

Viva VEG Sector!

A Classic mission for 4-6 players

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Summary

Free Enterprise starts a casino in VEG Sector and uses the PC's to help build it and run it. PC's will have the opportunity to staff the casino with INFRAREDs, bet on their own success or failure, capture a real albino tiger, use scrubots to fight against Corpore Metal, and finally help Communists who aren't Communists to destroy the casino.

And you thought the 99-cent shrimp cocktail was dangerous.

Mission background: Let my people double down!

After a successful night of playing dice with the Romantics (and beating the jumpsuits off 'em), a Free Enterprise higher-up got an idea: why not build a place where he could steal ... er, *win* lots of credits from his fellow citizens?

Benny-V-BIN-3 secretly began investing in an abandoned sector until he built a place where clones can have a great time playing games while losing all their credits—in other words, a casino. After a few months of getting hard-to-find supplies like green felt and playing cards, VEG sector opened for gambling.

At first, only Free Enterprise was invited. But other secret societies, always keeping tabs on each other, saw what had been built—and they wanted in. Each society saw a chance to earn credits for nothing, which would help their respective agendas. (Or at least, a way to get some decent food and drink for a change.) Soon enough the casinos opened their doors to other clones and one could sit at a blackjack table with a Sierra Clubber, a Mystic, a Humanist, and a Computer Phreak.

Only two societies did not join the fun. Bots were forbidden because they could count cards, so Corpore Metal was banned from the casinos. One society refused to participate: The Communists. The very idea of winning credits to make one richer than their fellow clone was too capitalist, no matter how inviting.

This generated something that rarely exists in Alpha Complex; a secret society truce that held. Everyone wanted a chance at winning a jackpot, so no one did anything to ruin that chance. When it looked like a fight would break out—say, a Psion bet it all on red and an Anti-Mutant bet it all on black—Free Enterprise passed out 'comps' to keep people happy. These were coupons for services in VEG sector, such as free massages or a free all-you-can-eat Soylent Red buffet. This kept both parties happy enough to prevent violence, at least until they left VEG Sector.

Ah, the power of the all-mighty credit.

Mission Summary

1: Put it all on black

The Troubleshooters are given a mission to round up 200 INFRARED clones and escort them to VEG Sector under complete secrecy. Players will have to decide how to get all these INFRAREDS and how to move 200 IRs across the Complex without other citizens noticing the herd. Once they arrive at VEG Sector, the players are thanked and sent home.

2: I bet you want to join us

Before they can reach home, the PC's get an urgent call from The Computer. VEG Sector is reporting an unusually high number of INFRARED terminations, especially since VEG Sector is listed as abandoned. Once the PC's tell Friend Computer of their previous mission, they are sent back to VEG sector to infiltrate and investigate. Once there, they are offered a deal: become part of the casino staff and lie to The Computer, or become very dead repeatedly.

Which would you choose?

3: Hello Siegfried! Hello Roy!

Now part of the casino staff, the PC's are sent to recover a runaway bot used in one of the casino's lavish stage spectacles. This bot is really an albino tiger cloned from archived DNA. The PCs will have to track down the tiger running loose in an abandoned sector/casino and bring it back unharmed.

4: One-armed scrubots

Once the tiger has been dealt with, the PC's are sent by the casino to escort a truckbot full of slot machines from nearby RNO Sector. These are labeled as 'experimental warbots' to discourage curious clones from looking at them. Along the way back to VEG Sector, the PC's have to deal with a news team who wants to do a story on the warbots. Then a Corpore Metal strike team arrives to liberate the warbots. All of this happens while moving a good 80kph down an Alpha Complex freeway.

5: Did I say black? I meant RED

The Computer finally figures out what's going on, and it offers the PCs amnesty if they will help The Computer take down the casino. This requires the PCs to help a cell of Communists smuggle a tacnuke into the casino. These Commies are really IntSec agents posing as Commies, but The Computer doesn't want to blow their cover and so tells nothing to the PC's.

As VEG Sector turns into so much radioactive ash, the PC's must defend themselves during debriefing where 'amnesty' doesn't sound as reassuring as it once did.

