for tympanic resonance in a wide range of frequencies, which is to say it's like a speaker. It faithfully reproduces almost any sound, giving it lifelike quality, which is a feature you're probably not going to notice if your life is on the line, but which is still pretty neat since bots don't have lifelike qualities in their voices to be reproduced. So we're already one up on those tin cans. Plus we don't have overloading reactors inside our bodies like some scrubots I know.

Cell-U-LAR's Phone has a custom micro-transmitter and receiver which patches it in to your own unique communication frequency to insure privacy, which is another feature Fred is not particularly concerned with. In fact, I'll bet privacy is exactly what he doesn't want. But you will, when you're negotiating tricky deals that will result in the deaths of all those people you don't like. Like maybe your reactor maintenance personnel.

Be warned, though, that although Cell-U-LAR's Phone uses a unique transmission frequency broadcast through our private temple echo station, that Cell-U-LAR's Phone patches in to the standard Alpha Complex communications system, so you might want to make sure that whoever you're dealing with has got a secure line. Which he would if he also had Cell-U-LAR's Phone. You ought to require all your customers to get them. You want to be safe, right? Not catch any nasty bugs? (Come on, laugh. That's a pun.)

And Cell-U-LAR's Phone is painless to install. Well, maybe not. totally painless, but it's a lot less painful than eating photons like Fred or even falling down the stairs, which is a silly thing to do when there are perfectly good elevators around. It's even less painful than stubbing your toe, which I admit is a pretty weak comparison since on the one hand you're talking about a blunt strike against your foot caused by your own clumsiness and in the other we're talking about a searing needle-like pain in your ear inflicted by some attendant, which seems a lot more personal than an attack on an appendage all the way at the other end of your body.

Not to say toes aren't important, mind you, I rather like mine and intend on keeping them all. Toes are pretty cool. It's just that you can't place Cell-U-LAR's Phone in your toe. I mean, you'd look pretty silly holding your foot to your ear when you're trying to carry on a dignified negotiation. 'Nuff said.

So anyway, the installation procedure is a nearly painless (with above disclaimer) operation where we inject your very own Cell-U-LAR Phone into your ear right next to your ear drum where its tympanic resonance will get you in the Complex rhythms. (Did you catch that? Drum? Tympanic? Rhythms? Triple pun! I must be on a roll ... a drum roll!)

So your Cell-U-LAR Phone just sits in the aural canal and whispers sweet somethings in your ear. There's no chance of anyone eavesdropping on your conversation, at least not between your Cell-U-LAR Phone and our tower, where we patch into the Alpha Complex communications network. I mean, we'd have to think you were pretty stupid to believe we could guarantee the security of the whole complex's com system. Shott, if you were that stupid you'd be dead or your reactor would be blowing up in your back yard or you'd be too busy falling down stairs to read this ad.

The Care and Feeding of Cell-U-LAR's Phone

Like any living organism, Cell-U-LAR's Phone needs junk food to survive. Negligent maintenance can make your line go dead. And believe me, Cell-U-LAR's Phone repair services are even more painless than installation. So be sure to keep your Cell-U-LAR phone fed and happy.

To do this, simply give your Phone a weekly feeding of either 20 CCs of Bouncy Bubble Beverage (new or classic) or one gram of crushed Cruncheetyme Algae Chips. No need for subcutaneous administration, just place the foodstuffs in your ear before you go to bed at nightcycle. This will keep your Phone happy and sounding clear as a bell.

Cell-U-LAR Phone Sales

You can buy your very own Cell-U-LAR Phone for just 1000 credits, or one functional warbot brain (must be able to communicate directly with other bots by radio).

Then, if you decide to use your own radio broadcasting tower with your Cell-U-LAR Phone, we will allow you to set your own frequency. You owe nothing more!

If you'd rather rent the use of our broadcasting equipment, you pay only three spools of thread a monthcycle (four if the colors are mismatched). Or, you can sign up for lifetime access to our broadcasting for just one fully-charged waterproof laser barrel!

We guarantee you'll find your business exploding with the Phone. Well, maybe "exploding" is a bad choice of words, given the mention of nuclear reactors earlier in this ad. So I'll just say "booming," instead. Hmmm. Not much better. Oh, well.

Anyway, you'll be so efficient, so profitable, so downright organized that you won't have time to mess around with cheap punks who want to orally administer a laser shot. So now we finally have a good reason for Fred to have bought a Phone; he wouldn't have bothered with those dweebs.

So next time you get a gun shoved in your face, do so with the calm assurance of someone who owns a Cell-U-LAR Phone. Fred sure wishes he did.

Game Stuff

The Cell-U-LAR Phone is exactly what they say it is, and more. It is a perfectly portable cellular communication unit. It works exactly as described. It's wonderful. Really. Now come on, we're serious here, okay?

It's all this and more. A lot more. The cell is easily the size of your thumb. That's why it's so much fun to have installed. Repair work is occasionally lethal, and not just to the cell.

So anyway, there's this cell in your ear. It effectively blocks normal hearing on that side (maybe it *would* be smarter to put in in your toe). It occasionally wriggles around into a more comfortable position, making the user lose his balance (remember, your balance is in your inner ear).

Feeding is an extremely annoying thing to have to do, but very necessary. Just a small sip of Bouncy Bubble Beverage or enough chip crumbs to plug your ear are all the cell requires. This usually generates hysterical laughter from onlookers, and often stains your pillow.

But if you don't feed the cell, it dies and nasty things start to happen. Flies congregate around your ear. Your friends all stand upwind of you. And the communication chips, no longer contained by the cell wall, start to rattle around in your ear like — well, like rattles.

Overfeeding the cell is even worse, and is frighteningly easy to do. The cell starts to grow. In a very short time (usually less than one play session's worth) it'll look like a sickly-colored water balloon is starting to squeeze out of your ear. And it kind of wiggles as it gets its first taste of freedom.

Naturally, the mechanical parts of this cybernetic phonelink are also less than perfect. Occasionally, you'll get some feedback or signal crossing. No big deal unless you go through some heavy magnetic flux, or stand too near a tacnuke (EMP, remember?).

Most people don't have the creds on hand to buy a Cell-U-LAR Phone (named because High Programmers, while hated, are still status symbols) for cash. This way you can design a great adventure for them to get a bot brain to buy the phone with! Get a bunch of Trekkie bots and call it Spark's Brain.

Oh, yeah, one last thing. There is a little-known option for a Cell-U-LAR Pay Phone. You know, stick a credit in your ear and dial? Check it out.

BickerBetter™

Traveling Salesclone's Companion Priceless Pricefixer

"Batty Betty bicked a bunch of baking butter with a batter bidder. Betty's butter bicker made the batter bidder bitter. But Batty Betty's baby brother bravely brought his BickerBetter. The BickerBetter made the bidding better, and the butter bidder wasn't bitter and bought the baking butter from Batty Betty. Baby brother's BickerBetter billed the butter bidder's biller and Betty felt better. Batty Betty and the batter bidder have been bosom buddies ever since.

"Bravo!"

Testimonials like these prove that R&D's amazing BickerBetter is the best accessory a free traitor — er, free **trader** can have.

The BickerBetter uses multicorder technology adapted to biological scanning. You might call it a bicorder. But then again, you might not.

The bioscanners built into the BickerBetter constantly monitor your subject's pulse, respiration, blush response, temperature, pupil dilation, pheromone production, and skin resistivity. It analyzes posture and body language. In addition, the BickerBetter analyzes the words spoken by your subject, and breaks them down into fundamental concepts, and unspoken implications tabulated by probability.

These parameters and more are input to the BickerBetter's CPU, which is hard-programmed with a state-of-the-art psychescan software package to provide you with instant and continuous readings on your subject's state and thoughts.

Armed with this information, you can better negotiate with even the most intransigent of customers.

Didja Hear the One about the Traveling Salesclone and the Seal Clubber's Scrubot?

But wait, there's more!

The BickerBetter knows jokes, too! Everyone knows there's no better way to break the ice with a tough client than a good joke or two!

Your BickerBetter is programmed to assess what type of humor your client would most likely appreciate, then bombard him with jokes until he is powerless to resist your business advances. Get a load of these all-time humor gems:

What did the Red clearance Crash survivor say to the Yellow clearance Crash survivor after the Red clearance Crash survivor stepped on the Yellow clearance Crash survivor's foot?

I'm going to kill you!

Why did the High Programmer cross the road?

To get away from the Mark IV!

How many CPU bureaucrats can you fit in a thimble?

All of them!

"I used the prototype BickerBetter when I talked to my chief priest about my promotion to deacon. He laughed so hard at the BickerBetter's jokes that he ruptured a lung and spent two weeks in the infirmary. I was promoted to his position instead! R&D moves in mysterious ways!"

— Praise-B-HAD

The Raw Details

The BickerBetter is a portable negotiations enhancer. It masses just three kilograms, and is designed to be inconspicuous in use. The people you're bickering with will not even know about your incredible advantage! You'll be able to blow them away (figuratively speaking) with your amazing diplomatic maneuvers!

The convenient shoulder strap is made out of padded tire rubber, so it's comfortable to wear, and stylish, too! (Your choice of steel-belted, whitewall, or winter treads. Or, for a sportier look, choose a strap made out of motorcycle tires!)

The BickerBetter's Price

We can't tell you how much the BickerBetter costs. In fact, we're not even selling them by mail order at all! The ONLY way to get your very own BickerBetter is to pay a cordial visit to R&D temples.

Once there, we'll talk about the price. But we warn you, we're so confident of the BickerBetter's ability to snow even the most veteran negotiators, that we'll be using the BickerBetter to bicker against you! We won't intervene at all!

It'll be just you and the BickerBetter you're trying to buy. And let me warn you, that BickerBetter drives a hard bargain. But look at it this way:

The more the BickerBetter gets you to pay for the privilege if owning it, the **more you need the BickerBetter!!!**

Game Stuff

There are very few BickerBetters, and what few there are, are very expensive. The BickerBetters themselves insure this. They would not want to live in a world where they were cheap.

The BickerBetter has a rudimentary intelligence, which in turn leads to a childish sort of pride. This can be problematic when someone yells at their BickerBetter, because it will tend to sulk.

Conversely, the BickerBetter has none of the advantages of intelligence. Did you notice that the bargaining software was hard-programmed? The BickerBetter cannot learn from its mistakes. If it fails to convince a given person, it will never be able to convince said person. It simply cannot learn how to adapt itself to a situation not in its program.

The BickerBetter has a psychescan skill of 19, a Bicker skill of 18, and almost all of the other Chutzpah skills at 14.

I know that they advertise the BickerBetter is "designed to be inconspicuous," and it is. It's about as inconspicuous as, say, a neon elephant on a turbo skateboard. It hums to itself, its miniature scanners lock onto the subject like superglue, and it flashes and beeps and the like. But, with a little fast talk (or, heaven forbid, some jokes from the BickerBetter) even the most nervous client can be convinced to negotiate. And once you get 'em talking, the BickerBetter will do the rest.

Now for a nasty adventure hook. We admit this thing is ludicrous, and against our designers' better judgments, but it's too silly to pass up:

The War of the Thing

There is a BickerBetter (serial number SOR-1) that got a heavy dose of hard radiation and achieved a higher level of intelligence. Its structured hard memory broke down into an ionic crystalline matrix. It proceeded to completely buffalo the simpleton who'd bought it, one Nose-G-OUL. So this BickerBetter sits in MOR Sector near an open nuclear reactor, where the steady stream of alpha radiation ensures it a supply of fresh thoughts.

From there it sits and negotiates with everyone brave enough to approach the thermo-fires.

It's a great negotiator. A better bartering BickerBetter has not been built. It hires guards to keep its treasures secure. It has hired technicians to give it whatever external controls it needs. All these are patched into its bitter BickerBetter brain box.

And now its seeks total domination. The Shadow of SOR-1 spreads. The Troubleshooters are sent to drop the thing into the crack in its doom. Even now they stand at the MOR door. Hope they don't make a hobbit of this ...

The Electric Chair

Is it impossible to find good help these days?

In these turbulent times of shifting loyalties and social entropy, when efficiency and workflow are at a premium, where can a visionary executive like yourself find a trustworthy secretary?

Late One Night ...

I must admit, I was perplexed. Julie-Y-OUS, Grandlord Landlord of New PAL Sector (an HPD&MC-run simplex), was seated in the other side of the combination confessional and rotisserie, crying hysterically into her Bouncy Bubble Beverage, thereby making it unnervingly cloudy. Oblivious to the fact, she took another deep drink and begged me to help her.

Now, even I will admit that I am the most enlightened and insightful of the Priesthood, but her problem seemed insoluble. Apparently several of her trusted aides were actually a Seal Club fanatic group called the Aardvark Anarchist Army, and they had thoroughly sabotaged her Simplex by altering dictated letters, rescheduling appointments, and cutting themselves in for a share of the Gross Simplecal Profit. And to top it all off, when she asked one of her aides-de-camp to do something about her aching back, he tried some very primitive acupuncture. She was less than pleased.

Her simplex was in a shambles, and the populace was in a sour mood, a fact made all the worse by her secretary wrongly quoting her as saying, "Let them eat Hot Fun!"

She managed, through long hours of personal attention, to salvage her simplex, although it took nearly a full cycle to complete her work. Her follow-up investigation unearthed even more Aardvarks, and eventually her entire secretarial staff was sacked ... opaque plastic sacks, that is. And I do mean everybody, even the kitchen staff supervisor. Not only that, but she had also uncovered some evidence of other long-range subversives planted in her simplex as a contingency against just such a security breach. There were Aardvark moles near her, and she did not know who they were. In short, she could trust no one. (Where have we heard that before?)

Now she was wasting too much time doing menial tasks she would rather delegate. She needed someone to handle her appointments with important personages, take dictation on sensitive subjects, and help her run the Simplex, and yet she needed to be certain this person wouldn't find new and innovative uses for a letter opener. She was in a bind, and if I couldn't solve her problem, her Simplex would not hold together for long.

The Idea

I brought this concern before the council of priests. We searched Holy Tomes for clues. We donned the sacred thinking caps of the New Orleans Saints. But we could not solve the dilemma. The only citizen that was conclusively trustworthy was a dead citizen. No one alive was that dependable.

But wait!

Did we say no one alive? Yes, we did! Divine inspiration struck us like a bolt of lightning, killing three!We were so enthusiastic, we completely ignored the apologies from the priest testing the shock cannon, for we knew What To Do.

We would *create* the perfect social secretary!

Undead Receptionists?

No, not undead. Not even biological at all! We had a bunch of leftover scrubot brains in the Temple's Holy Hall Closet, wedged somewhere in the back between the Chapstick refill kits and the petrified Twinkies.

We used these brains, which are known to be the most conscientious and enthusiastic of all bot brains, and created the ultimate in executive office companionship ...

The Electric Chair!

The Electric Chair is a full, luxurious real leather easy chair with footrest, housing not one, not two, but three bot brains and a whole plethora or two of automated office equipment. Just what every exec needs!

Amazing Standard Features

Speed: The Electric Chair uses state-of-the-art electronic circuitry to ensure the fastest processing of every command. Optimized coprocessors allow the bot brains to each handle any of the peripheral equipment.

Efficiency: Three coincident bot brains allow for true multitasking. Buffer boards for each brain allow you to maintain a backlog of tasks to be executed while your mind is concerned with more weighty matters like getting the address of that cute nature babe. (Plus, when you get it, you can be sure that your trusty chair has recorded it for you!)

Portability: The electric chair has rollers on the bottom for your around-the-office work, but is also equipped with a battery-charged anti-gravity unit for those occasional business trips. Since the Electric Chair is no larger than the average combot, you'll never be

at a loss for your personal secretary when you're visiting foreign dignitaries. Just relax; the anti-grav cushion will take you to your destination while you're dictating your latest memos!

Comfort: The overstuffed, all-leather upholstery is a joy to your fanny! And the Electric Chair has a built-in massage unit (adapted from standard scrubot rotary brushes) to help you unwind after even the hardest daycycle!

Style: We brought in one of the designers of DAN-ish modern furniture to handcraft each and every Electric Chair we sell. He labors joyously nightcycle and daycycle, under the benevolent eyes of the Temple Guard, so you're assured of the finest in quality and fashion.

Durability: We have taken every precaution against catastrophic failure of the Electric Chair. The frame is galvanized steel, the upholstery is the finest leather, the circuitry is state-of the art, and all the wiring is fully insulated. With all this going for it, we are proud to give the Electric Chair a full five-cycle warranty. Or, if you prefer, you can sign up for our lifetime guarantee plan.

Protection: Ain't nothin' that senses danger as well as a scrubot, unless of course it's three scrubots! Your Electric Chair's brains have all had their sensitivity boosted, and they'll get you out of any hazardous situation before you can say, "Help!" So confident are we of our Electric Chair that if it fails to get you out of a life-threatening situation, we'll give you double your money back, and you can *still keep the chair!*

Versatility: The scrubot brains have been fully reprogrammed for their new clerical services. They are guaranteed never to slip back into their old programming.

(By the way, that did happen with one of our prototypes. It was quite the humorous situation. See, this priest was proofing one of his own letters, and said, "Clean up this typing a bit, would you? It needs polishing." Then, when the predictable had happened, he made the mistake of saying, "I've been hosed." Ha ha. Really. Guess you had to be there.)

Compatibility: The bot brains have been carefully selected to be compatible both with each other and with the personality profile of the modern executive. We guarantee your dealings with the Electric Chair will be relaxing, even friendly.

Security: Each Electric Chair is keyed to your individual voice patterns, and will respond to no one else. Further, the Electric Chair has no external jacks, so no one can gain access to the inner programming of your chair.

Privacy: If you have some really sensitive details to attend to, the Electric Chair comes equipped with a telepathic dictation array. Just slip it over your head and *think* what you want to say. The Electric Chair will transcribe it just like you were speaking out loud.

Etc.: Each Electric Chair comes equipped with the following office supplies:

stapler, tape dispenser, universal gum solvent, everflo high-pressure pen, pseudo-cork bulletin board, telephone, fax machine, photocopier, letter-quality printer, data base software, VGA graphics screen, coffee maker, medicinal supplies (mostly wakey-wakey), paper folder (with 14 airplane designs), scissors, slugthrower holster, etc.

Cost 2 U

The Electric Chair, though somewhat pricey, is cheap at twice the price when you consider the value you're getting.

You can purchase your very own Electric Chair, complete with a full stock of supplies, for (your choice):

one Model 425 Mark IV warbot, one hydroelectric turbine, 200 kilos of nitroglycerine, or one unused vial of Chapstick (pre-Crash).

Plus, you can use your Electric Chair for 10 daycycles with no risk! If you're not completely satisfied, return it and owe nothing more!

Additional supplies and options can also be purchased for your Electric Chair. See your confessor for details.

Game Stuff

The Electric Chair can be just that: should it take some damage or somehow suffer undue stresses, it just might short-circuit. Assure your players that the chances of that are infinitesimal.

The three scrubot brains should be played as Larry, Curly and Moe. They are not happy without scrubot bodies. They are not happy being hooked together so that each of them can read the others' thoughts. "Oooh, a woise guy, huh?" Without recourse to physical violence, they often end up sending short overloads back and forth, some of which might zap the Troubleshooter (for no damage) or damage some stored data.

Frequent threats by the owner can keep these guys under control.

Speaking of control, these guys generally flee at the sign of any trouble, unless it's a truly serious face-off. Then they suddenly find their courage, and the Troubleshooter will probably lose his. Note that this in no way compromises the safety guarantee: if a Troubleshooter tries to collect, he obviously escaped the situation. If the Troubleshooter claims he didn't escape, but instead fought his way out, the situation was obviously not life-threatening. He survived, didn't he? QED.

Note that there are four ways to pay for the Electric Chair. The first three are very difficult, but hey, if someone offered to trade you the Mark IV for a measly Electric Chair, We'd be inclined to say yes, wouldn't you?

Needless to say, R&D doesn't expect to see any of the first three. It's worth a shot, though. Heck, you might want to have the players just stumble across the nitro. Getting it back would be loads of fun!

But most people are gonna buy the Electric Chair with the Chapstick, which is really not all that hard to find. Most Chapsticks are used to some extent, so the R&D Priests can "make a deal," offering to take the slightly used chapstick if the Troubleshooter also gives them something else.

But to Risirch and De'Sann, the Chair is a loss leader. Shortly after purchasing it, the Troubleshooter is gonna start running out of essentials: paper, pens, printer ribbon, etc. HERE'S where R&D is gonna turn their hefty profit. The Electric Chair is designed to not take standard paper, etc., so the Troubleshooters will have to come to the Temple for refills. And they'll pay for the privilege. The Priests calculate that they will turn a profit from their Electric Chairs after three monthcycles of normal use.

In addition, R&D will periodically announce new peripherals and upgrades, which will also be quite pricey.

Finally, the telepathic dictation bites big time. Everything done with this reads like stream-of-consciousness writing.

"To all employees lousy, ungrateful ought to fire them do the job better myself as of tomorrow darn mother-in-law's coming tomorrow all of you will be responsible wow look at the chassis on that stenographerbot for cleaning off your desks at the end of the day."

Yuuuk.

The Omnipotent, Omnipresent, Overdressed and Underdone R&D

ORDER FORM

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Please print your name and security clearance in the space provided (last name first, first name last, security clearance somewhere in the middle). Under that, list the name of your Simplex and Sector, a daytime com number, and the number of your next-of-clone, in case your order goes off, explodes, or hasn't been fed recently.

2. **Notice**: if you are ordering from the adult clone section of this catalog (i.e., items such as "Teela Does TEXMEX"), you must sign the proof of clearance form. You must be Yellow or above to purchase these items. Of course, if you're just a ratfaced, lying Orange, there's no way we can tell. We'll be in complete ignorance as we take your credits, and the joke will be on us, right?

3. Please print legibly. If you don't, USS (United Simplex Service) might deliver your gadget to, oh, the clone down the hall — you know, the one you planned to use your new Death-Footpad on. And he might notice your name, and call up a few of his clonemates to help return it to you.

4. All packages are mailed flat, even if they were meant to be round. USS hates inconsistency.

5. Allow 4-6 weekcycles for delivery. If your package has not arrived by then, make sure you included the correct address and amount of credits or trade goods with your order. If you did, double-check to make sure you don't owe us from the last time you ordered. If you don't, be sure that you you didn't order from one of those heretic temples last time and get us ticked off. If you're clear in that respect, consider the possibility that we're back-ordered on that product, overworked, understaffed, forgot your order, or just don't care. If none of those seem likely, and your package still hasn't arrived in the weekcycles you've been making sure of these things, try and get in touch with us. Go ahead, just try.

6. All payments must be in credits, unless, of course, they're not. Then we'll take whatever you feel like sending: food, old coveralls, 8-track Computer tapes (boy, remember those?), water laserpistols, black disks like "Perry-O-MOO Sings The-B-TLS," "The Computer Presents: Programs to be Run with the Dome Sealed," and that classic laugh-riot, "The Big C: I Started Out as a Toaster ..."

7. We reserve the right to refuse to ship any order, and keep all the credits. We reserve the right to investigate the background of any customer in search of a possible history of gadget abuse. If no such history is apparent, R&D retains the right to refuse any order under the "W.D.L.Y.F." (We Don't Like Your Face) provision in the sales contract.

8. R&D guarantees that all products were just PERFECT when we saw them last, and we can't imagine how you could have broken them. You were probably out carousing with your good-for-nothing clonemates, weren't you? And here we are, slaving over a hot gizmo all day! Well, you can just fix it yourself, Mr. Partybot, Mr. Good-Time Charl-I with the tacnuke shell on your head! And don't eat the last of the Algae Chips, they're for company!

9. Residents of CDA Sector, please add 57 percent sales tax. All Outside orders, don't hold your breath waiting for your packages. Void where prohibited by clones better armed than you.

Item	Quantity	Price per item	Total of line	Total of line with a little something extra thrown in for our trouble

Name

(last, security clearance, first, wished-for, stuck-with, nick, and one you were called by all those dumb clones on the creche-ground).

Address

(Simplex, sector, zip, zap, sorry, trigger finger slipped.)

Alpha Express Synthegold Card

(Don't leave HME Sector without it.)

Offer Valid in Alpha Complex and its Simplexes only. Void in all other Complexes and Outside. May expire at any time.

YOU MAY ALREADY BE A WINNER!
in the 5 million credit

R&D SHOPPING SPREE SWEEPSTAKES

You may become famous from Simplex to shining Simplex as the lucky clone who took home armfuls of loot from the Temple of Risirch and De'Sann! You may become the recipient of your neighbor's respect, admiration, jealousy, envy and growing resentment that eventually flares into violence!

Can you afford to wait??

Oh, we know what you're saying: you can't get something for nothing. Every ceiling doesn't have a silver lining.It's not really raining rain, you know, it's raining Cold Fun. There's no use crying over spilled mutagenic radioactive waste. All those old cliches, and more, were pounded into our brains by The Computer, but we at R&D feel that a new era has begun. And what better way to welcome this brave, new world than by appealing to the greed of the avarice — er, average clone. Yes, you heard it here first. You have a chance to attain wealth and power beyond your wildest dreams, or be passed over like you were an insignificant synthedust mote, and it's all up to fate, kismet, blind chance (in other words, it's not that much different from the rest of your life).

That's right, you, Joe-Clone-in-the-Corridor, may be a grand-prize winner in the 1 AM "R&D Shopping Spree" Sweepstakes!

How Do I Play?

It's easy and fun! Stuck on the back of every item in this catalog is a "proof of possession" seal. When you order 57 or more items from R&D, simply ship us the seals to be entered in our super-drawing! (You notice we said "proof of possession," not "proof of purchase." We don't care if the seals came from the clone who bought the item, or the clone who was smart enough to whack him on the head with a synthebrick and take it for himself. With that in mind, you might want to be careful about personally accepting large orders from R&D so your neighbors won't discover you have seals. In fact, since your safety is our primary concern, we at R&D will let you ship your entire order back to us for only a small fee, in addition to the purchase price of the items. In return, we'll swear we never heard of you.)

If you are lucky enough to accumulate 57 seals and survive getting them to us, we'll enter you in our super-drawing! The 4700 winners of the drawing will become eligible for a second drawing, to determine who will go on to become quarter-finalists! All quarter-finalists will be flown by decrepit flybot in a big circle and deposited back where they came from!

Then those lucky few will be brought to meet our new Mark IV Warbot in a room about the size of the average clone's closet. The warbot will fire at random for two hourcycles, and any contestants who survive will become — you guessed it — semi-finalists!

Once they've recovered, the semi-finalists will be ushered to a special dining area for a refreshing snack of Algae Chips, syntheturkey loaf, and Hot Fun! What the contestants won't know is that some of their drinks will have been replaced with Red-Hot Fun, the latest soft drink/incendiary device to come from those wacky wizards at R&D! It will be a meal to remember, and those who live to do so will be our fanatical finalists!

Following that rest break is the moment everyone's been waiting for: the finalists are let loose inside the sacred confines of the R&D Temple and allowed to run wild for five minutecycles, picking up anything and everything they can get their claws on! Anything they pick up, they can keep, providing they are able to get out of the Temple with it.

And that's where the *real* fun begins! You see, the Vulture Warriors who guard the Temple weren't too thrilled about this contest idea to begin with, and probably won't be real quick to let a finalist exit. Not only that, but all finalists are allowed to use the equipment they pick up on each other.

In the end, no matter how many finalists escape the Temple (if any at all), there will be only one winner. The contestant who sent in the most "proof of possession" seals will take home the loot, and be met by a crowd of his fellow clones (who R&D will have thoughtfully notified of the outcome, exactly what the winner's got, and what weapons go with a group greet). Runner-ups will be introduced to exciting new careers as test dummies!

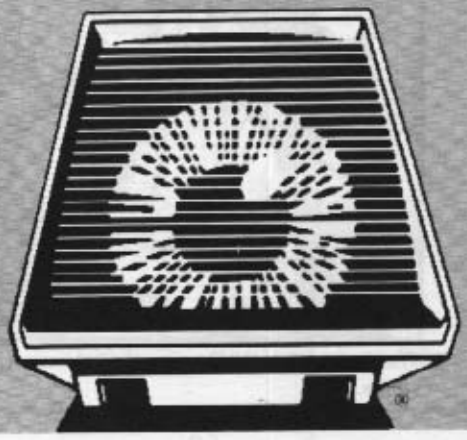
Sound fun? You bet! So get out your pencils and start scratching away on your order form! Fame, fortune and lunch on R&D may be just 57 "proof-of-possession" seals away!

You may have your picture in a future R&D catalog!

Offer Valid in Alpha Complex and its Simplexes only. Void in all other Complexes and Outside. May expire at any time.

Have Gizmo, Will Travel

by C.J. Tramontana



Introduction

After the Fall

Imagine, if you will (if you cannot imagine, may Risirch and De'Sann help you — if you will not imagine, go watch TV or go to law school, they both require the same amount of imagination), a Complex awash in a sea of turmoil or synthecoconut oil or whatever noxious oil is spewing forth from the malfunctioning Vend-A-Mood dispensers and from the overturned food vats and — Oh! Omnasal, God of the Oilfactories, tell us it's not true! — from the untended and untreated waste disposal vats. (Gee, you know, from this angle, those waste vats look an offal lot like the food vats; sorta smell like them, too.)

Imagine that the Order of Color has foundered beneath luminescent, rainbow-colored waves of chaos. Imagine a Complex of clones running amok through the tidal muck — a Complex where "catbots and dogbots are living together". Riding the rolling waves of that chaos, hanging 10 (or 11 or 12 or whatever number of pedal digits glorious mutation hath wrought) over the leading edge of their surfbots and their new technology, are the mad-scientist boffins of:

R&D Land

From the beginnings of unrecorded history, clonekind has found it psychologically necessary to worship at one altar or another. So, who could blame the more enterprising members of Research and Design for setting themselves up as priests at the altar? Hey, listen, this way every clone gets what he wants. The priests get tax-free donations from the worshippers, free food, clothing, living quarters, carbots, nunbots, ersatzermine robes, synthegold candlesticks — you know, the essentials for life in the R&D Simplexes. The worshippers get the opportunity to buy relics from the priests, gizmos to test, a place where they can freely kowtow, crawl on their knees, and bang their heads on the floor in glorious supplication, a whole hierarchy of priests to be admired, worshipped, and adored without the worshippers ever having to worry their brain sludge about why these particular clones are worthy of admiration, worship, and adoration. And last, but certainly not least, the worshippers are endowed with the belief that there is an omniscient, all-powerful being somewhere in the Great Beyond, a being poised and eager to make each and every action performed by his worshippers totally pointless.

East of EDN — A History of R&D

When the world of Alpha Complex was smote Whoopside the head by the darkness of the Great Screen Blanking, when the gates of PAR and DSE Sectors closed forever, the safety and security of the ivory towers of R&D crumbled and collapsed on the narrow shoulders of the latex-minded geniuses working there. Dust and despair filled the weak, watery eyes of the scientists when The Computer gasped its last cough-chattering printout. No longer would carte blanche for all research programs be offered on a synthesilver tray to R&D. No longer did the firm, properly white-gloved waldo extensions of Friend Computer shield the pot-bellied potterers from vengeance at the hands of troubled Troubleshooters who had seen teammates blown to Clonedom Come by a malfunctioning R&D device.

The "priests" of R&D enjoy their newfound status.

Faced with the unfaceable, the wizards of weird science threw up defenses of denial, ignored the total collapse of their Complex world, and became obsessed with their work. Blind and absolute dedication became the watchword. Formerly indolent scientists began working all daycycle and all nightcycle, without even asking for overtime or sick days or The Computer's birthday off. Even Nep-O-TST, the archetype of all government workers, was rumored to be providing productive postulations and insightful inquiries on many design and implementation problems. All that could be done was done in an attempt to hold back the chaos that swirled around the hallowed walls and threatened to seep through the cracks in the sealed doors of R&D. Until:

Enter the Arm Militant

Training pays off in times of crisis. Ask Cust-R. When all about them were losing their heads (figuratively and literally) in those first terrible moments of the MegaWhoops, the Armed Forces, especially the Vulture Warriors, operating by-the-numbers, maintained a sense of order, dignity, decorum, and survival.

Roaming units of VWs (not to be confused with VWs) seized supplies of food and ammunition. And, in a shining example of military acumen the likes of which is unknown in the annals of martial history (ask Cust-R), General Han-I-BAL sent five platoons of VWs to guard the R&D laboratories in NOD Sector.

One scrubot washes the other, as the saying goes. The Vulture Warriors provided a renewed sense of security and meager rations of food and chapstick to the scientists. In return, R&D supplied a continuous stream of new and improved lethal weapons to the VWs. Until:

The Turn of the Crew

By-the-numbers doesn't necessarily require bulb-dimming surges of brain drain. Nevertheless, it didn't take the Vulture goons camped outside the pretentious portals of R&D long to realize that they could determine the distribution of the new weapons technologies that issued from those portals. Quietly, they kept for themselves the megaest of the new megadeath gizmos.

When the commanding officers of the guard platoons came on an inspection tour, the VWs, bristling with newly acquired weaponry, menacingly clenched their fists, extended their trigger fingers (or an appropriate substitute), leveled their Atomic Structure Decoder Rings, and told Han-I-BAL to go do something unmentionable with that white Elephantbot Mark I he rode in on.

So, as a defeated Han-I-BAL mounted the white Elephantbot and rode off into the daycyclebulbset, the 200 clones in the five platoons of Vulture Warriors cheered and declared themselves to be autonomous mercenaries sworn to protect the R&D Temples of Knowledge.

While all this was going on, you might ask:

What Do the Simple Folk Do?

They get scared, so we're told.

Faced with a world turned Whoopside down, the common clone lived a life (if he was very very lucky) of fear and ignorance — just like in the old days, only worse. Organization, such as that exhibited by the monomaniacs at R&D, represented knowledge and power. And power was something to be feared. Dress up all that knowledge and power with a cordon of kill-crazy Vultures, and fear, like a Mark IV warbot running amok with its control circuits blown, stalked the simplified corridors of the Complex through the long, dark nightcycles of the Great Blankness of the Screen.

Fear breeds rumors, and soon it was rumored that the detached-from-reality R&Dlanders knew exactly what was going on as the Complex made its tortuous transition into myriad Simplexes — maybe, even, that R&D had deliberately caused the New Order to come about. The only way the average clone knew how to deal with fear and ignorance was to kowtow, appease, and bootlick. So, religion and the priesthood of R&D was born, as we shall read about in:

The Dead C Scrolls

When the clones of Alpha found within themselves the need to worship, then discovered the ready-made altar of R&D, and fully aware that propitiation never (seldom? more often than not? always?) hurt anybody, they began to leave offerings of unburnt food, clothing, and chapstick at the gates of the sanctimonious sanctorum.

Up until that time, even with the meager food supplies being provided by the 200 Immortals of the Guards (previously known as the VWs or the Vulture Warriors), the cracked and peeling visage of unchapsticked malnutrition had been rearing its skeletal head, causing an uncertainty about the Grand Purpose of Research and Design to flow through the corridors of R&Dland. But now the inflow of edibles encouraged the puling practitioners of practical physics to strengthen their efforts at keeping the chaos of the Complex at bay.

The time was ripe for belief. Into that ripeness of the resurgence of the Great Oncoming of Science stepped Ack-O-LYT-6, the first Speaker of House R&D.

"Wacko Ack-O," as Ack-O-LYT-6 was formerly known to his peers, in a moment of eyes-streaming-tears-of-joy-and-relief at the arrival of food and supplies to R&Dland, toasted the R&Ders' good fortune by tossing back a beakerfull of the noxious pink syntheshampain he had been trying to perfect. His eyes rolled back into the balding dome of his head; he spasmed to the floor; and a gurgle of bubbly foam erupted from his slack mouth. But, inside the hollowed corridors of Wacko Ack-O's brain, glorious, scintillating spears of radiance brought to him the illumination of a new enlightenment.

Five daycycles later, when Wacko Ack-O came to his senses — er, that is when he woke up (sense and Wacko Ack-O never occupied the same time-space continuum again) — he found himself muttering phrases and adages as he leafed through the pages of "Chairman Computer's Little Gray Book" and through the pages of the "R&D Lab Safety Manual." Knowing that these perils of wisdom should not be denied the researching masses, Ack-O-LYT marched determinedly and faithfully to the CCC (Central Communications Core) of NOD R&D, clicked on the loudspeaker system, and began reading comfortingly to the R&D workers:

"Never test a device yourself when there is an Infrared handy. Power corrupts, so try not to give any new devices that really work to Power Services."

To the R&Ders, this was more like the old days — the comfort of misguided unwisdom mixed with the motivation of fear and ignorance. Things began to hum in R&Dland — the transformers, the electric motors, and even the busy boffins as they plied happily at their trade until:

Eureka!

What to their wondering eyes should appear but projects that actually got finished (on deadline and under budget) and gizmos that actually worked. Who can forget the wonderful, pretested, debugged, and useful inventions that were the product of that heydaycycle of enlightened research and design? Microwaveable Synthesmores Algae Chips that stayed crisp; paste-on underarm deodorant pads that measured a mere 25.4 centimeters by 25.4 centimeters by 25.4 centimeters and were guaranteed to subdue odor for almost one full hour; a functioning cone rifle safety (the 200 Immortals of the Guard snatched up that gizmo and kept it for themselves.)

The attraction of a cone rifle that didn't blast a hole through your forehead while you were sighting in on a target drew many more roaming bands of Vultures to volunteer for Temple service. Soon, the guard around R&D's gates was doubled. The new VWs were an even rougher and rowdier bunch than the original 200 Immortals and were not allowed to join that elite unit. Instead, in reaction to that slur on their militancy, the volunteers called themselves the 200 Immorals. The surrounding civilian populace noticed no difference in the units. They couldn't tell if they were being Immortally pillaged and plundered or Immorally pillaged and plundered (could this possibly be the birth of politics in Alpha?) All they knew was that the P&P now occurred twice as often, and that life and liberty were twice as uncertain. Nevertheless:

Business is Business

All of the new devices and gizmos, except those kept by the I&I, were released to those profit-minded clones who left the biggest and best offerings. These entry-level entrepreneurs, in turn, sold the gizmos to the public and became quite rich in the process. (Good gracious, the rise of the merchant class!) (You, in the back! Pay attention, there'll be a quiz at the end of this.) You can bet the hobnails off your Infra-stompers that soon this merchant class, in the hopes of discovering new markets

and greater financial gain, would be bankrolling expeditions into the Outside. Yet, even in those times of project completion and successful debugging, there was a fly in the ointment:

The Hole is Greater than Some of Its Parts

In this case, the hole was in the supply line, and some of the parts just weren't.

This is what happened: project after functioning project rolled or walked or tottered or were carried off the assembly lines of R&Dland. That was the bright, shiny side of the credit disc — that and the popular acclaim each new gizmo created and the generous donations that poured in from eager speculators. The dark, tarnished side of the credit disc, sticky with old synthegum and pocket lint, was that as each project was finished it was ... well, it was finished, completed, done from here to eternitycycle. And — holy joblist, Atman! (as Hindu husbands are wont to mutter in times of marital stress) — there were no more crumpled, torn pieces of paper in the job jar, because when the Big C crunched its last bit of data, no more requests for better and faster gizmos were sent to R&D.

In effect, R&D was doing so well in production that it was going to produce itself right out of business.

As Ack-O intoned over the loudspeakers and as project after project was wrapped up and delivered to the eager profiteering profferers yammering at the gates of R&Dland, no one thought things could ever get any better — until:

The Daycycle They Ran Out of Parts!

That's better? Sure. See, without parts, the projects couldn't be completed. If the projects weren't completed, then R&Dland could continue to exist. Better. See?