Staging the episodes

Some players might have the time to go through all five episodes in one sitting: others can only go through one episode each time they meet. Either way works with this mission. Each episode comes to a momentary end in the action, making it an excellent stopping point for the busy GM and player alike.

See? We have hand-crafted this mission just for your benefit. That's right, we *are* that nice. Thank you.

Poker card Perversity

Given the theme of this mission, we have designed a unique way to use Perversity Points during the game. Instead of using chips or tokens, playing cards are handed out to represent Perversity. A single card represent a single point of perversity—sometimes.

These cards are worth more collectively when they are used to make poker hands. Normally, four cards would mean four points. But if the player throws down four Kings, he's got himself a whopping 30 points to play with!

When someone wants to spend perversity, the GM goes around the table and asks everyone if they'd like to play as well. Players who are 'in' put their cards face down on the table. After everyone's decided whether to be in or not, the cards are flipped.

Whoever has the winning poker hand gets to spend perversity points for or against a roll, and those that lose get nothing—not even their cards back. That's right. Lose the hand, lose your cards and the perversity they represented. If a player folds, they can take back their cards. But if you lose to a better hand, your cards go back to the GM.

Below is a list of poker hands and the perversity they are worth.

Reference: Poker Hand Value (low to high) + Suggested PP Value

1 Pair (3 PP)

2 Pairs (7 PP)

3 of a Kind (10 PP)

Straight (15 PP)

Flush (20 PP)

Full House (25 PP)

4 of a Kind (30 PP)

Straight Flush (40 PP)

Royal Flush (50 PP)

Here's an example. Edward-R is trying to bluff his way past a guard. He throws down three cards. Rianne-R wants him to lose, so she throws down four cards. Lisa-R is just plain mean and throws down five cards.

Edward-R is a frightened little man. He folds and takes back his three

cards. Ryanne-R isn't so easily intimidated and stays in. So does Lisa-R. Now they reveal their cards: Ryanne-R has three Tens, while Lisa-R has a Five, a Seven, a Jack, a Queen, and an Ace.

Clever Lisa-R tried to bluff. Ryanne-R called her bluff and won. Both of them turn their cards back over to the GM, but now Ryanne-R has 10 perversity points to spend against Edward-R's roll.

Not only does this give the game a casino feel, it encourages players to wheel and deal their cards and to try on their poker faces. ('He only has 5 cards, but are they just worth 5 points or 50?') So give it a try, and feel free to modify it any way you want. It's your game, after all.

The secret society truce

As the Background states, most secret societies love the casino and have a truce concerning it: no one will jeopardize the casino or its operations. Communists and Corpore Metal are not part of the truce.

When it comes to assigning secret societies to your PC's, we recommend avoiding Communists and Corpore Metal. Both groups play parts in the mission's plot and having one or more players involved would complicate things, and not in the good way.

Once The Computer finds out about the casino, it's going to want the Troubleshooters to destroy it. Yet the Troubleshooter's secret societies want them to save it. Their lives will hang by a thread that's blowing in the wind, swinging from 'Save the casino!' to 'Destroy the casino!'

Nothing like being caught between The Computer and a hard place.

1: Put it all on black

Episode summary

The Troubleshooters are given a mission to round up 200 INFRARED clones and escort them to VEG Sector under complete secrecy. Players will have to decide how to get all these INFRAREDS and how to move 200 IRs across the Complex without other citizens noticing the herd. Once they arrive at VEG Sector, the players are thanked and sent home.

I don't think I'm trained to make decisions

Once Benny-V-BIN-3 built the casino in VEG Sector, he needed to staff it. He doesn't want to dirty himself with actually running the games--he would rather dirty themselves with counting credits and rigging roulette wheels.

Since INFRAREDS have the least amount of credits to lose, and since there's so many of them, they would make perfect casino staffers without tipping off Friend Computer to the sudden labor reallocations.

Benny-V used his high-clearance access to get a Temporary Labor Reassignment for 200 INFRAREDs. Normally it's easy to get this kind of manpower, but not when you want to hide the changes in an ocean of data. So they decide to use a Troubleshooter team to collect the INFRARED clones from different sectors and escort them to VEG sector.