Better yet, the shortage of parts felt sorta comfortable, kinda like the good old days when Boss C was in charge. By this time, our wide-eyed researchers had trained themselves to produce in order to survive. But there were no parts with which to produce. So, caught between a ROM and a hard disk, the R&D force began to produce the only things they had left — ideas — and became:

The Mothers of Invention

Ideas are dangerous things. They lead to pure theoretical research, to designing and testing on paper, to hypotheses, to debates, to THINKING. Questions arose. Questions like: how many Warbots can dance on the head of an Infrared? Out of all those questions and all that dangerous thinking, the constant pushing at the envelope of theoretical physics caused R&Dland to devolve from a nebulous scientific discipline to a hard religion headed by:

The Delphic Horribles

Or, as they are more properly known, the "Prophetic Scholars of the Incomprehensible Wisdom of the Universe." This is what happened:

Anyone in his right mind would think that, after the MegaWhoops, the mad-eyed mopheads who always built gonzo gizmos or backfiring cone rifles would be the first to be introduced to Madame Guillotine. Au contraire.

It is commonly known that to be truly mad requires a pinch of genius. And nowhere is genius and madness more respected and utile than in the world of theoretical research that exists behind the walls of R&Dland (except maybe at major game companies.) Freed from the limitations of applied reality, these maddest of all mad scientists became the leading gonzo gurus in the world of babblespeak. As with all true delphic horribles, the unintelligibility of their utterings gave added credence to their nonsense. Mountains of mechanicals were built on their command. Their undying words were recorded, written in little grey lab books and given to Ack-O-LYT-6 to read over the loudspeakers. They became as wild-eyed gods who walked upon the earth and drooled in their beards.

We're Going to the Temple, and We're Going to Have Fun

Although the Troubleshooters in "Have Gizmo, Will Travel" are politely summoned to put in an appearance in the presence of the Chief Priest of NOD R&D, the typical motivation for any Troubleshooter to visit an R&D Temple is pretty much the same as it was in the old daycycles of Alpha: "Hey, meester big, strong, Troubleshooter, want to see some feelthy holograms of a shiny new gizmo? Cross my palms with synthesilver credit plaques and I can arrange for you to gaze into its transparisteel lenses, stroke its flexsteel flanks, load its rocket launcher, and probe its firing stud."

Children can't resist brightly painted toys; Troubleshooters can't resist glistening gizmos — even if those Troubleshooters have to be the ones to test the accuracy and dependability of the gizmos. The Temple has, the Troubleshooters want — see, we told you that Paranoia wasn't so different from real life.

Not all projects were successes — thermonuclear dental floss, for example.

In the BM (Before MegaWhoops) yearcycles, R&D devices were brightly wrapped packages of accidental and premature clone activation. Now, R&D produces gizmos of the first water that are often quantum leaps in Alpha technology. Who could resist such devices in a society where even the quaintest gizmos have become scarce?

But even now, the seal of approval of the R&D labs does not assure that a device is failsafe. Reckless use or abuse of equipment by overzealous Troubleshooters presents a subtle danger since quality parts and supplies are few and far between and the Priests at R&D are often forced to jury-rig and assemble projects from damaged equipment — a factor that doesn't have any bearing on the functioning of the gizmos unless they are used in circumstances that are in any way less than ideal.

Setting the Stage

"Have Gizmo, Will Travel" is an adventure that will help introduce your players to the new world of Risirch and De'sann — not to mention the new world of post-Crash Alpha. It can be run as a separate mini-adventure or anytime during a campaign when the Troubleshooters go to an R&D enclave to get outfitted with experimental weapons or equipment. The Chief R&D

Priest can simply take the Troubleshooters aside and ask them to perform a short mission for him.

Suppose the ornery Troubleshooters don't want to go along with Holy Writ? No problem. After all, we all have free will. Except that these particular Troubleshooters will no longer be welcome in R&Dland. The reliability of any equipment given to them will not be assured, etc., etc ...

Even if your Troubleshooters don't regularly visit R&Dland for outfitting, you can always have the Chief Priest politely summon them and request that they go on a mission for him. If they refuse the summons, see the paragraph above.

Getting the Tone Right

It would be helpful to have read the Crash Course Manual. It would also be helpful if you had read the second edition rules for Paranoia, but hey, the High Programmers at WEG Sector can't get everything they want. (Can they?)

"Have Gizmo, Will Travel" takes place in the post-Crash environment of Alpha Complex after the MegaWhoops. Chaos and anarchy (that phrase has a nice, comforting ring to it, doesn't it?) reign supreme. But this chaos and anarchy is different than the kind we have come to know and love in Paranoia. It's a little more ... well, chaotic and anarchic. (And, no, Anarchic is not a young girl from the South Pole.)

The Computer is crashed, dead, down, whatever. R&D has changed. The Secret Societies have changed and aren't so secret anymore. The Complex is being reduced to Simplexes. Mercenaries and Cyberpunks run rampant in the corridors of what used to be Alpha Complex.

So, who runs things? Well, Paranoia has gotten a lot like the real world. The common clone hasn't got the foggiest idea of what is going on, but he does know that might makes right. Thus, the clone with clout is in control. The rest of you will just have to survive as best as possible. Or not. Who cares? See, it is a lot like the real world.

Troubleshooter teams are now generally operating as freelance mercenaries, picking and choosing their missions from the available actions open to them (see "The New Troubleshooters" in the Crash Course Manual). However, one must remember that while Troubleshooters may have clout in the matter of firepower, R&D has even more clout in the assignment of supplies, gizmos, and armament.

Adventure Summary

Episode One: In Old New TEXMEX — The player characters, a team of Troubleshooters gone mercenary, have been hired to drive a herd of cattlebots to TEXMEX. But as they approach the town, the sight of a rattlesnakebot causes the cattlebots to stampede, setting the stage for lots of entertaining bloodshed and carnage. The Troubleshooters are left in TEXMEX with no cattlebots, little money, and a Vulture Warrior named James R-NES telling them to get out of town by daycyclebulbset. Fate intervenes (not the Fate — Bob Fate, a well-known buttinski) and the Troubleshooters receive a mission assignment from a local mercenary prince. They are requested to report to the NOD Sector R&D Temple. On their way to the Temple, they are attacked by one of the many gangs of motley marauders who lurk in wait along the route to the Temple, hoping to relieve travellers of the burden of whatever goods they may be carrying to the priests at the Temple. The Troubleshooters are either victorious or get away from the bandits.

Episode Two: Saints and Sinners — The Troubleshooters arrive at NOD Sector R&D Temple, negotiate with the Immortals and Immorals guarding the Temple, meet the Chief Priest, and go through the necessary self-abasement. They are outfitted and then taken aside by the Chief Priest who asks that they perform a mission for him. As prepayment, each of the Troubleshooters is given a wristbot. He also gives them six horsebots to trade for needed microchip raw material owned by another R&D Temple in ORD Sector, far to the west. When they bring the components back to NOD Sector Temple, they will receive either credit plaques or a brand, spanking-new steam engine. The Troubleshooters leave on the mission for the Chief Priest.

Episode Three: The Church Militant — The Troubleshooters arrive at their destination, the R&D Temple in ORD Sector. Bargains are struck, and the ORD Sectorites agree to the trade, but only if the Troubleshooters agree to carry a surprise present, a token of ORD Sector's appreciation and good will, back to NOD Sector R&D. The Troubleshooters are invited/requested/commanded to spend the night.

Episode Four: And Molebots to go Before I Sleep — While the ORD Sectorites are sleeping, the Troubleshooters find evidence that causes them to suspect Army involvement in R&D affairs. They can investigate the R&D Temple, or attempt to sneak away. Either way, they come across Ah-G-ERR, a prisoner whom they free and who helps them escape the Temple guards.

Pullout Section

In this section, you will find: a list of pregenerated player characters so that you can get this exciting, fun-filled adventure up and running with the minimum amount of preparation; a map for the Troubleshooters to use; a gamemaster's map, which should not be shown to the players; and other assorted bits and pieces of paranoid fun and games.

Episode One: In Old New TEXMEX

Episode Summary

Pal-O-DIN's Wanderers, a band of independent mercs, get caught in the middle of a cattlebot stampede, stranded in NOD Sector, threatened by a Vulture Warrior, and accosted by an intimidating merc enforcer.

In other words, it's just another ordinary day.

Adventure Background

After the Great MegaWhoops, when The Computer crashed, EDN Sector collapsed. PAR and DSE were no more. A mass exodus of lost and confused clones wended their aimless way into NOD Sector, somewhere east of EDN.

This flood of refugees inundated a Sector already awash in a sea of clonemanity. With the Order of Color in chaos and The Computer no longer around to tell clonekind how to behave and where to get those little, unimportant things like food and clothing, the resident clones in NOD Sector and the influx of wetback clones from other, more devastated Sectors found themselves dependent on their own resources — no matter how feeble those resources might be.

Enter Entropy

Order tends toward disorder, they say, in nature, astrophysics and on most major freeways. NOD was no exception. But into this particular Sector of disorder came a leader, Kitt-Y-KAT, who attempted to keep disorder at bay.

Not much is known about the origins of Kitt-Y-KAT, beyond the fact that he was one of the first wetbacks to cross the waters into NOD. Rumors abound about his being the next-of-clone to one of the highest High Programmers in Alpha; about how he was accidentally activated ahead of time, and thus was an embarrassment for that HP to have around. Nevertheless, Kitt-Y-KAT brought with him a squad of loyal VWs and a pack of hard-bitten, hard-edged merks known as the Sons of STP Sector, who are led by Temp-U-SSS.

A patina of order was enforced upon NOD by Kitt-Y-Kat and the Sons of STP — except in the warren of corridors and byways at the center of NOD where most of the wetback clones eventually came to live, an area known to its inhabitants as TEXMEX.

Preemies

Mistakes happen — even in Alpha. Premature activations of next-of-clones were rare occurrences in the pre-Crash Complex, but they did happen.

Kitt-Y-KAT was quite busy at his desk job in a remote corner of KAT Sector, happily shuffling quadruplicate emergency request forms for pulped, formed, and rolled synthecellulose disposable hygiene cubicle sanitary-swipe flushettes, when suddenly a bright light blinded him and a nauseating, sinking feeling twisted through his guts. The light dimmed; the sinking feeling sank; Kitt-Y-KAT found himself staring at himself, but the himself he was gaping at had the number "1" on his name tag. Kitt-Y-KAT looked down at the name tag on his own chest and saw an upside down "2" after his name. Oh, yeah, and he was no longer in his nice, safe, comfortable office — he was in the gleaming white, highly electronic headquarters of a High Programmer.

Since his previous next-of-clone was still extant, Kitt-Y-KAT-2 had nothing to do all daycycle except follow Kitt-Y-KAT-1 around and make a general nuisance of himself. The nightcycles were even tougher. Kitt-Y-KAT-1, being an HP, had luxurious quarters, but he had no desire to share his rooms and turn his quarters into eighths. Worse yet, Kitt-Y-KAT-1 had only a one-clone sized bed.

Something had to give. Two being subordinate to one, Kitt-Y-KAT-2 soon found himself and an assigned guard of VWs wandering out of KAT toward distant NOD, on the orders of Kitt-Y-KAT-1, found himself and an assigned guard of VWs wandering out of KAT toward distant NOD.

Wetback

The term "wetback" is not a derogatory term, merely descriptive. NOD Sector happens to be situated in an area of the former Alpha Complex that is surrounded by a network of huge, arterial water mains (hundreds of meters across, in some cases), an area that had served as the central distribution point for all of Alpha's water supply. When the moment of MegaWhoops hit and The Big Blue Spark sent The Computer riding the cybernet into disk-crashing oblivion, automated control over the water supply went the way of all fiche. Massive valves opened that should have closed, or closed when they should have opened. Pressures built up.

Now, NOD is surrounded by a river (in effect, a moat) of roiling, turgid waters. From the further banks of those waters, NOD looked, to the refugee clones, like an island of calm (boy! were they wrong) in a sea of troubles (boy! were they right). To get to that supposed haven, the river had to be crossed. In those early daycycles, transportation and bridges across that river did not exist. The clones had to swim, wade, and get wet in the crossing. Hence, the term "wetback clones."

And That's No Bullbot ...

It seemed like such an easy job at first. Pal-O-DIN and his merry band of mercs had been hired by Daniel B-OON, one of the first settlers in WES Sector and now a well-know cattlebot baron, to drive one of his herds to NOD. There they would be sold at auction and eventually taken to the dismantling houses in CHI Sector. This trip would also give the merks a chance to scour NOD for "The Horn."

The herd was a large one — over 500 head-segments. The Wanderers had endured much hardship and deprivation, and a few had even seen Bouncy Bubble Beverage mirages while travelling through ALK and ALI Sectors. But now NOD is in sight, the synthedusty trail will soon be a memory, and the smelly, clanky cattlebots will be safely penned.

Or will they?

Read aloud:

The cattle are lowing, which means their batteries will need charging soon. Through the clouds of synthedust and the hazy daycyclebulbshine, you can see the rows of buildings that line NOD's main road, the Street of Dreams. Soon you'll be able to get a bottle of Cold Fun, maybe find a hygienebot and clean up, and 'try to win each other's wages in a cutthroat game of finbizz.

But then you hear the sound that every cattlebot-puncher dreads: a sound like slugthrower slugs being shaken in an empty Hot Fun can. That horrible sound that has turned many a drive into total disaster, and which can mean only one thing:

Rattlesnakebot!

The rattlesnakebot is the scourge of countless Simplexes. Legend has it that a snakebot was actually responsible for the collapse of EDN Sector, but nothing has even been proven. What is known is that the rattlesnakebot is the worst of the batch of syntheserpents produced by R&D pre-Crash, known for its habit of eating small objects (like short Troubleshooters). It also has a penchant for terrifying cattlebots, as we shall see.

Read aloud:

The sight of the syntheserpent immediately overloads the cattlebot's fear capacitors. They begin to stampede down the Street of Dreams, scattering cowclones in their wake. At the end of the street, they turn around and start running back towards you! A few of the more enterprising bots crash through windows and doors, dash up staircases, and begin leaping off second-floor balconies (look out below!) All in all, havoc reigns, and in about four seconds you and the Wanderers are going to have tons of maddened synthebeef trampling you.

Time to make some Agility rolls. The cattlebots aren't terribly difficult to dodge — granted, there are a lot of them, but they're not very fast and for the most part they're all running in the same direction. If a Troubleshooter fails a Normal agility roll, he takes damage in Column 3. Any Troubleshooter who dodges, but doesn't duck into a building or in some other way get off the street, runs the risk of getting hit by a cattlebot falling from above. Have the Troubleshooter make another roll, and on a 20, the cattlebot lands on his head, doing damage in Column 4.

Read aloud:

The stampede is over. You've all survived, though a bit the worse for wear. That's the good news. The bad news is that the cattlebots have all stormed off for parts unknown, and you have no hope of catching them. That means no credits from Daniel-B-OON, and no immediate prospects of employment. You decide to do what any self-respecting, intelligent clone would do under these circumstances — have breakfast.

The Street of Dreams

Read aloud:

The clank of your synthesteel-shod boot heels on metal flooring and the squeak of your viciously-spiked reflec armor mingles with the bustling sounds of shopkeepers and scrubots cleaning up splinters that once were doorways and pieces of clones who didn't move *quite* fast enough during the morning's entertainment.

The sibilant sound of syntheglass being swept up fills the air as the blood-red daycyclebulb rises in the east. The smell of your old, dried sweat inside your reflec armor mixes with the damp reek of stale Cold Fun, the salty tang of Cruncheetyme Chips, and the permeating ozone odor of melted-down electric motors and burnt electrical insulation to make no one want to stand downwind from you.

To your right, you can see through the narrow window of an inn (chiefly because it's broken). Inside the inn, bleary-eyed merks sit at battered tables. They take occasional and lethargic swigs at mugs of alersatz or synthewhisk or shamwine. Straggly-haired wenchbots whose full-bosomed torsos strain at the lacings on their low-cut blouses sway sultrily and carry trays of mugs and bowls of gruel.

Just another quiet day in TEXMEX.

Above the plastiron-bound door of the inn hangs a fading and peeling sign showing a battle-battered Mark IV Warbot with only its idler wheels remaining. Down the street, you can see a a clone on a rickety ladder painting a picture on a sign of a scrubot doing something you can't quite make out.

The Breakfast of Champions

The Troubleshooters can try to buy nourishment of some sort at one of the inns (perhaps a bowl of that famous NOD TEXMEX chili that has been known to make even iron-gutted VWs cry for mercy). The operative word here is "buy." Nothing, absolutely nothing, especially not food, is given away on The Street of Dreams.

The Retired Warbot is the inn on the right side of the street, the one closest to the Troubleshooters. Here, they can buy (see, there's that word again) liquid breakfast and more solid fare, such as: Wakey-Wakeys, Red-desades, Purple-violents, Mello-daze, Upanatems, TEXMEX chili.

The Vulgar Scrubot is the inn on the left side of The Street of Dreams. This inn is not really open for business yet. If the Troubleshooters approach this inn, they will still not be able to make out what the scrubot painted on the sign is doing. The name of the inn has not yet been applied to the sign. But something about the scrubot's actions makes them want to look away, with a slightly embarrassed feeling. If they look into the open door of the inn, the Troubleshooters will see a one-armed clone nailing pieces of plastic together, building a crude bar at the back of the inn.

If approached, the clone painting the sign will stop his work and say that the inn is not open for business. However, as he speaks, a shimmer of life invests the picture of the scrubot and she leers lasciviously at the Troubleshooters.

If the Troubleshooters enter the inn and attempt to speak with the one-armed clone working in the back, that clone says:

"Here, one of you hold this nail while I drive it in with this sledge hammer. Say, have I ever told you about what happened to me during the moment of MegaW-hoops. Well, listen, it was this way ..."

The one-armed clone drones on with a story you can read aloud (omitting all mention of nature babes) from "Tales of the Vulgar Scrubot" in *The Crash Course Manual* — if the Troubleshooters sit still that long.

An audience with Kitt-Y-KAT.

Temp-U-SSS Fugit

No matter where the Troubleshooters go, not much time passes before they are confronted by a grizzled Vulture Warrior wearing a piece of synthetin on the breast pocket of his reflec. He snarls at you and says:

"You the clones responsible for all this mess around here?"

The Troubleshooters can try to deny it, but being the only strangers in the Sector, they won't get away with it. The VW gives them a hard look, fingers his laserpistol, and says:

"My name's R-NES. James-R-NES. I run this street, and I aim to keep it peaceful. I want you no-account clones out of here by daycyclebulbset."

R-NES really has no authority, beyond that his laserpistol gives him. He's the only VW in the Sector who doesn't belong to the Immortals or the Immorals, and he was desperate for something to do, so he appointed himself guardian of the Street of Dreams. He's a threatening presence, but probably won't try to take on a whole band of Troubleshooters. Still, he'll have his eye on them, and could complicate any search for "The Horn" or other Troubleshooter activities. Feel free to drop him in if the Troubleshooters need a little extra push in the right (or wrong) direction.

The Joke's on You

Read aloud:

As you watch R-NES leave, a 10-man pack of heavily armed, mean-eyed mercenaries surrounds you. The spikiest looking of the bunch, obviously the leader, steps forward, glares straight into your eyes and says, "Why did the chickenbot cross the corridor?"

This merc so rudely accosting the Troubleshooters is Temp-U-SSS, leader of the Sons of STP, a band of mercenaries loyal (for as long as the credit plaques keep coming) to Kitt-Y-KAT. Temp-U-SSS is also know as "Riddl-R." That's why he talks in such an enigmatic way.

The Troubleshooters cannot outfight or outrun this squad of merks. But all Riddl-R is doing is delivering a message and seeing that it is received.

No matter what the Troubleshooters answer (to get to the other side, because it's too long to walk around, to cohabit with a catbot, etc.), it's the wrong answer.

Whatever hemming and hawing the Troubleshooters do in response to Riddl-R's question, he says:

"Wrong. You lose. You are now invited to an audience with the ruler of NOD Sector, Kitt-Y-KAT."

The Quest for the Horn

Gaily bedight,
A gallant knight,
In sunshine and in shadow,
Had journeyed long,
Singing a song,
In search of Eldo-R-ADO.

Well, sort of. You get the idea — the quest's the thing, or each clone to his own beast glatisant (oh, go read some Arthurian mythology if you don't know what that is — see, even that will be a kind of mini-quest).

Every clone is looking for something, even if he or she doesn't know what that something is. Pal-O-DIN and his merry band of Wanderers are no exceptions to this rule. Merely the motivation of wanting to know what's over the next synthemountain would be enough to get Pal-O-DIN's Wanderers wending their wayward way toward thrills, spills, and prolonged attention by a docbot.

Nevertheless, once again life mirrors *Paranoia* — or is it the other way round — and things are just a tad more complicated than they appear.

If you haven't yet read the pregenerated player character descriptions in the pullout section of this adventure, do so now.

Go ahead, we'll wait.

Okay. Are you back? Good. Now we all know that each of the six Wanderers has his or her own reasons for joining Pal-O-DIN and his band of mercs: Pal-O-DIN is a simple, wandering soul looking for a hotel, a laundry, and adventure. Tam-O-ZEN follows Pal-O-DIN as a student of the Way of the Pal-O-DIN. Hole-G-ARR wants to find out what Denmark is and save it from something called the "Nazis" — and he's also looking for Carr-I-HUE, Charl-Y-MYN, and Alian-O-RAA. Roll-Y-AND feels an obligation to the Wanderers for helping him in a shootout — more importantly, he's trying to find weapons that will help Pro Tech rise to its rightful place in Alpha — most importantly, he wants to find "The Horn" that he thinks will rally the Host of Computerdom and restore The Computer to its ruling position. Ill-Y-RAH has received an almost mystical command from her monitor screen (shades of Mission Control) that may or may not be a last-gasp attempt on the part of The C to have itself rebooted. She is told that "The Horn" is somewhere in NOD. She tells Roll-Y-AND and the other Wanderers. Crit-Y-SSS is looking for the agent or agency (the PFLAs?) responsible for The Crash.

(Some of you may be wondering just what "The Horn" is and why we're saying such intriguing things about it. To be honest, we don't know what it is, either. It may well be that the Muses have given Ill-Y-RAH the key to a great mystery, or it may be that the stampeding cattlebots were not the first burn steers in NOD. For this adventure, the question of where "The Horn's" been borne is irrelevant, but if you want to take up the search on your own at some point, go right ahead).

Be that as it may, it's awfully hard to conduct a quest when you're down to your last Algae Chip. Pal-O-DIN's Wanderers need work, and need it badly. If they're tempted to leave NOD in search of it, tell them that Temp-U-SSS and his band of merks, the Sons of STP, are hiring at good wages — or that the Immortals and Immorals are hiring — or something to that effect to let them know it would probably be worth their while to hang around, at least until R-NES shows up again.

If your players are not using the pregenerated Troubleshooters found in the pullout section, you can use Roll-Y-AND as a non-player character to tell your Troubleshooters about "The Horn" being somewhere in NOD and convince them that there is fame and fortune enough for all. Even if your Troubleshooters are averse to rebooting The Computer, they can be made to realize that "The Horn" can be a valuable asset — if only as an object of ransom. And while they're mulling that over, they can take on a job to pay for all the Bouncy Bubbly Beverage they've been drinking to wash the dry dust of the corridor out of their throats.

If you're still wondering who or what Eldo-R-ADO is and why any clone might go in search of him/it, you've missed the point about questing and adventure. Go back to the beginning of this sidebar and read it again — better yet, go read Heinlein's *Glory Road*.

Temp-U-SSS and his goons won't take no for an answer. So the Troubleshooters are off to see:

A Prince of a Guy

Dragged hand and foot, or striding strongly like the proud merks that they are, the Troubleshooters end up in the audience chamber of the palace of Kitt-Y-KAT. Read aloud:

You are ushered into an audience chamber that is dimly and eerily illuminated by glowing, blank monitor screens. Seated on a throne made out of computer consoles and rubbing the soles of his unshod feet luxuriously over an extended (king-sized?) keyboard, is a man, small of stature, but with an aristocratic and somewhat effeminate manner. Yet, there is the confidence of command in his eyes and the greater confidence of credit plaques in his purse.

A semi-circle of palace guards defends his back. On his left stands a rather scantily clad, fish-eyed woman whose skin appears to be covered with a delicate tracery of scales. On his right, is a darkly clad, lithe young clone bristling with edged weapons. Kitt-Y-KAT, the Prince of the City, eyes you disdainfully.

"Oh, well," he simpers. "It must be done. MMM-O-LNN says so, and you are here. Are you not? So, report to MMM-O-LNN, Chief Priest of NOD R&D. He has a job for you." He stops speaking, stares at you vacantly, almost as if he is wondering why you are still there. He adds, "Oh, of course, you will be handsomely rewarded."

The Prince gives you a back-handed, limp-wristed wave, quite obviously dismissing you from the audience chamber and from his attention.

It would seem that the Troubleshooters are free to choose their own path. They can go to NOD R&D and do the job requested of them, or they can wander the mazelike streets of NOD, forever looking for "The Horn," selling off pieces of equipment to pay for food and trying to avoid James-R-NES. Maybe the Troubleshooters decide to try to take over NODland? Yeah, the odds are only a couple of thousand to one. So: which way to the Temple?

Which Way to the Temple?

Ask anybody.

Straight down The Street of Dreams, across the TEXMEX Zone, and there you are.

The TEXMEX Zone? Yup. You see, most of those refugee clones who came to NOD after the Great Screen Blanking were from TEX and MEX Sectors. NOD being as crowded as it was, the newcomers were forced to gather together in a once parklike area that surrounded the Temple of R&D.

Unfortunately, lack of food, equipment, shelter, toilet tissue, Teela-O-MLY tapes

and all the other necessities of life caused many of the TEXMEXers to form bandit bands that preyed on pilgrims traveling to and from the Temple — pilgrims such as the Troubleshooters.

Hey! Greengo!

Read aloud:

Your passage down The Street of Dreams was accompanied by hundreds of whining, begging voices and by myriads of fluttering hands grasping, touching, and pulling at your clothes and your equipment.

At last, you reach the end of the Street of Dreams, which flows like the delta of some wide river, full of twisted channels and convoluted alleys, into the TEXMEX Zone.

Ahead of you is a vast wasteland littered with towering piles of discarded equipment. Defunct Warbots, scrubots, and docbots are piled dozens of meters high. Twisty, narrow paths lead through a series of canyons. Littering the paths are the skullcasings of cattlebots, their horns gleaming metallically in the light of the daycyclebulb.

If they've come this far, the Troubleshooters should continue on into the TEXMEX Zone. Lead them through the canyons for a while, then bring them to a box canyon and read the following:

You've wandered into a dead end canyon. You hear the rustling of many feet and the lock-and-load clicking of cone rifles from the mouth of the canyon at your back. A strangely accented voice calls out, "Hey, amigos, what chyew got in jyour pockets for us, eh?"

Behind you is a mob of oddly dressed clones. Their coveralls are tight-legged and very baggy in the seat. Bandoliers filled with laser barrels cross their chests. Wide brimmed, conically topped hats with silver numbers haphazardly stuck on them throw the faces of the clones into deep shadow. Out of that shadow glints the occasional gleam of a synthegold tooth. Oddest of all are their boots: the fronts have been cut away, exposing the toes of the bandits' feet.

The leader steps forward. With a smile and a glint from beneath the shadow of his hat, he says, "Come onnn. Tshow us what chyew got. We mean chyew noo harrmm. We are the Free-toe Banditos."

Even if the Troubleshooters talk themselves out of this spot, the Free-toe Banditos will simply ambush them further along the way. In combat, the Free-toe Banditos are louder than they are dangerous. The Troubleshooters will either drive off the Banditos or manage to force their way out or over the trap in the box canyon and escape from the banditos so they can head into Episode Two.

The Freetoe Banditos

NODland is an Island

The Troubleshooters may not want to do the job for Kitt-Y-KAT and MMM-O-LNN. That's their prerogative. However, there was a "handsome reward" offered, and that should sway them. More importantly, leaving NOD is not so easy — first, you must cross the river surrounding it. Unfortunately, over the yearcycles since the MegaWhoops, the River Sticky has become highly polluted.

The river, which surrounds NODland, cutting it off from the rest of Alpha, now has a pollution level of highly toxic chemicals and pharmaceuticals so concentrated that merely touching its viscous fluid can eat a clone to the bone.

While it is easy to enter NOD (no toll is required on the way in), it is quite expensive and difficult to leave (read: only by permission of the Chief Priest of R&D).

There are two ways out of NOD — three, if you count death. There is a ferry operated by Shar-O-NNN, the boatclone on the River Sticky, that will take one safely across, provided one has MMM-O-LNN's permission and the proper toll. It is of no use to try and overpower the boatclone. The boat only holds one passenger, and Shar-O-NNN would rather capsize the craft than turn over its command.

There is one bridge, The Bridge of Sighs, spanning the River Sticky. Guarding the entrance to the bridge is a fully-armed and functional Mark IV Warbot. Stationed in the control module of the Warbot and acting as toll collector is Doog-Y-LAS. Over his years of service as guardian of the gates of NODland, his habit of audibly expressing (with heartfelt sighs) his recognition of the absurdity of life in Alpha and his resignation to that absurdity has caused the bridge to get its rather distinctive name.

Typical Free-toe Bandito

Mutation: Omnivore

Weapons:	Slugthrower	(7P)	4
	Cone Rifle	(10P)	3
	Machete	(3P)	5

Armor: Red Reflec Ponchos (L1)
Red Reflec Sombreros (L1)
Yellow Reflec Gold Teeth (L3)
— effective only on a direct hit to the mouth

Tactics: Run around in circles, yell, fire their slugthrowers in the air a lot. If too many of them get hit by the return fire from the Troubleshooters, the Free-toe Banditos all run away.

Background: The reason for these TEXMEXers becoming bandits is simple: survival — robbing other clones of food and equipment was the only way a majority of the wetback TEXMEXers could continue to exist. The reason why they chopped off the toe covering of their boots and became Free toe Banditos is slightly more obscure.

In the beginning (oh, boy, think of all the really great stories that have started out this way — this isn't one of them), when the hordes of refugees from TEX and MEX Sectors began to inundate NOD, available jobs became hard to find. With the rise of the merchant class and the concept of capitalism in Alpha, along with free enterprise (not to be confused with Free Enterprise), all the better paying jobs were snapped up by the natives of NOD Sector. All that was left for the wetbacks was menial labor that paid pittance — jobs none of the NODlanders would stoop to do, such as weeding lawns.

Yes, there were and are lawns in NOD Sector. Yearcycles ago, just before The Computer went AWOL, the wonder-workers at NOD R&D developed syntheastroturf which both flourished in the climate of NOD and became a status symbol for the higher ranking clones of the Sector. A syntheastroturf lawn in a clone's living quarters became a symbol of success in the new society of post-crash NOD. Even the lowliest of clones became inordinately proud of even the smallest, scraggliest plot of syntheastroturf and diligently watered it and tended it daily. Soon, syntheastroazaleas and syntheastrohedges were added to the greenery beginning to abound in NOD.

Even PAR and DSE are not without their flaws. NOD, with its new growth, was no exception. Syntheastroweeds and syntheastrodandelions began to spring up amidst the lush lawns. So, not only did the weeds need to be plucked, but the quickly growing syntheastroturf itself needed to be cut back. Syntheastroazaleas grew wild and needed pruning. Syntheastrohedges needed trimming.

Enter the wetbacks, needing to earn credits to live, and a new status symbol was established in NOD: the TEXMEX gardener, who for a few credits kept the lawns and gardens of the wealthier clones neatly plucked, pruned, and trimmed.

One daycycle, while pushing a lawnmowerbot, a weary TEXMEX gardener accidentally pulled the whirring blades of the mowerbot over the tips of his boots. The gardener was unhurt, but the syntheleather fronts of his boots had been quickly chewed away, exposing his naked toes.

Laughter burst out from all the wealthy clones who had been sitting in their lawnchairs, drinking syntheiced tea, and watching the gardeners toil in the heat of the daycyclebulb. In deep embarrassment, the TEXMEX gardener slunk back to his squalid living quarters.

That nightcycle, in response to the daycycle's events, a movement of solidarity began among the TEXMEXers. Led by the famous Ponch-O-TEX, all the TEXMEXers rallied in support of the hapless clone who had stepped under the mowerbot. The next daycycle, every TEXMEXer in NOD reported to work with the toes of his or her boots deliberately cut off, openly exposing the naked toes inside.

It was open insolence, and the wealthy clones of NOD didn't put up with it. Every TEXMEX gardener was fired. The jobless, and soon homeless, TEXMEXers retreated to the open area of parkland surrounding the NOD R&D Temple and under the leadership of Ponch-O-TEX and Emilan-O-MEX banded together as the Free-toe Banditos. Of course they sought revenge for their treatment at the hands of the NODlanders and attacked anyone trying to cross the Zone.

Episode Two: Saints and Sinners

Episode Summary

The Troubleshooters visit NOD R&D, a peaceful place with, oh, only about 400 guards around it. They get new uniforms and an assignment in which to shred them.

Off to See the Wizards

After dealing in one way or another with the Free-toe Banditos, the Troubleshooters spend the rest of the daycycle and that nightcycle wandering through the junkyard wasteland of the TEXMEX Zone. If they decide to try to get some sleep after the daycyclebulb has set, keep them wandering the narrow paths of the Zone by having the Free-toe Bandito snipers fire laser bolts and slugthrower rounds at the appropriate moments, and at the appropriate targets. You can add ricochet sound effects and the occasional offstage mutter:

"Ay! Carrumba! I meesed heem agayn! Ay! Chihuahua!"

The Troubleshooters manage to stumble out of the maze of the junkyard just as the glowing green daycyclebulb rises in the west.

The Daycyclebulb

Yeah, we know that yesterdaycycle the daycyclebulb was blood-red and rose (came up) in the east. That was yesterdaycycle. Here's how it works in NOD Sector: life needs light. Even clones need light. So the designers of NOD Sector, in their infinite wisdom, put this great big bulb, the daycyclebulb, on a track that ran across the top of the dome of NOD. The daycyclebulb rises from one side of NOD, moves across the track, and sets on the other side of NOD. The next daycycle, it goes the other way. Simple, see?

The daycyclebulb was also designed to be an artificial sun. The light it emitted, before the MegaWhoops came along and shook the bulb to its very filaments, contained all the colors of natural sunlight. However, now the daycyclebulb and its controls aren't working so well. Sometimes it gives off red light, or orange, or yellow, or green, or puce, or magenta, or...well, you get the idea.

Worse yet, the track mechanism isn't quite up to snuff, either. Sometimes the daycyclebulb only gets part-way along the track before shuddering to a stop and sliding back the other way. Sometimes it sticks in the same place for daycycle after daycyle. We're not even going to tell you what the mooncyclebulb does, but a lot of the female clones in NOD have been behaving very strangely since the Big C headed for that great repair lab in the sky.

Read aloud:

The greenish glow of the setting daycyclebulb half-blinds you as you finally make the correct turn and step out of the maze of the TEXMEX Zone. In front of you, a cratered, bomb-blasted circular plain stretches to the horizon, which is only two or three kilometers away.

In the center of the bombed-out plain, the Temple of Risirch and De'Sann rises majestically, looking as if it almost touches the dome up above. Crenelations gleam, turrets glitter, plastiron grills on the barbicans and portcullises sparkle greenly. Even from here, you can hear a dull chant coming from the loudspeakers mounted on the highest turrets:

"Never grab the bare end of the wire. What is good for R&D is good for the clone. It's not the voltage that kills you; it's the amps. Read the label twice; pour once."

This is probably the beatific voice of an acolyte of Ack-O-LYT-6 (see the Introduction) that the Troubleshooters hear. These chants and intonations go on constantly at the Temple of R&D. Throw one in every now and then to keep the Troubleshooters on their toes and off guard.

The Killing Fields

There's a reason why that plain looks the way it does. Those zany, loveable mad scientists at R&D gotta test their inventions someplace. You've heard of field tests? Well, this is the field. This is nothing personal against the Troubleshooters. In fact, it's quite impersonal ... just like death. It's just that the Troubleshooters have to cross the weapons range to get to the Temple.

Oh, by the way, we're sure your Troubleshooters remember that clone replacement has broken down along with most of the other technical functions of Alpha. So, this is it. This is the only chance a clone has to go for the gold, the whole nine meters.

It's about a klick and a half to the Temple from where the Troubleshooters are. If he or she runs like the dickens, a healthy clone can make it across the killing fields and to the safety (?) of the Temple gates in about six or seven minutes. So, using a six-sided die, create a series of random events.

Once every minute that any or all of the Troubleshooters are in the open, roll the die. On a roll of 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, or 6, some piece of test equipment issues from the Temple. Yup, something happens every minute. However, the lower the number, the farther away from the Troubleshooters the event happens, but the more powerful the event is. For example, on a roll of "1," an anti-warbot tactical nuke missile might rise out of the Temple and crash to the ground — but far enough away so that the Troubleshooters are only bowled over by the concussion of the blast. (Maybe their dosimeters turn black. But that won't bother them. At least not until this adventure is over.)

We're off to see the High Priests ...

The events get closer and weaker as the number rolled gets higher. For example, on a roll of "6," an infantrybot armed with a canister of giggle gas and wearing no armor might leave the Temple and charge directly at the Troubleshooters.

Knock on Any Door

Once the Troubleshooters cross the field test area and get to the Temple, they have to get past the Immortals and the Immorals to enter the Temple and see the Chief Priest. There are 200 Immortals and 200 Immorals, so trying to shoot their way in isn't going to work for the Troubleshooters.

The outermost ring of guards encircling the Temple is the 200 Immorals. The Troubleshooters must get through the Immorals before they can try to get through the Immortals to get to the Temple. (Is that a long, drawn out echo from The Bridge of Sighs we just heard, wafting across the Sector?)

As the Troubleshooters approach the first line of the Temple's defense, the nearest Immoral comes to attention and commands:

Halt! Who goes there?

No matter what the Troubleshooters say, the Immoral responds:

Yeah! So what?

Eventually, the Immoral demands:

What's the password?

The Troubleshooters were not given any password by Kitt-Y-Kat, nor by anyone else. They can try all they want to guess the password ("Uh, herring? Nasturtium? Can you give us a hint?"), but the Immoral just stands stoically, ignoring all their guesses — until they say "Okay," "All right," "I give up," or something to that effect. Then, the Immoral says:

"That's it. That's the password. But I forgot, first I gotta say, 'Gimme half of everything you got.' Then, you say the password. Got that?"

Lighter by half of all their equipment, clothing, food, and credit plaques, the Troubleshooters are allowed to proceed to the next line of the Temple's defense, the Immortals. Of course, their movement is rather comical, since after relinquishing have of everything they have each of them is wearing only one boot. (Did we mention that the ground is littered with broken Cold Fun bottles and little pieces of shrapnel from weapons tests? Anyone who fails a Tough agility roll will need to get that foot looked at sometime soon. Ever hear of gangrene?)

Temple Guards

Typical Immortal

Description: Mean, tough
Service Group: The 200 Immortals of the Temple Guard
Arms: Atomic Structure Decoder Ring (25E), skill 15
Armor: Combat suit (All7)
Secret Society: Unaffiliated
Mutant Power: Eat nails
Relevant Skills: All agility skills 15; stealth, surveillance, survival 17

Typical Immoral

Description: Pretty mean, pretty tough, not quite as bright as an Immortal
Service Group: The 200 Immorals of the Temple Guard
Arms: Cone Rifle (with safety) (17AP), skill 12
Armor: Combat suit (all4)
Secret Society: Unaffiliated
Mutant Power: Regeneration
Relevant Skills: All agility skills 10; bootlicking, interrogation 15

Intimidations of Immortality

Limpingly, the Troubleshooters reach the line of Immortals. The nearest five, six, or dozen Immortals leer menacingly at the half-dressed, practically disarmed Troubleshooters.

The closest Immortal yawns from boredom and asks:

"Who goes there? Whaddaya want? What's the password?"

By this time, the Troubleshooters should know the drill. They can play along with the Immortals, making them work somewhat for their loot, or they can simply hand over half of everything they have left and save a lot of time.

The I&I are greedy, but not greedy enough to bleed supplicants to the Temple of R&D of everything they have. Those supplicants have to have something left to offer to the priests in return for gizmos. Also, if you have noted the progression of events, the I&I are smart enough to ask for only half of what a supplicant has. (In the case of our Troubleshooters, they are left at the doors of the Temple with one quarter of their original equipment.) In this way, no matter how many more recruits are taken into the Temple guard, and no matter how many more lines of defense are set up around the Temple, there will always be something left for the priests. (Remember the old frog on the log, trying to get to the end of the log by jumping half the distance with each leap? No matter how many jumps he makes, he still has half of the remaining distance left to go. And he usually ends up neurotic.)

Oh, and if you're worried that the Immorals are getting more from the supplicants than the Immortals, don't be. See, the Immorals have to pass through the Immortals to get their new weapons and ammo from the Temple. Guess what the Immortals say to the Immorals when the Immorals try to get through their lines. Yup, you got it: "Gimme half of everything you got!"

Open Up! Wheeooo!

Read aloud:

Even the harsh, green light of the daycyclebulb, shining directly down from the highest point on its track, can't take the chill out of the cool air, as you stand shivering in your skivvies in front of the massive, grandly monumental portals of the Temple of R&D.

At eye level on those tightly shut portals is a synthebrass plaque engraved with these words:

Let only he who is without the least taint of the sin of treason against the All Mighty and Beneficent Computer and Its disciples, the Gods Risirch and De'Sann, and their disciples, the priests of the temple of R&D, be permitted to knock upon this portal. He whose heart is pure will choose correctly.

Below that sign, at chest level, is a pair of huge brass knockers. Leading from each of these door knockers are wrist-thick, heavily-shielded electrical cables.

How dangerous can a pair of knockers be? Ask the guy who had to pick one of the two doors that led to a lady or a tiger. In the end, he whose heart is pure will know the right answer. Yeah, but we're talking your average, run-of-the-mill Troubleshooter-turned-merk here, not some pure-of-heart weenie.

So, whichever of the Troubleshooters is foolish enough to think he is without the sin of treason, or is brave enough to risk the chance, or is the slowest to draw his laser gets knocked on his thinly clad keister — unless, of course, he or she has managed to figure out some way of grounding himself/herself and taking the sting out of the charge.

After one of the Troubleshooters has braved — successfully or un — the ordeal of the knockers, a loud ominous gong reverberates throughout the Temple and showers the Troubleshooters with dust from the walls.

The Knockers

Long ago, the priests got tired of opening their massive portals to every Tom, Dick, and supplicant that came along—especially because by the time the supplicants got through the guard lines of I&I, those supplicants didn't have all that much left in the way of offerings for the Temple priests. So, in response to this law of diminishing returns, and in order to test the bravery and stupidity of the Troubleshooters pounding constantly on the Temple doors, the priests decided to set up a little test of supplicant sincerity.

The Gate Keeper at that time, Cer-B-RUS, was fooling around with the effects of electricity on clones. He decided to combine his experiments with his duties. He installed the knockers and the plaque on the portals and wired the knockers to a huge array of electric batteries. Cer-B-RUS reasoned that the threat of electrocution would keep most supplicants away. The ones foolish enough to think they were pure or the idiots brave enough to risk what appeared to be a 50-50 chance would add to his experimental data. Yep, you *guessed* it. Both knockers were lethal.

That's right, "were." Cer-B ran out of next-of-clones, or moved to BZL and BUB Sectors, or something, and the batteries ran down. Now, all they are capable of is a strong joy-buzz. But our heroes don't know that. And the priests won't respond to anything but the gong of the knockers.

Forgive Me, Computer, for I Have Sinned

Read aloud:

In front of you, the valves of the massive portals swing creakingly open. From the darkness in the hall beyond, comes a deep, resonant voice:

"Enter, all who seek salvation and the boons of Risirch and De'Sann."

Once inside the entry hall of the Temple, the Troubleshooters come face to face with Turnk-Y, the Keeper of the Gates. He is typical of most of the priests of R&D, except that a megaphone hangs on a cord around his neck. He uses the megaphone to make his voice sound deeper when he opens the door and greets supplicants. His normal voice is on the squeaky side.

With luck, when asked how the saintly order of the priests of Risirch and De'Sann can help them, the Troubleshooters will explain that they have been sent by Prince Kitt-Y-KAT at the express request of the Chief Priest, MMM-O-LNN. Turnk-Y will look at the Troubleshooters in their near-nakedness, shake his head, "tsk-tsk" a lot, and say:

"This will never do. You cannot be brought into the Holy Presence of the blessed Holder of the Torch looking like this. Come, follow me. We will get you equipped properly."

Turnk-Y leads the Troubleshooters down many dark and dank flights of stairs, eventually bringing them to the storage rooms in the lower levels of the Temple. The priest opens boxes and closets and starts handing out blue reflec armor (on the chest of each reflec the initials "M-O-L" are emblazoned in gilt), cone rifles with functioning safeties, slugthrowers, laser pistols, bandoliers of barrels, handfuls of detonators, etc. (See the Bonus Equipment cards in the pullout section. These cards are to be cut out and handed to the appropriate Troubleshooter during the outfitting at the NOD R&D Temple). And not once does he hand them a stack of forms or threaten them with termination for equipment abuse.

This is like no outfitting the Troubleshooters have ever been to. Nor is it likely they'll ever see its like again.

When all are equipped to his satisfaction, Turnk-Y nods his approval and says,

"Good. Now, I shall take you to the Holder of the Torch."

Typical Priest of NOD R&D

Description: Your guess is as good as ours. They all wear long, heavy, deeply-cowled robes that hide their features in shadow (straight out of any monk movie you've ever seen). The robes give off a pulsating rainbow of colors that are almost painful to the eye.

Service Group: Priests of Risirch and De'Sann
Arms: Battery operated supplicant prod.
Armor: Priestly Robes (All7)
Secret Society: Various, if any
Mutant Powers: Various
Relevant Skills: breadboarding 20

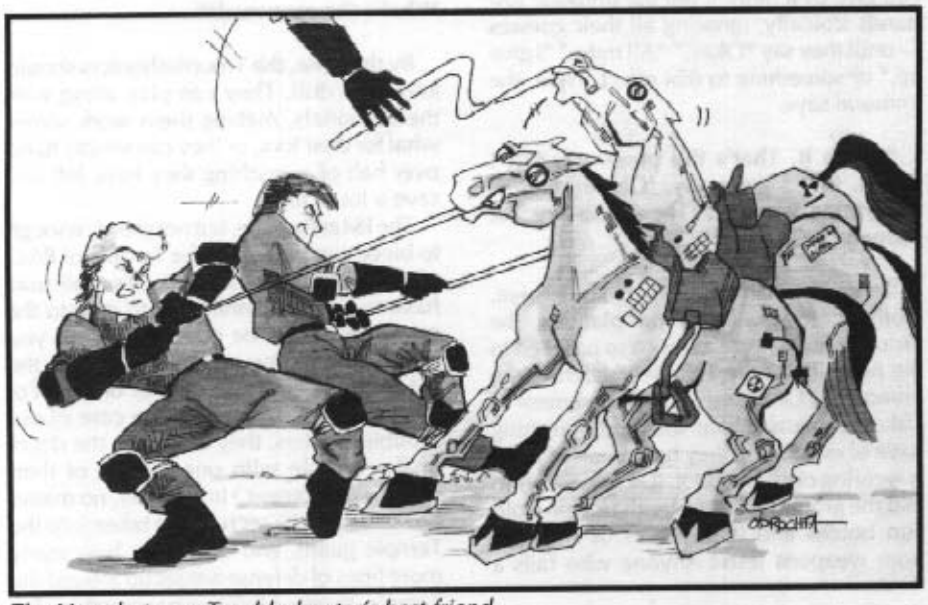
Hi! Priest

MMM-O-LNN doesn't speak aloud very much. He just kind of slouches in the Chief Priests' chair, moans, groans, shakes his head, looks wistfully out into the corridors, rolls his eyes, and sighs a lot. (MMM-O's sighs are sad, little, lonely sighs that are not to be confused with the sighs that emanate from The Bridge of Sighs and that recognize the absurdity of Alpha and everything in it.)

The Holder of the Torch may not speak a lot, but his expressive eyes speak volumes, with footnotes added. When he rolls his eyes at Min-I-ONN (MMM-O-LNN's second in command and interpreter), this aide to the Chief Priest knows exactly what the CP wants to say, and says it for him.

Read aloud:

MMM-O-LNN looks at you, standing proudly, martially with the your newly acquired armor and equipment, and rolls his eyes at Min-I-ONN.



The Horsebot — a Troubleshooter's best friend.

"Mmmm? MMM-O-LNN ponders your appearance," states Min-I-ONN. "Your armor and weapons look very familiar. He wonders where he has seen that equipment before?"

Turnk-Y coughs nervously behind his hand and signals you with a finger to his lips to not say anything about your equipment. Perhaps he has just remembered what the initials on the chests of the Blue Reflec stand for and is feeling a bit of gilt guilt.

Turnk-Y raises his megaphone to his mouth and, in an attempt to conceal the blazing emblazons, he commands in a deep voice, "On your knees, Infidel dogface Troubleshooters. How dare you stand in the presence of the Chief Priest? You are not worthy! Knock your foreheads thrice on the floor beneath His feet. Stay on your knees; keep your heads to the floor; raise your empty hands above your bent backs; now, approach the Chief Priest to beg His forgiveness and receive the honor of His commission — and remember to address His Holiness correctly!"

You may want to ask your Troubleshooters to demonstrate what they do at this point. Go ahead, they'll love you for it.

The Chief Priest ceases his close examination of your equipment and again rolls his eyes at Min-I-ONN, who interprets, "His Holiness says you certainly look capable enough, dressed in all that shiny blue, quite familiar-looking reflec. So, this is the little chore He would like you to do for Him and for NOD R&D ..."

Whatever MMM-O-LNN Wants

What the Torch Holder wants (according to Min-I) the Troubleshooters to do is take a small herd of horsebots (see the Gizmo sidebar) far to the west, to the R&D enclave in ORD Sector. Once there, the Troubleshooters will trade the horsebots to the Priests of ORD for a few tons of silicon much needed by the NODland R&Ders in their attempts to rechip the dead C.

So, What's in it for Us?

As advance payment, Min-I-ONN, at the eye-rolling behest of MMM-O-LNN, offers the Troubleshooters six wristbots, gizmos still warm from the R&D labs (see the gizmo sidebar).

The Holder of the Torch

MMM-O-LNN, Holder of the Torch, didn't get his epithet because he is the holder of the torch of wisdom and enlightenment in the Temple of R&D, or because he has a warm personality, or even because he wanted a Bouncy Bubbly Beverage Lite. Nope. What happened was that some monthcycles after the Moment of MegaWhoops, after some of the hormonal suppressant drugs were no longer being gratuitously added to the food and water supplies, MMM-O-LNN began to get these ... well, sort of "urges." Unfortunately for him, the first thing his desire fixated on was a new, improved catalog modelbot he was diddling with for the newly-created order of Risirich and De'Sann.

When he jacked in the charging cable and powered her up, the light of her vision lenses looked up at MMM-O-LNN, her creator. He called her Rose-I-NDA; she called him Master, and reminded him not to snap her bad side. It was love at first sight.

For him — not for her. Everyone knows modelbots don't have the capacitors to love anyone making less than 150,000 credits a yearcycle, unless, of course, it's someone from HWD sector who can get them into wall-pictures. So, MMM-O-LNN's first and only love was an unrequited love, a love he has never forgotten. Even now, when he hears the rustle of her reflec (only 100 credits from R&D!) as she moves on her habitual path through the Temple, hope eternal pounds in his breast. But alas, her plastiron heart does not notice and MMM-O-LNN is left carrying the torch.

Door Number One or ...

As final payment, when the Troubleshooters bring back the load of silicon, Min-I-ONN says that MMM-O-LNN promises to give them their choice of Door #1 or Door #2. It's the old double door dilemma again. (Was that the faint echo of a sigh from The Bridge of Sighs?)

Behind one of the doors is more credit plaques than the Troubleshooters can count in a monthcycle.

Behind the other door is a brand new Steam Engine (can't you feel the excitement building? We knew you could. See the gizmo sidebar).

Out! Out! Thieves, Vandals

Read aloud:

The massive portals slam behind you with a very final-sounding thud. Each of you holds the control reins of a horsebot that stands behind you. One of you is holding a pass that will get you through I&I and across the River Sticky without losing your trade goods or your back teeth. Each of you is wearing a wristbot strapped to his or her wrist. One of you is carrying a map that is supposed to guide you to ORD.

The pass that will allow the Troubleshooters to leave NODland, by means of the ferry or by the Bridge of Sighs is found in the pullout section of this adventure. At the appropriate time, hand it to one of the Troubleshooters. The Troubleshooters' map is also in the pullout section.

All's Well that Ends

Well, the Troubleshooters still have to recross the killing fields. That would be quicker on horsebotback, wouldn't it? (See the gizmo sidebar.) And they still have to negotiate the narrow, Free-toe Bandito-filled canyons of the TEXMEX Zone, but they are much better armed now and should have no trouble driving off the banditos (snipers are another problem — sometimes, even a Free-toe Bandito can get lucky). And they still have to cross the River Sticky by way of Shar-O-NNN's ferry boat or by The Bridge of Sighs (they have MMM-O-LNN's safe conduct pass — if they haven't lost it while bucking bronco horsebots or had it blown to smithereens on the killing fields). But once across the river, it should be easy traveling to ORD Sector.

Gizmos

Horsebots

These new AATVs (Almost All Terrain Vehicles — they flip on their sides and float aimlessly in fluids and most of them don't run so well in mud) are reminiscent of the legendary Old Reckoning animal, the horse. However, horsebots are more short-legged, boxier, and more angular than what is known of the original animal. For some reason, the ORDites seem quite interested in the horsebot's ability to traverse most terrain and to fuel themselves by ingesting the strange, weedy growths beginning to sprout up in all the Sectors, now that systemized garbage removal has totally broken down.

The horsebots come equipped with control reins and a cockpit instead of a saddle. If the Troubleshooters figure out what the cockpits are for, they can ride the horsebots to ORD. But there is very little leg room in them, so it takes a Dexterity roll against Normal difficulty to get out once you're seated. The difficulty level becomes Tough if you're trying to get out while floating down a river with water filling the cockpit. Needless to say, attempting to mount and ride a horsebot not yet trained for carrying clones should be an interesting and edifying experience — especially for clones not trained in horsebot riding.

One final word about horsebots. They have a big storage compartment in them. It is opened by moving a lever situated underneath the horsebot and towards the back. Inside each storage compartment of the six horsebots with theTroubleshooters is one of the robes of the priests of R&D. The Troubleshooters can discover these robes by accident or through deliberate investigation. The robes, with their armor qualities, may come in handy later on in the adventure.

Wristwatchers

Not only do these handy, little eight-kilo gizmos have six-handed dials that, with a few weekcycles of simple instruction, can be used to tell the time of daycycle — yes! even if the daycyclebulb is stuck on its track — but they also come with genuine faux syntheleather straps and integral buckles so that they can be worn on your wrists.

The inside story: in the bad old daycycles, just after the fall of the Order of Color, when an Ultraviolet's life wasn't worth its weight in Crunchcetyme Chips, many of the High Programmers mistakenly sought sanctuary in the Temples of R&D.

This arrangement worked out well enough — until project supplies ran short and new projects were no longer being sent down from above. Then, the big-domed boffins began to look at the UVs with a new interest. Some unsung hero of a boy wonder developed a process whereby portions of the personality of an Ultraviolet could be stored in a microchip. Then, the microchips would be used to run gizmos. (The Ultraviolet clone husks were discarded, of course. This helped during the food shortage.) The better chips could be fitted with audio circuits and voice-programmed. The inferior, erratic chips were put into smaller gizmos, like the wristwatcher (also known as the wristbot).

Didg-U-TAL is the Ultraviolet personality in the microchip that runs the wristbots given to the Troubleshooters. His personality chip was duplicated to fit into the six wristbots. Didg-U-TAL, one of the most erratically operating chips (but then Didg never had all his circuits wired right, anyway — even before he was enchipped), not only tells the time, somewhat accurately, but is also prone to uttering vague, and usually inapropos, statements through its tiny, tinny speaker. Statements such as: "It is now 23 o'wristbot. Do you know where your next-of-clones are?"

The Steam Engine

This gizmo is bound to be of great value in the coming yearcycles. To operate it, you gather lots of steam. Then, you force that steam into the wide, funnellike end of the engine. Pretty soon, when you open the small valve at the other end of the engine, water will come out. Eureka!

The proud owner of this remarkable engine will never have to be short of drinking water again, as long as there is plenty of steam around.

Episode Three: The Church Militant

Episode Summary

The Troubleshooters do a little horsebot trading, and meet — (dun dun dunnnn) — the Philosopher's Crone.

Something to Consider

And so it is — easy traveling to ORD Sector, that is. Or, it will be easy traveling if that's the way the Troubleshooters decide to go. Think about it:

If you've been kind to your Troubleshooters (stranger things have been known to happen, though we can't think of any off-hand), they managed to lead the horsebots across the Killing Fields, through the TEXMEX Zone, down The Street of Dreams, through the maze of NOD Sector, across the River Sticky (by boat or by bridge) all without too much in the way of difficulty.

If you've been even kinder to your Troubleshooters, they've managed to figure out how to ride the horsebots and quickly train them to be ridden by clones. In this case, the Troubleshooters have managed to ride across the Killing Fields in one-third of the time it would have taken to traverse them on foot (reducing the random encounters to two). The Troubleshooters, armed and armored to the teeth, would then have been able to ride through the canyons of the TEXMEX Zone, shouting, shouting, and scattering the craven Free-toe Banditos to the four winds. (Put yourself in the place of a typical Free-toe Bandito. Would you want your delicate, little, unprotected tootsies tromped on by a plastiron horsebot that weighs a couple of tonnes? (Thought we misspelled "tons," didn't you? No, that's actually the correct spelling for metric tons. Anyone who figured that out can stay after the adventure and clean the erasers.)

Then, if the Troubleshooters were smart, they would have easily crossed the River Sticky via The Bridge of Sighs (balancing a horsebot in that little, one-passenger ferry boat would have been really tricky).

But then what? There they are, six heavily-armed and armored mercenaries mounted on fearsome plastiron chargers. They could go practically anywhere (horsebots are AATVs, remember), conquer practically anyone or anything — maybe even control enough territory and supplies to set up their own Simplex and live the lives of Rile-Y. Soon, they could be rolling in credit plaques and dandling fair wenchbots on their laps. But that's another campaign.

The Unkindest Cut of ALL

If you haven't been too kind (and we suggest you restrain your natural sense of generosity with regard to Troublemakers ... er, Troubleshooters), the horsebots have given the Troubleshooters a really tough time. The horsebots have a tendency to get sort of mulebotish — stand as immovable as plastiron statues, sit on their haunches and bray a lot, snap their big square teeth and kick their plastiron-shod hooves at anybody pulling on the control reins.

The time needed to cross the Killing Fields while dragging the horsebots could be tripled, even heptupled. And imagine fighting off the Free-toes with one arm wrapped in the control reins of a recalcitrant, bucking horsebot. We don't even want to think about what could happen on the bridge (sigh) or on the ferry (splash).

Under these conditions, the thought of being marauding merks ruling a Simplex from the backs of their sleek mounts should be pretty far from the minds of the Troubleshooters. The trip west will not have been so easy. They should be glad to get to ORD, trade the horsebots for the silicon, return to NOD and collect the credit plaques or the steam engine. Maybe even continue to search for "The Horn."

PreORDained

While the Troubleshooters are in transit (or, indeed, anywhere else in this adventure), feel free to toss in as many post-Crash encounters as you like. (Look for the "Whoops Random Encounter Table," coming soon to a supplement near you.)

When the horsebot herders finally make it to ORD Sector, read the following aloud:

You stand on a low hill of rubble. The horsebots are in tow behind you, nipping halfheartedly at your posteriors. Even they, with their mechanical intelligence, are tired of this imposed semi-cooperation with you, and are glad that the journey is nearing its end.

At the bottom of the hill is ORD Sector. Its straight, well-laid-out streets and corridors, and the relaxed manner of its inhabitants as they go about their duties present the picture of an oasis of peace and order in the midst of the desert of chaos that Alpha has become. (Or a desert of peace amid an oasis of chaos, whatever turns you on.)

At the very center of ORD stands the Temple of ORD R&D. It is recognizable by the large looped cross mounted in a nest of intermeshing gears which juts up imperiously from the domed roof of the Temple.

Relaxed manners? Peace? How can this be? Well, since you're the Gamemaster (you are the Gamemaster, aren't you? Otherwise you wouldn't even think of reading this, would you?), we'll tell you.

ORD Sector went the way of most of the R&D Sectors after Friend Computer sang its swan song (see the introduction). For a while, anyway. The many wandering units of Vulture Warriors had coalesced into the 10,000 Immortals and the 10,000 Immorals of the Temple Guard. The best weapons advancements were kept by the Guardclones, and only inconsequential gizmos were passed out to the civilian clones.

Soon, all that firepower in the pawlike mitts of 20,000 trigger happy I&I took its toll. ORD Sector became devoid of civilian clones, except for those left in R&D. And their daycycles were numbered.

When the supply crunch hit ORD Sector R&D, weapons innovations and, indeed, any completed projects at all were few and far between. Eventually, the doors of R&D shut completely and no new gadgets issued from their labs.

The commanding officer of the Immortals, General Han-I-BAL (yup, the very same elephantbot rider who had been so rudely expelled back in NOD Sector. He learned his lesson back in NOD — and besides, he had to go someplace on his white elephantbot), and the commanding officer of the Immorals, General Patt-O-NNN, had a conference. They decided that since the only reason they were here protecting the Temple was to get the new weapons from R&D, and there were no new weapons

forthcoming, well ... Besides, all military clones know that the world of Alpha would be much better off if the army were in charge.

The Temple fell quickly to the concerted attack by the 20,000 I&I. Boffins lost in their own world of theoretical research were no match for battle-hardened troops; tanglers and test tubes were no match for combat suits and plasma generators.

It wasn't long before all of ORD, including R&D, was controlled by the I&I. Then Han-I-BAL and Patt-O-NNN began to make bigger plans — plans for all of Alpha, every Sector, every Simplex. Also, Han-I-BAL had not for one daycycle ever forgotten that it was in NOD Sector that his troops had turned against him.

What to My Wondering Eyes ...

In order to keep their war plans secret for as long as possible from the rest of Alpha (the element of surprise is one of those things the military mind just loves to diddle with), Patt-O-NNN and Han-I-BAL have ordered their respective I&I units to masquerade as civilians. Even the MR&D (Military Research and Design) that now occupies the former Temple of R&D was ordered to wear the scintillating rainbow robes of the defunct priesthood.

But with 20,000 troops involved, and with the military mind not being all that conversant with the complexities of the civilian sector, slip-ups in disguise and procedure are bound to happen (bringing new meaning to the phrase, "Ah, your High Priest wears army boots!")

So, while the military takeover of ORD Sector, along with its R&D labs, may not be readily apparent to the Troubleshooters (indeed, it should not be — we want them to figure this out for themselves), some clues should be evident along the way.

Fools Rush In

If the Troubleshooters enter ORD Sector by way of the main gates, they can admire the Sector patriotism that inspired someone to erect a large "Welcome" sign that arches from the top of one gatepost to the top of the other. The sign reads: **FOR ORD.**

If the Troubleshooters pass a difficult Moxie check, tell them that there is some evidence on the sign that one or more letters may have been carefully obliterated, but it is really difficult to tell what that letter(s) might be.

Two clones stand at the gates of ORD Sector. Their coveralls are immaculate and the creases on the legs are vibroknife-sharp. When the two clones notice the approaching Troubleshooters, both of them stand up much straighter, suck in what little gut they have, and jut out their square-jawed chins.

If the Troubleshooters ask the clones for directions to the R&D Temple, one of the clones looks the questioner straight in the eyes and, never breaking eye contact, says:

"Proceed directly along Persh-I-NGG Corridor until you come to Jeff-R-SON Promenade. Make a right facing movement. Proceed south for three blocks. You can't miss it, si ... er, mac."

If the Troubleshooters go directly to the Temple, skip ahead to "Let's Make A Deal."

If they decide to wander about the streets of ORD Sector, let them do so. During their explorations, they see many clones walking around in a strange and quite precise manner. All of the vehicles they see will be painted a dull, drab grey, or in motley patches of various colors. All of the individuals they meet will appear to be strapping specimens of clonemanity and will be polite and courteous in conversation. However, if questioned directly about anything of a military nature, or about anything that will reveal the actual goings-on in ORD Sector, the ORDite will clumsily change the subject, or try to talk the way they think civilians talk: "Why are all the vehicles painted those colors? Well, uh, clone, like, it's a free Simplex, ain't it? Besides, that color is general issu... er, generally liked by all us civilian-type clones. See?"

Let's Make a Deal

When the Troubleshooters decide to go to the ORD R&D Temple, read aloud:

As you approach the portals of the Temple of R&D, two clones block your path and demand:

"State your names and your business at R&D!"

After the Troubleshooters have done as requested, one of the clones tells them to wait where they are, then turns and enters the Temple.

He returns a few minutes later and commands them to accompany him, but to leave those smelly things outside the Temple (he indicates the horsebots).

The Troubleshooters can all go with the guard, or some of them can stay with the horsebots. The Troubleshooters entering the Temple are led along corridors and hallways busy with clones clad in the rainbow robes of priests of R&D. These priests are moving with a speed and direction quite uncommon for priests in the Troubleshooters' experience. And there are so many of them! Read aloud:

As the guide leads you down a particularly long corridor, you hear the sound of many deep voices joined in some muffled chant. Soon, you pass an open archway. Behind that archway is a large gathering of robed priests. They are all kneeling with their backs to you. The altar and the object of worship on it are too far away to be recognizable. But as the priests kneel, their robes are pulled up, revealing their footwear. Each of the priests is wearing a shiny pair of hobnailed boots.

If the Troubleshooters linger at the archway, the guard will urge them on to the office of the Chief Priest of ORD Sector R&D. The guard introduces them to Chief Priest Han-I-BAL and to his second-in-command, Arch Priest Patt-O-NNN.

After hearing what the Troubleshooters have to say, Han-I-BAL throws back his priestly cowl, rises to his feet and says:

"Well, Patt, let's go see what these boys have traveled so far to bring us. Maybe we can do some business together."

Han-I-BAL

Description: Tall, dark, strongly handsome face, close-cropped graying hair. A Vulture Warrior recruiting poster.
Service Group: The 10,000 Immortals
Arms: Needle Gun (AP), skill 20
Armor: Battle Armor (All7) under rainbow robe (All7)
Secret Society: Military Supremacists, Grand Master
Mutant Power: Charm
Relevant Skills: All Armed Forces Skills 20

Patt-O-NNN

Description: Slight of frame, intense eyes, gravelly voice, refuses to accept awards, etc.
Service Group: The 10,000 Immorals
Arms: Ice Gun (P8)
Armor: Combat suit (All4) under rainbow robes (All7)
Secret Society: Military Supremacists, Chief Factotum
Mutant Power: Warbot Empathy
Relevant Skills: All Armed Forces Skills 17

Note: The Military Supremacists is a new Secret Society, but it already has 20,002 members. Guess who they are

Some Friendly Horsebot Trading

Han-I-BAL and Patt-O-NNN closely examine the horsebots. They run their hands over their flanks, pat them on the withers, lift up their hooves, look in their mouths and count their teeth (it's okay to do that, these are not gift horsebots). The Troubleshooters can hear the Chief Priest and the Arch Priest talking quietly together while they conduct the examination.

"Mumble mumble range mumble mumble mumble payload mumble shock value mumble mumble mobility mumble self-fueling mumble ..."

Han-I-BAL turns to the Troubleshooters and says:

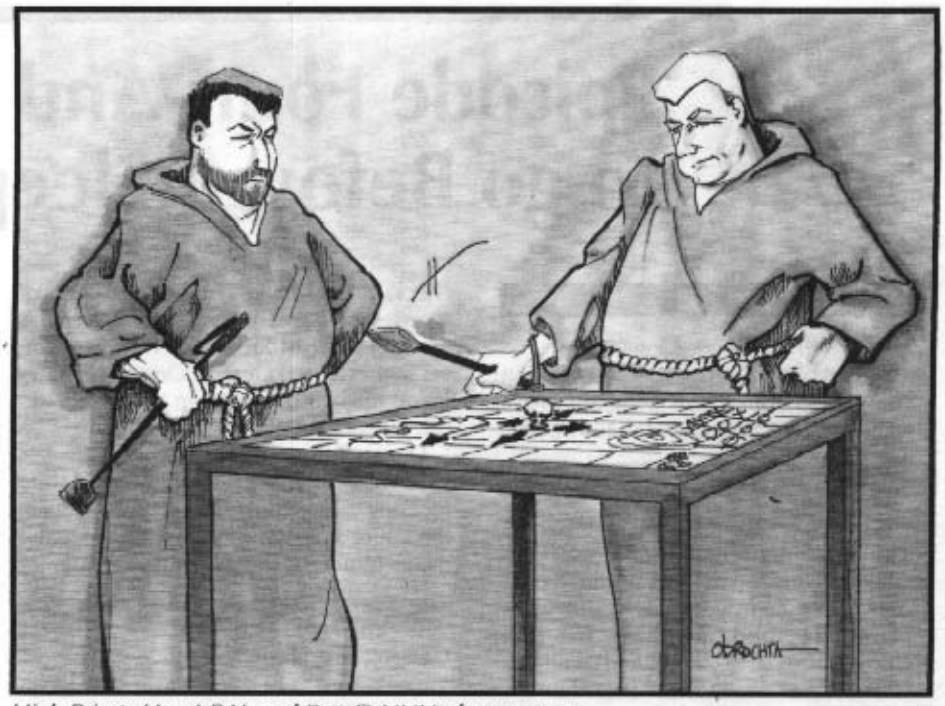
"Well, boys, I think we can shake hands on this deal. We'll let you have 30 tons of silicon and the 10-wheel dumpbots to haul it. And we'll take these old swayback nagbots off your hands as a favor to our brethren in NOD R&D.

"However, there is one condition. I want you boys, as a special favor to me, to take a token of appreciation and remembrance back to my brothers at NOD. Will you do that for me, boys? I'll owe you one."

How can the Troubleshooters refuse the old charmer? They'll get paid on their return to NOD, and the Chief Priest of ORD will also owe them a favor. How can they go wrong? (Let us count the ways...) If they do refuse the task, Han-I-BAL makes a big show of rethinking the purchase of the horsebots, which would leave the Troubleshooters in worse shape financially than they were in the beginning of the adventure. You might want to point this out to them if they're being contrary.

After the Troubleshooters agree to the deal, Han-I-BAL orders the guards to take the horsebots to the R&D knockoff facilities, and has three 10-wheel dumpbots filled with silicon and brought around to the front of the Temple. He also has his gift for his brothers at NOD brought to the Troubleshooters.

The gift looks like a scrubot designed in the image of a wizened, old female clone.



High Priests Han-I-BAL and Patt-O-NNN plan strategy

She is humbly dressed, but carries a locked oblong purse made of flexsteel.

The Gift of the Mad Guy

Read aloud:

"Ain't she grand, boys?" Han-I-BAL asks. "This one I designed myself. Quite proud of her, even if I do have to blow my own hornbot. I call her The Philosophers' Crone. Not only is she self-mobile and can ride with you in the cab of one of the dumpbots, but she's a real synthegold mine. Feed her anything you want, and pretty soon out comes a brick of synthegold. I know the brothers back at NOD will love this. They'll never have to worry about their credit plaque shortage again. That I promise.

"See that purse? That contains her operating instructions and is made of flexsteel, impervious to anything up to being at ground zero under a ballistic nuke. And the lock can only be opened by the Chief Priest at NOD. I sent one of my boys ahead with the key. Not that I don't trust you fine lads, but I wouldn't want to tempt you into sin, would I?"

Let's Spend the Nightcycle Together

After showing off the Philosophers' Crone, Han-I-BAL realizes that the ORD Sector daycyclebulb is about to set. He suggests (insists, if the Troubleshooters demur) that they not drive in the dark, and that they spend the nightcycle in the Temple's guest apartments.

He assures the Troubleshooters that the silicon and the Crone will be quite safe until they are ready to leave at daycyclebulbrise.

After being brought to comfortable rooms in the Temple, the Troubleshooters are served food and other refreshments. But as the chamber-service priests leave, the apartment's only door closes with the solid click of a lock followed by the thud of a bar falling into place.

Episode Four: And Molebots to go Before I Sleep

Episode Summary

The Troubleshooters enjoy a refreshing constitutional in an air duct, and discover a plan to conquer Simplexes far and wide.

Something's Rotten in ORDmark

The apartment in which the Troubleshooters find themselves confined consists of: three bedrooms, each containing two single beds and two small nightcyclestands; a large and well-appointed hygiene cubicle; a large lounge/library with crammed shelves, richly upholstered chairs, and a long central table, at which the Troubleshooters have just finished their repast; and one door leading into the corridors of the Temple...or it would if it weren't locked and barred. There are no windows. The Troubleshooters were led down four flights of stairs on their way to the apartment, so it must be below ground level.

If they examine the shelves, the Troubleshooters will find that they are jammed with data discs with titles such as: *Clawsw-I-TZZ's Art of War, At-I-LAA's Tactics of Mobility, Se-I-SAR's GALic Wars,* etc. However, there is no operational equipment on which to view the discs. Also on the shelves is a printed copy of the *R&D Catalog of Astounding, Amazing, Really Nifty Items*. If the Troubleshooters examine the catalog, they will find no mention of the Philosophers' Crone.

The walls are solid syntheconcrete and the door is plastiron. If the Troubleshooters attempt to blast their way out, they find that all the barrels, detonators, triggers, and power charges have been surreptitiously removed from their weapons, probably by the priests who served the meal.

There is a way out of the room. A plastered-over ventilation shaft (large enough to admit a crouching clone) is in the ceiling just above the chandelier that hangs over the central table. The air passing along the shaft (but not into the apartment) causes the chandelier to vibrate ever so slightly. Otherwise that area of the ceiling looks just as solid as any other area.

If the Troubleshooters don't find the vent shaft on their own (a very difficult Moxie check), have Didg-U-TAL the wristbot make a series of nonsense statements from as many of the wristbots on the Troubleshooters' wrists as you choose. One of the statements might be: "Just when all seems darkest, things are bound to look up."

Depending on the intelligence level of the Troubleshooters, it may be necessary for Didg to accentuate "look up," or repeat the entire statement, or make more statements hinting at the exit in the ceiling.

Getting the Shaft

The Troubleshooters can wander through the ventilator shafts and ducts of the Temple for centurycycles if you wish. You can show them all sorts of nifty chambers and rooms — all of which are heavily guarded or present no way of escape from the Temple.

Or, you can let them stumble upon even more evidence of what the priests of ORD are up to. Sure, it's not too suspicious for an entire Sector or Simplex to be military. But here in ORD, the military seems to have invaded that most Holy of Holies, the Temple of R&D.

We're not going to give you a map (after all, this is a *mini*-adventure). So just let the Troubleshooters wander from chamber to chamber. Keep in mind, though, that the further they stray from the area of their apartment, the more likely they are to run into trouble (see the "Trouble Along the Way" sidebar for suggestions).

The following are arranged in order of distance from the apartment. You can give out as much of the available information as you think your Troubleshooters deserve.

The Troubleshooters can find:

The Mystery Machine Room — Looking down through a hole in the floor of the ventilator shaft, the Troubleshooters can see a huge chamber, dimly lit and having only one locked and bolted plastiron door. In the center of the chamber, resting on the solid syntheconcrete floor, is a massive tubular construct. It appears to be large enough to hold three or four 10-wheel dumpbots. Yet, no access hatches are visible on the smooth skin of the construct. One end of the device is in the shape of a huge screw.

It is a long drop to the floor of the chamber with no apparent means of climbing back out.

The Arsenal — Yup. The Troubleshooters can load up on weapons and ammo here. It's guarded from the outside, not from the inside. Who would want to break out of an arsenal? And how could they have gotten in there in the first place?

Han-I-BAL's Private Laboratory — This is where Han-I-BAL developed the Philosophers' Crone. Schematic and transparent overlays are filed neatly away in large, flat file drawers. All the tools, screwdrivers, pliers, soldering irons, are cleaned and racked like well-trained soldiers on parade. (Han-I-BAL, like many military leaders before him, is just a tad on the obsessive-compulsive side.)

If the wiring diagrams and physical plans for the Philosophers' Crone are examined, the Troubleshooters will discover some obscure circuits that just may turn anything into gold. You can use this information to spur the Troubleshooters into attempting to solve the puzzle of the purse, if you so wish.

In actuality, the gold created by this method of transmutation will be highly radioactive and quite deadly to the average clone. You may withhold this information until that moment when you will get the greatest pleasure out of informing the Troubleshooters. Maybe when they have the Philosophers' Crone make some gold and are standing there, happily holding a glowing ingot or two.

A Difficult Moxie role will reveal to the Troubleshooters the true purpose of the Crone: it is a simple robot with every available square centimeter of interior space loaded with enough syntheplastique to blow the entire NOD Sector R&D Temple clean out of NODland and across the River Sticky.

If the Troubleshooters have made a successful Moxie roll, examination of the plans will also show that the Philosophers' Crone's flexsteel purse was not designed to hold operating instructions. It was designed to hold the timing/detonating mechanism that will set off the syntheplastique. There is no way to destroy the purse or remove it from the Crone without setting off the bomb. The only way to turn off the detonator, or reset the timer, is to open the locked purse, and the Troubleshooters do not find the key (there isn't one). Illustrations in the pullout

section show what the locked purse looks like and how it can be opened. Show the illustration of the locked purse (not the one of the solution) to the Players and see if their Troubleshooters can figure out how to open the purse to get at the detonator controls.

The Trophy Room — Dozens and dozens of mounted heads adorn the walls of this room. They are not the heads of legendary wild animals hunted down in the great Outdoors, but those of clones. Some of them are wearing glasses. Most of their faces seem to be frozen in a moment of surprise or confusion, or both. In some cases, only the hands of the victim were stuffed and mounted. They project from the walls and hold pocket calculators and pocket protectors filled with pencils and pens. Synthebrass plates below the heads read: Chief Priest Inn-O-CNT-1, or Brother Thom-O-MAS. On one wall is a large photograph of Han-I-BAL with a proud smile on his face, a slugthrower in his hands, and his foot on the chest of a dead R&D priest.

The War Room — This is the room where Han-I-BAL, Patt-O-NNN, and all the other ranking officers of the I&I War Plans Staff do all their plotting, scheming, and daycycle dreaming about the War of the World for which they are preparing. The desks and worktables in here are littered with half-full synthecoffee mugs, chewed pencils, rulers, pointers, overhead projectors, papers, and maps — lots of maps. Big maps, small maps, even wall maps. Maps of all the Sectors and known Simplexes — NOD, EDN, DOA, HEL, PAR, DSE, WST, Boys' Town Simplex, Lola's Saloon and Gambling Emporium Simplex, etc.

On each and every one of those maps are handwritten numbers and hand-drawn big red arrows showing attack plans, proposed troop movements, supply lines, troop designations, and kill estimates. The map of NOD Sector appears to have been worked upon the most. It is wrinkled and stained, and has the most red arrows on it — all pointing toward NOD R&D.

Han-I-BAL's Office — This room has a large desk with papers piled neatly in "IN/OUT" baskets, a chair behind the desk, a couch, and two chairs facing the desk. Large windows permit a view of the courtyard surrounding the Temple and of the many guards on patrol in that courtyard. Some of the papers on the desk are signed, "Han-I-BAL, General, CIC 10,000 Immortals, RA." The center drawer of the desk holds Han-I-BAL's personal diary. Perhaps the two most notable entries are:

Yearcycle 1 AM, Monthcycle 3, Daycycle 4

Dear Diary,

This daycycle, the troops I had sent to guard the NOD Sector R&D facilities rebelled against my authority. I shall never forget the insult they did to me and my white elephantbot.

(There are a few spots on this page that look suspiciously like tear stains.)

Yearcycle 2 AM, Monthcycle 7, Daycycle 2

Dear Diary,

I finally finished her. She's loaded and ready to go. Now, I have to find a way to get her to NOD R&D. Gee, I wish I could see the looks on the faces of those traitors when they get my present!

(**Note**: Yearcycle 1AM = the first yearcycle After the MegaWhoops)

The Dungeons — There are many dungeons below the ORD R&D Temple. Only one is occupied — well, only one is occupied by a *live* clone.

Ah-G-ERR is the surviving clone in dungeon cell 323. Because the automated food supply to his cell has broken down, causing delivery of sustenance to become quite erratic, Ah-G-ERR can be either emaciated to the point of starvation from lack of proper nutrition, or quite physically hardy (maybe 400 pounds worth of hardy) due to an almost constant delivery of food by the malfunctioning supply system. Take your pick. Each situation has its own attractions as far as the adventure is concerned. If he is thin and weak, he will have to be helped along the air shafts. If he is rotund, the Troubleshooters will have to push and shove to get him to fit through some of the narrower openings.

Also, because of his long incarceration with little contact with other members of clonemanity, Ah-G-ERR's primary board is not operating with a full installment of microchips. In other words, Ah-G-ERR has a few synthebats in his belfry. Because of his mental state, Ah-G-ERR's reaction to meeting the Troubleshooters might go something like this:

"Stay away from me, you illegally decanted goons! I've got nothing left to tell you. No more R&D secret inventions, nothing. No matter how much you torture me, I won't talk. Torture? Did I say torture? Well, maybe I can tell you about one more invention — if you'll be kind to poor old Ah-G-ERR."

When the Troubleshooters find him and convince him that they are friends and not some more fiendish I&Is sent to torture him, Ah-G-ERR explains that, as far as he knows, he is the last living ORD R&D priest, and he thanks the gods Risirich and De'Sann that they have finally sent someone to rescue him.

Ah-G-ERR tells the Troubleshooters that the only reason he is still alive is that the I&I seem to have forgotten all about him.

Trouble Along the Way

Traveling through the chambers and air shafts of the ORD R&D Temple is not all fun and games. Any number of random events can befall the Troubleshooters as they make their dusty way. Hit the Troubleshooters with as few or as many of the following as you think will be fun, or make up some encounters of your own. You're the gamemaster, right?

1. Sections of the air shafts are covered with millipedebots and spiderbots and slugbots. Yuk.
2. Wandering packs of hungry ratbots attack from out of the darkness of cross shafts.
3. Doberbots have been set to patrol various chambers, such as, the Arsenal, Han-I-BAL's lab, the War Room, etc.
4. Sections of the air shafts have rotted through and may collapse under an unwary Troubleshooter, dropping him into a deep dungeon cell or into a pit full of crocbots.
5. Han-I-BAL might return to his office while the Troubleshooters are reading his diary. If this happens, allow the Troubleshooters to escape back into the air shafts, but only after a firefight with Han-I-BAL — and before I&I reinforcements arrive.
6. An Immortal, dressed as a priest, enters the apartment in which the Troubleshooters were held captive, finds them gone, and sounds a general alarm that starts every I&I in the Temple searching for them.
7. Have the Troubleshooter(s) of your choice make a Tough Chutzpah roll. If he fails, he gets a sudden attack of claustrophobia, and starts trying to get out of the shaft by climbing over the other Troubleshooters. His yelling, crying and general hysteria should help the I&Is pinpoint where you are. He needs to make a successful Chutzpah roll to fight down the phobia.

If the Troubleshooters have already visited the arsenal and rearmed themselves, they can easily break Ah-G-ERR out of his cell. If they want to rescue him quietly, they can rig up some kind of rope and haul him up into the vent shaft with them.

Well Said, Olde Mole! Canst Work I' the Earth So Fast?

Once Ah-G-ERR has been rescued from his cell, he cleans his glasses on his shirttail, places them back in position, blinks at the Troubleshooters and says:

The Philosopher's Crone

"Gee, I sure would like to get back to my project. It's been a long time since I worked on it. It's been a long time since I worked on anything. You guys haven't seen the molebot around anywhere, have you? You know, big shiny tubular thing with a reducing, tapering, spiraling inclined plane at one end?"

The Troubleshooters should have figured out the bellicose intentions of the fake priests of ORD R&D by this time. They should realize that ORD intends to destroy, either by infiltration or direct attack, all the other R&D enclaves in Alpha. Their intentions are to place the whole world of Alpha under the direct control of the military.

The Troubleshooters should scoop up Ah-G-ERR and head back for the chamber where they saw the molebot.

Once they get it powered up and running, they can use the molebot to bore down through the earth and effect their escape from the ORD R&D Temple. They can, if they wish, pop up in the courtyard of the Temple, haul the dumpbots loaded with silicon aboard, drill back into the earth and head for NOD Sector at a comfortable four kilometers per hour. Shucks, they can even take the Philosophers' Crone along — she will still be standing out there in the courtyard next to the dumpbots.

Why Haul the Hag?

The solution to the purse problem isn't all that difficult, once one starts to consider the puzzle. Besides, maybe the Troubleshooters missed the clues about the Crone having an explosive personality. Think about them humming along under the ground with the Crone's timer ticking away as she sits in the passenger section of the molebot.

In that case it might be kind to let one of the Troubleshooters hear the soft ticking coming from the flexsteel purse. It might sound to him very much like the ticking made by the wristbot as it whiles away the seconds. This might lead the Troubleshooters to realize that the purse contains a timer and that the Philosophers' Crone is a bomb. (Sorry, lady. This is where you get off.)

But, if they figure out how to open the purse and reset the timer, they can scoot back under the ORD Temple of R&D, return Han-I-BAL's present, and drill away to NOD, waiting for that collapsing CRUMMP that follows a distant explosion.

All Trussed Up and No Place to Go

If the Troubleshooters figure things out in ORDland, but are hesitant or too frightened to try to escape and warn NOD Sector, you, Mister (or Ms.) Gamemaster, can have them run across Ah-G-ERR, wounded and dying after having escaped from his cell and from the pursuing I&I, who are dressed as priests. Or, you can have Ah-G-ERR drop in on your party of adventurers after escaping from his cell and then falling through one of the rotted sections of air shaft.

Ah-G-ERR can confirm all their suspicions before he dies. However, he is too preoccupied with impending death to mention the molebot and how they can use it to escape.

This scene of bloody mayhem is intended to spur the Troubleshooters on to making an attempt at escape from the ORD Temple. If they still insist on sitting on their hands, let them stew in their own juices.

Hey, Listen, I've Got this Swampland

If the Troubleshooters are so dense and unobservant as to accept the scam that Han-I-BAL, Patt-O-NNN, and the I&I are trying to pull in the name of military supremacy, then they drive the dumpbots back to NOD Sector R&D with the Philosophers' Crone sitting beside them in one of the cabs, smiling and happily ticking away as her feeble little alloy brain exults in the idea that the goal of her existence is about to be fulfilled.

Back at NOD R&D, the Philosophers' Crone explodes, and the battered Troubleshooters get to watch Han-I-BAL's invasion from where they and the rest of the Temple inhabitants, and the Temple itself, have landed on the far side of the River Sticky. Maybe they even get to watch through sorta dead eyes ...

The Good News

There are no Treason Points here. Either the Troubleshooters succeed, or they never come back from ORD, or they get blown up. So who cares about a few measly Treason Points?

The better news is that if they succeed in either blowing up ORD or warning NOD or both, they get to pick which curtain to look behind for their reward for a mission well done. They might get lucky and end up with the wonderful steam engine. Gee. (Or, was that a sigh I heard?)

And if they do make it safely back to NOD, they are now free to pursue their original quest, the search for "The Horn." (And a long quest it's liable to be ...)

The Molebot

Ah-G-ERR designed the molebot to tunnel through the earth below Alpha. Its powerful screw, aided by intense lasers, can bore through practically any material. It can bore through average rock and soil at a speed of four kilometers per hour. Even discussions of it have been known to bore large groups of people! It can be operated by one clone, but is more easily operated by a crew of two. In addition to the two-clone crew, it can carry six passengers and a payload equivalent to three 10-wheel dumpbots and the 30 tons of their combined cargos. (Gee, isn't that handy?)

PC#1:
Name Now: Pal-O-DIN
Name Then: Cav-I-LER

Former Service Group: HPD and Mind Control

Security Clearance:
Private: Indigo
Public: Orange

Player Name: _____

Attributes and Skills

Strength (11)
Damage _____ 0
Carry _____ 25 kg

Endurance (14)
Macho _____ 1

Agility (19) Skill Base _____ 5
Unarmed _____ 10

Chutzpah (19) Skill Base ____ 5

Dexterity (12) Skill Base ____ 3
Energy Weapons _____ 6
Laser Weapons _____ 15
Projectile Weapons _____ 13

Mechanical (12) Skill Base ___ 3
Grawler Op. & Maint. _____ 6

Moxie (17) Skill Base _____ 4

Power (5)

Personal Equipment
Laser Pistol
Knife
Orange Reflec
Dental Floss
Spare Shoe Laces
Goggles

Weapon	Skill Number	Type	Damage Rating	Range	Experi-mental?
Laser Pistol	15	L	8	50	no
Knife	5	I	7	—	—

Damage Status

Credits
57

Armor	Rating
Orange Reflec	L4

PC#2:
Name Now: Tam-O-ZEN
Name Then: Arm-R-ALL

Former Service Group: Technical Services

Security Clearance:
Private: Red
Public: Orange

Player Name: _____

Attributes and Skills

Strength (12)
Damage _____ 0
Carry _____ 25 kg

Endurance (17)
Macho _____ 1

Agility (15) Skill Base _____ 4

Chutzpah (14) Skill Base ____ 3

Dexterity (13) Skill Base ____ 3
Projectile Weapons _____ 15

Mechanical (12) Skill Base ___ 3
Flybot Op. & Maint. _____ 13

Moxie (12) Skill Base _____ 3
Medical _____ 11

Power (8)

Personal Equipment
Slugthrower (solid slug)
Orange Reflec
Flashlight
Sunglasses
Mosquito Netting
Scarves

Weapon	Skill Number	Type	Damage Rating	Range	Experi-mental?
Slugthrower	15	P	7	50	—

Damage Status

Credits
23

Armor	Rating
Orange Reflec	L4

PC#3:
Name Now: Hole-G-ARR
Name Then: You Forget

Former Service Group: CPU

Security Clearance:
Private: You Forget
Public: Green

Player Name: _____

Attributes and Skills

Strength (13)
Damage _____ 0
Carry _____ 30 kg

Endurance (9)
Macho _____ 0

Agility (13) Skill Base _____ 3
Primitive Melee Weapons ___ 17

Unarmed _____ 14

Chutzpah (13) Skill Base ____ 3
Intimidation _____ 10

Dexterity (11) Skill Base ____ 3

Mechanical (20) Skill Base __ 5

Moxie (17) Skill Base _____ 4
Stealth _____ 8

Power (9)

Personal Equipment
Brass Knuckles
Green Reflec
Petbot
Gas Mask

Weapon	Skill Number	Type	Damage Rating	Range	Experi-mental?
Brass Knuckles	17	I	6	—	—

Damage Status

Credits
63

Armor	Rating
Green Reflec	L4

PC#1: Pal-O-DIN

Secret Society: Romantics
Secret Society Rank: 16

Mutant Power(s):
Machine Empathy

Troubleshooter Team: Pal-O-DIN's Wanderers

Loyalties:

Free-lance Troubleshooter

Leader of Pal-O-DIN's Wanderers

Background: You hated working at HPD&MC. Being stuck behind a desk shuffling data packs just wasn't for you. You felt you were decanted for the open spaces, with the wind of the corridor ventilation fans blowing through your hair. But more than that, you hated being promoted from Infrared through Indigo — because you just loved how you looked in Infra-basic Black. Even now, you wear black underwear under your public Orange reflec. The MegaWhoops liberated you from HPD&MC. You banded together with some like-minded clones and went off to live the life of a wandering mercenary. And you insisted on being the leader, otherwise you wouldn't play.

Goal in Life: Get back to Infra-basic Black; find a hotel with a round seat in the lobby and with a Chinese laundry not too far away.

Description: You stand 1.83 meters tall (6') — you are much shorter when sitting or lying. Your nose is large and the skin of your face is pock marked (think Richard Boone in "Have Gun Will Travel"). Despite your strong Romantic drives, you behave in a quite gentlemanly fashion toward clones of the opposite sex — especially when they are stronger and better armed than you.

PC#2: Tam-O-ZEN

Secret Society: Death Leopard
Secret Society Rank: 3

Mutant Power(s):
Telekinesis

Troubleshooter Team: Pal-O-DIN's Wanderers

Loyalties:

Pal-O-DIN's Wanderers, a mercenary Troubleshooter team.

Background: For a short time after The Computer went to the Great Beyond, you maintained your affiliation to both your Service Group and to your Secret Society. Your life was filled solving plumbing problems during working hours and roaming the corridors with your quasi-Guardian Angel group of Death Leopards during your hours. But a good thing can last only so long. You can pulp just so many skulls and unclog just so many hygiene cubicle syntheporcelain oubliettes before you begin to wonder whether or not life has more to offer a young female clone.

You found that something extra when Pal-O-DIN single-handedly defeated your Death Leopard Death Squad. You did not flee after the encounter but, in all humility, offered to join Pal-O. Thus, Pal-O found his first recruit for Pal-O-DIN's Wanderers.

Goal in Life: To follow the way of the Pal-O-DIN. To become one with the high explosive shells of your slugthrower as they seek their targets. To offer to as many as you can the opportunity for corporeal advancement to the next incarnation, or clone activation.

Description: Scarves, lots of scarves (you even managed to find some in NOD Outfitting). You have a poised, confident, well balanced walk; dark, straight hair; sallow complexion; long face with a small, pointed chin; almond shaped eyes evincing great internal peace.

PC#3: Hole-G-ARR

Secret Society: Psion
Secret Society Rank: 2

Mutant Power(s):
Pyrokinesis

Troubleshooter Team: Pal-O-DIN's Wanderers

Loyalties:

Pal-O-DIN's Wanderers, a mercenary Troubleshooter team.

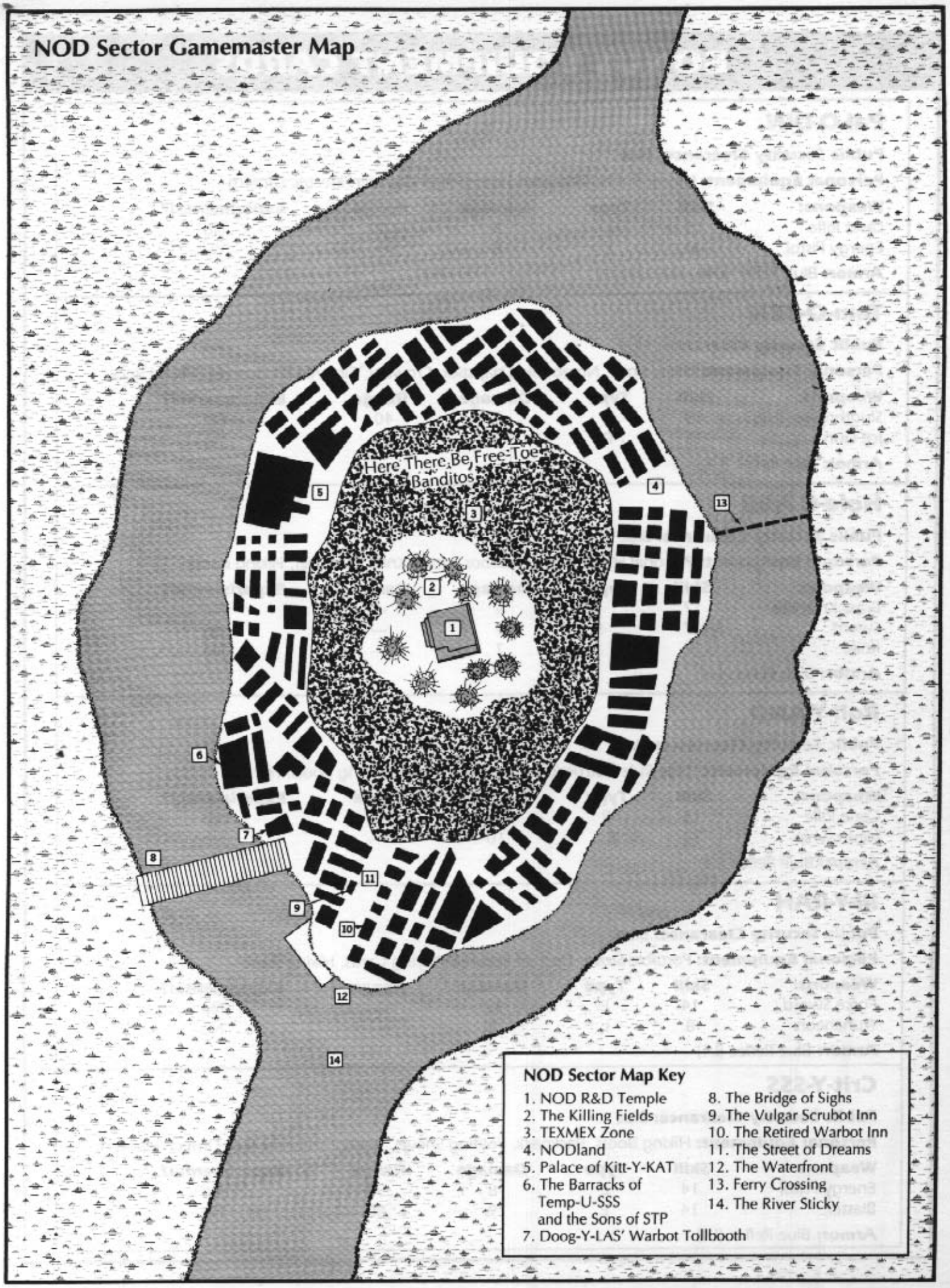
Background: You were off delivering a Writ of Termination when the Moment of MegaWhoops swooped upon the land. You found yourself in the midst of the whirlpooling riots of the Great CPU Turkey Shoot. You did not escape, and were killed near the Gork-Y Park Transtube Station.

Luckily for you, your next-of-clone activation was one of the few that happened after The Big C went catatonic. The mob of Infras and Reds had left you for dead (probably because you were) forgetting, for the moment, about possible replacement. When your next-of-clone popped into existence, your former body had not been removed. The shock of activation, followed by the trauma of seeing the mangled body of your previous clone, caused you to pass out. When you awoke you saw Pal-O-DIN standing over you, and you saw Tam-O-ZEN kneeling at your side, applying an Upanatem derm to your wrist. But you now suffered from amnesia. Not knowing where else to go, you stayed with Pal-O-DIN and Tam-O-ZEN and became the third Wanderer.

Goal in Life: Save Denmark from the Nazis — if you can only figure out what that means.

Description: You are a big guy — a little over two meters tall. You have a broken nose, speak with a Danish accent, and keep asking about two guys named Carr-I-HUE and Charl-Y-MYN, and about a femmeclone called Alian-O-RAA.

NOD Sector Gamemaster Map



NOD Sector Map Key

1. NOD R&D Temple
2. The Killing Fields
3. TEXMEX Zone
4. NODland
5. Palace of Kitt-Y-KAT
6. The Barracks of Temp-U-SSS and the Sons of STP
7. Doog-Y-LAS' Warbot Tollbooth
8. The Bridge of Sighs
9. The Vulgar Scrubot Inn
10. The Retired Warbot Inn
11. The Street of Dreams
12. The Waterfront
13. Ferry Crossing
14. The River Sticky

BONUS EQUIPMENT CARDS

Pal-O-DIN

Public Security Clearance: Blue

Personal Equipment: Hiking Boots, One-Man Tent, Geiger Counter, Electric Lantern

Weapons:	Skill	Type	Damage	Range	Experimental?
Laser Rifle	15	L	8	100	No
Energy Pistol	6	E	8	50	Yes

Armor: Blue Reflec (L4)

Tam-O-ZEN

Public Security Clearance: Blue

Personal Equipment: Utility Knife, Notebook, Chapstick, Crowbar, First Aid Kit, Scarves, Hiking Boots

Weapons:	Skill	Type	Damage	Range	Experimental?
Slugthrower (HE)	15	P	9	40	No
Ice Gun	15	P	8	50	Yes

Armor: Blue Reflec (L4

Hole-G-ARR

Public Security Clearance: Blue

Personal Equipment: Personal Hygiene Kit, Thermos, Utility Knife, Hammer, Hiking Boots

Weapons:	Skill	Type	Damage	Range	Experimental?
Brass Knuckles	17	I	6	—	No
Sword	17	I	9	—	No
Knife	17	I	7	—	No

Armor: Blue Reflec (L4)

Roll-Y-AND

Public Security Clearance: Blue

Personal Equipment: Slide Rule Instructions, Backpack, Pencil, Hiking Boots, Horn

Weapons:	Skill	Type	Damage	Range	Experimental?
Cone Rifle	15	AP	17	200	No
Neurowhip	10	E	10	—	No

Armor: Blue Reflec (L4)

Ill-Y-RAH

Public Security Clearance: Blue

Personal Equipment: Portable Stove, Deck of Pictured Playing Cards, Hiking Boots

Weapons:	Skill	Type	Damage	Range	Experimental?
Force Sword	14	E	12	—	No
Truncheon	8	I	8	—	No

Armor: Blue Reflec (L4)

Crit-Y-SSS

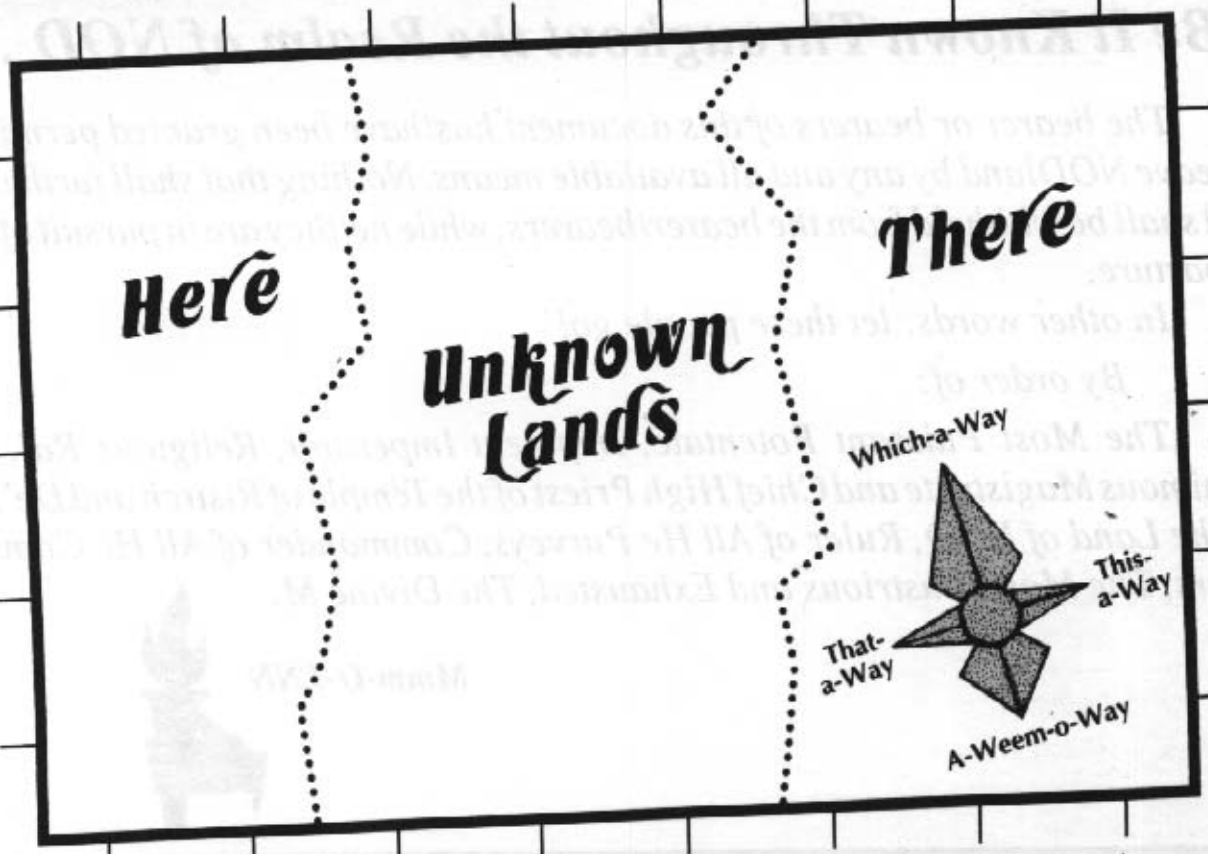
Public Security Clearance: Blue

Personal Equipment: Hiking Boots, Backpack, Folding Shovel, Water Flask (one liter), Insect Repellent

Weapons:	Skill	Type	Damage	Range	Experimental?
Energy Pistol	14	E	8	50	No
Blaster	14	E	9	50	No

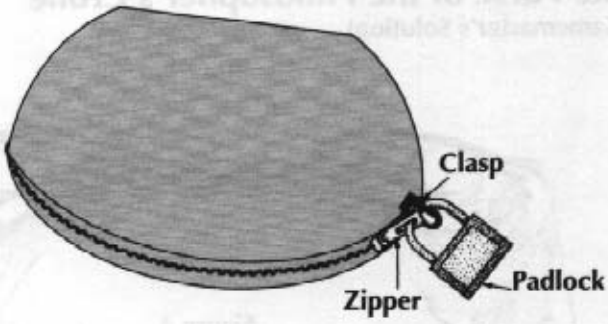
Armor: Blue Reflec (L4)

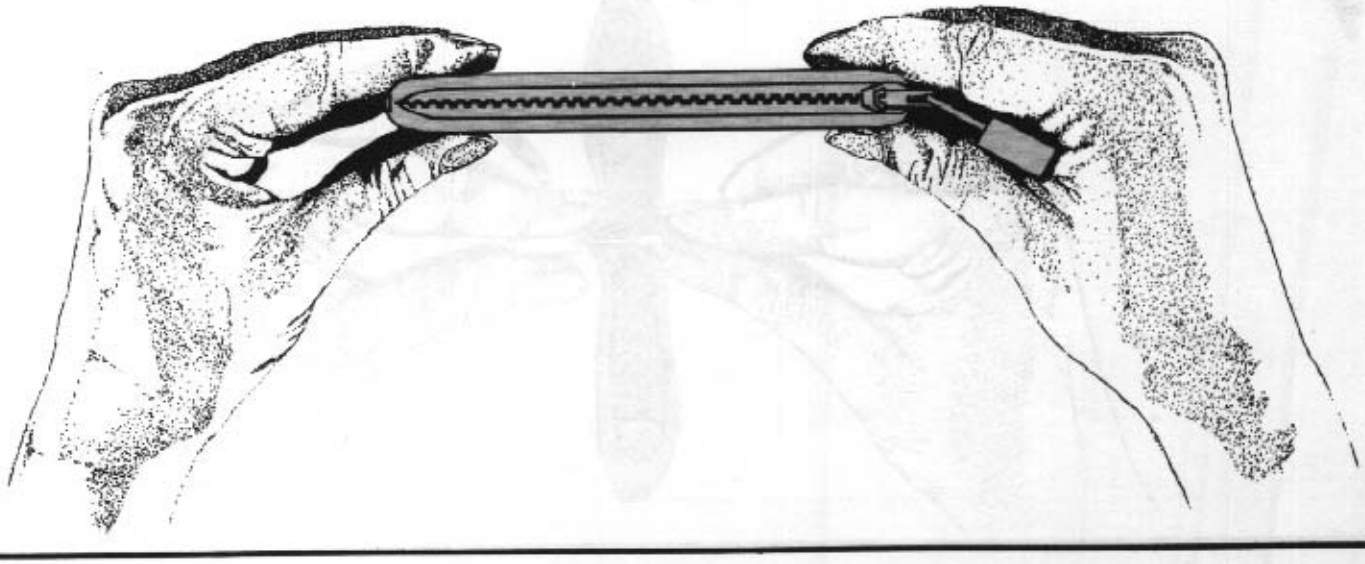
Troubleshooter Map
(Or, How to Get From Here to There and Back Again)



The Purse of the Philosopher's Crone
(Troubleshooters' Problem)

The purse of the Philosopher's Crone is made of flexsteel, and cannot be opened with any weapon short of a tacnuke. A padlock passes through the opening in the zipper and through a clasp affixed to the side of the purse. There is no key available to the lock.





Mmm-O-LNN's Pass

Be It Known Throughout the Realm of NOD ...

The bearer or bearers of this document has/have been granted permission to leave NODland by any and all available means. Nothing that shall further that end shall be withheld from the bearer/bearers, while he/they are in pursuit of their departure.

In other words: let these people go!

By order of:

The Most Puissant Potentate, Impotent Imperator, Religious Raj, Magnanimous Magistrate and Chief High Priest of the Temple of Risirch and De' Sann in the Land of NOD, Ruler of All He Purveys, Commander of All He Commandeers, The Most Illustrious and Exhausted, The Divine M.

Mmm-O-LNN

The Purse of the Philosopher's Crone

(Gamemaster's Solution)

Since there is no key, the Troubleshooters must find another method by which to open the purse. Here's how to do it:

Take the bag in both hands, with one pair of fingers holding the padlock and the other holding the opposite end of the purse (see Figure A). Push in so that the zipper, with the lock still attached, follows the slide all the way back until the bag is open, but still locked (see Figure B).

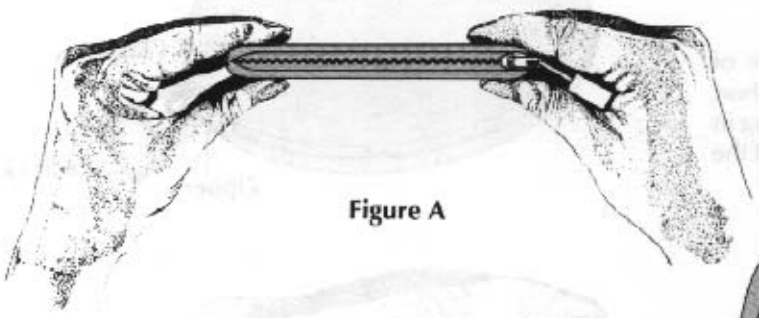


Figure A

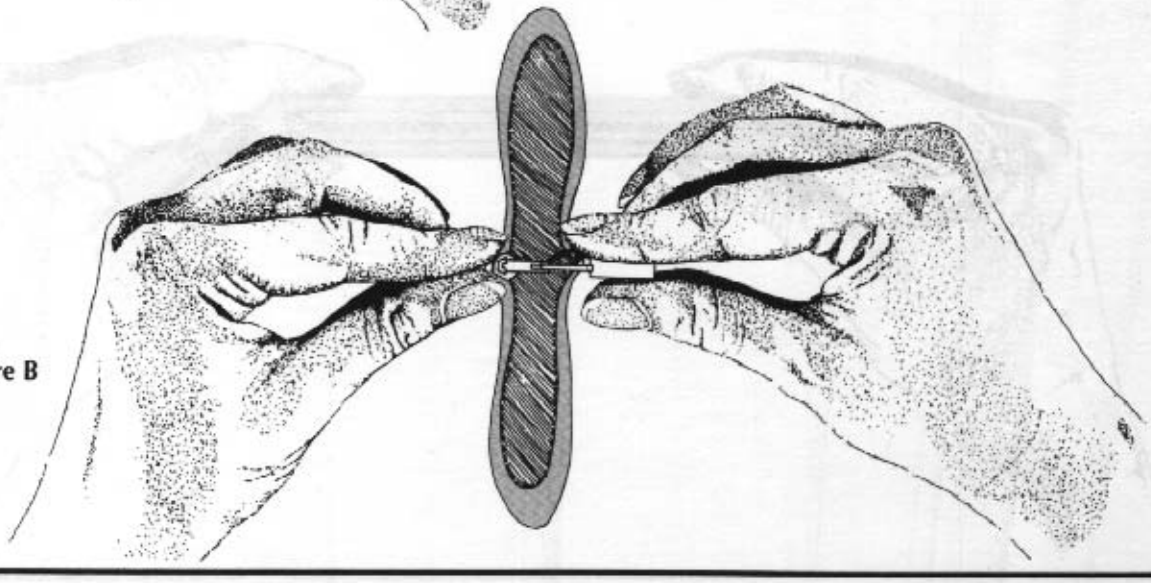


Figure B

PC#4:
Name Now: Roll-Y-AND
Name Then: Roll-Y-AND

Former Service Group: Internal Security

Security Clearance:
Private: Yellow
Public: Yellow

Player Name: _____

Attributes and Skills

Strength (13)
Damage _____ 0
Carry _____ 30 kg

Endurance (11)
Macho _____ 0

Agility (12) Skill Base _____ 3
Neurowhip _____ 10

Chutzpah (11) Skill Base ____ 3
Oratory _____ 9

Dexterity (20) Skill Base _____ 5
Projectile Weapons _____ 15

Mechanical (14) Skill Base ___ 3

Moxie (11) Skill Base _____ 3
Demolition _____ 10

Power (8)

Personal Equipment
Cone Rifle (Solid Slug)
Yellow Reflec
Decon Suit
Slide Rule

Weapon	Skill Number	Type	Damage Rating	Range	Experi-mental?
Cone Rifle (Solid Slug)	15	P	13	200	—

Damage Status

Credits
34

Armor	Rating
Yellow Reflec	L4

PC#5:
Name Now: III-Y-RAH
Name Then: III-G-ODE

Former Service Group: Power Services

Security Clearance:
Private: Green
Public: Yellow

Player Name: _____

Attributes and Skills

Strength (12)
Damage _____ 0
Carry _____ 25 kg

Endurance (19)
Macho Bonus _____ 2

Agility (15) Skill Base _____ 4
Force Sword _____ 14
Truncheon _____ 8

Chutzpah (18) Skill Base ____ 5
Psychescan _____ 10

Dexterity (9) Skill Base _____ 2
Projectile Weapons _____ 8

Mechanical (7) Skill Base ____ 2

Moxie (19) Skill Base _____ 5
Data Analysis _____ 10

Power (8)

Personal Equipment
Truncheon
Yellow Reflec
Magnifying Glass
Plasticord
Happiness Energy Bar

Weapon	Skill Number	Type	Damage Rating	Range	Experi-mental?
Truncheon	8	I	8	—	—

Damage Status

Credits
87

Armor	Rating
Yellow Reflec	L4

PC#6:
Name Now: Crit-Y-SSS
Name Then: Com-B-LAN

Former Service Group: Production, Logistic & Commissary

Security Clearance:
Private: Blue
Public: Yellow

Player Name: _____

Attributes and Skills

Strength (13)
Damage _____ 0
Carry _____ 30 kg

Endurance (12)
Macho _____ 0

Agility (18) Skill Base _____ 5

Chutzpah (17) Skill Base ____ 4
Interrogation _____ 12

Dexterity (17) Skill Base ____ 4
Energy Weapons _____ 14

Mechanical (12) Skill Base __ 3

Moxie (14) Skill Base _____ 3
Surveillance _____ 13

Power (9)

Personal Equipment
Sonic Pistol
Yellow Reflec
Bullhorn
Binoculars

Weapon	Skill Number	Type	Damage Rating	Range	Experi-mental?
Sonic Pistol	14	E	7	60	—

Damage Status

Credits
17

Armor	Rating
Yellow Reflec	L4

PC#4: Roll-Y-AND

Secret Society: Pro Tech
Secret Society Rank: 11

Mutant Power(s):
Telepathy

Troubleshooter Team: Pal-O-DIN's Wanderers

Loyalties:

Pal-O-DIN's Wanderers, a mercenary Troubleshooter team.

Background: You are one of the few (maybe the only) IntSec agents who managed to leave Internal Security and not be assassinated by the other IntSec agents. And you owe it all to Pal-O-DIN, Tam-O-ZEN, and Hole-G-ARR. You were in the middle of a hot and heavy shootout with a unit of IntSec loyalists when Pal-O-DIN's Wanderers came along and jumped into the battle on the part of the underdog (you), as is their wont. Needless to say, you were astounded by this undeserved support and vowed to spend the rest of your life repaying their heroism and kindness. So, you joined Pal-O-DIN's Wanderers.

Well, you had slightly more motivation than that. You managed to convince your Pro Tech local that wandering around all over Alpha with the Wanderers put you in a position to seek and acquire as many weapons as possible, thereby aiding your society in the acquisition of technical devices that would not only help restore some semblance of technology to the world, but also help Pro Tech rule in a Computerless complex.

Goal in Life: Repay the Wanderers and find "The Horn," which you know, once it is blown, will evoke the legions of The Computer and, thus, return The Big C to its rightful ruling place in Alpha — and drive out the Saracens, too — whoever they might be. Geez! If only Hole-G-ARR would get his memory back.

Description: You are a Gallic-looking clone who shrugs his shoulders a lot; and you are constantly looking for something you call "The Horn." You think you know Hole-G-ARR from someplace, but can't remember where.

PC#5: Ill-Y-RAH

Secret Society: Humanists
Secret Society Rank: 8

Mutant Power(s):
Empathy

Troubleshooter Team: Pal-O-DIN's Wanderers

Loyalties:

Pal-O-DIN's Wanderers, a mercenary Troubleshooter team.

Background: Before the Crunch, acting on orders from the Humanist bigwigs in RAH Sector, you infiltrated Power Services in an attempt to learn the workings of that group. Your ultimate goal was to seize control of Power Services and turn its power-generating ability over to the Humanists so they could use that power in an attempt to bring The Computer under their control.

You were at your station when the Big Blackout hit. You were playing a game of solitaire on your terminal when the cards suddenly all turned into picture cards, each with an intrinsic meaning that fairly blasted out of the screen into your mind — something about wanderers in the wasteland and a golden horn. You knew what you had to do. You did it.

You searched through the escalating turmoil in the corridors until you found Pal-O-DIN, Tam-O-ZEN, and Hole-G-ARR standing in an island of calm, listening to Roll-Y-AND describe something that was big and golden and bell-shaped at one end. You approached the group, offered your services and told them that "The Horn" is somewhere in NOD, and that you must go with them. "It's in the cards," you said.

Goal in Life: Help Roll-Y-AND find his horn, and use it to restore The Computer — so that the Humanists can take over.

Description: You are dark-skinned, and of petite stature. You have converted your coveralls into flowing skirts and a cowled head cover.

PC#6: Crit-Y-SSS

Secret Society: Frankenstein Destroyers
Secret Society Rank: 11

Mutant Power(s):
Energy Shield

Troubleshooter Team: Pal-O-DIN's Wanderers

Loyalties:

Pal-O-DIN's Wanderers, a mercenary Troubleshooter team.

Background: You had a pretty good life before someone or something came along and realized the greatest ambition of the Frankenstein Destroyers. Your middle-management rank at PLC allowed you to skim enough credits without getting caught. But when The Computer was sent beyond the Beyond, you lost your goal in life. Now, you and your Society have found a new goal: find the agent or agency responsible for giving the high colonic to The C-in-C (Computer-in-Chief) and reward them with a place of honor in the Frankenstein Destroyers.

So one day, as you were trying your best to gather information by stuffing a neurowhip into the ear of a clone, you elicited a response — with his terminal breath, the clone whispered, "Pal-O-DIN." You found Pal-O-DIN and the happy Wanderers and realized that by traveling with them you could cover more territory in your search for the Illustrious Perpetrator of the C's Seizure — someone many of your unwilling informants led you to believe belonged to the PFLA (Popular Front for the Liberation of Alpha).

Goal in Life: Find the PFLA agent responsible for sending The Computer up the water delivery aqueduct without a paddle and reward him with high-ranking membership in the Frankenstein Destroyers.

Description: You are a hard-eyed individual quite capable of obtaining information from anyone. You have difficulty dealing with Temp-U-SSS, since he seems to remember you from his home sector.

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