The PCs will start the mission in their respective service firm jobs. GMs can either role-play some of that as a prologue or just ignore it and get to the mission alert. Either way, everyone's PDC beeps announcing a new cmail.

FROM: Benny-V-BIN-3 (cmail address hidden)
TO: Troubleshooter Team 89109 mailgroup
SUBJ: Important Secret Mission

Do not rejoice! This is a secret mission! Due to your ability to keep a secret, you have been selected to join Troubleshooter Team 89109. This mission is vital to the security of Alpha Complex. Because of that, it must remain a secret! Anyone who divulges knowledge of this mission will be terminated! Take an autohack to Exit 2452 on the M1AA Autocar Freeway. I will meet you there to brief you on the details. Remember! Do not let your service firm supervisors know where you are going! This is all top secret!

Again, GMs can play out the service firm angle or they can just send the players together in an autohack.

Which will prove to be a small problem. Exit 2452 is closed; it leads to VEG Sector, which was abandoned years ago after an R&D experiment in applied gravitation went haywire and the local gravity increased to 2.4g. The experiment has since lost power and the sector is safe. Of course, the Alpha Complex bureaucracy has yet to catch up with reality. VEG Sector is still officially abandoned and risky; hence the closed exit ramp.

The autohack has a simple bot brain, but one of the points repeatedly coded in that brain is that it should never use closed exit ramps. Players will need to figure out how to get the autohack to use, or at least stop at, Exit 2452. Getting out of an autohack moving at 90kph is not a good idea. Stopping on the side of the road and walking to the exit could work, but could be very dangerous with all those other autocars zooming past.

Either way, this should not be too difficult. Don't make the players work for an hour on this. Make getting to the briefing a tad dangerous but do get them there.

Once they get past the 'Exit Closed' roadblock, they see a VIOLET citizen standing at the end of the ramp. He paces near a large box, obviously waiting for someone. This is Benny-V-BIN-3, their briefing officer.

Since it's officially listed as abandoned, VEG Sector is perfect for Benny-V's casino. However, this forces him to work in secrecy. Otherwise, The Computer will investigate why an abandoned sector is getting so much power, food, etc.

Benny-V-BIN-3: CPU, Free Enterprise, Hypersenses 12, Management 16, Violence 12, Financial Systems 18, VIOLET reflc

Yes, this Troubleshooter mission is for Free Enterprise and The Computer knows nothing about it. Remember, don't laugh out loud. The players might get suspicious.

'Hey! Troubleshooter team 89019! Get over here! Now listen carefully, 'cause I'm not going to repeat myself. You see this sector behind me? Well, this was abandoned years ago due to Commie sabotage. But The Computer has authorized a special project. We're going to bring VEG Sector back from the dead, but secretly!

'It'll be the perfect anti-traitor facility. A sector that doesn't officially exist will be safe from Commie infiltration! Unless ... one of you has already talked about it! Did you?

'Okay then. We're ready to go online with this project, but we are severely understaffed at this moment. So we need you Troubleshooters to grab some INFRAREDs to work here. We need 200 of 'em. You gotta grab 'em, blindfold 'em, and lead 'em back here. This box is full of blindfolds, so take it.

'You can't tell 'em where they're going. You can't even tell their supervisors about it! Take this form. It authorizes you to transfer up to 200 INFRAREDs to your control. Go to some places where INFRAREDs work and get their supervisors to sign over the INFRAREDs. Then march the 200 INFRAREDs back here, where I'll sign the authorization and take responsibility for 'em. Got it?

'Find some INFRAREDs, blindfold 'em and get 'em here. Simple. Don't forget to keep this quiet! Don't let some supervisor start screaming to The Computer, because The Computer will have to pretend this project doesn't exist! That would make you guys look ... suspicious, so don't force The Computer to lie, understood?

At this point, assign some Mandatory Bonus Duties if the PCs don't already have them. Benny-V will answer a few questions, but he's eager to start the casino so he quickly orders the team to get going.

Where to? That's totally up to the players. They should be given the freedom to come up with places to grab the INFRAREDs from, figure out how to get the IRs from there to here safely, and get in trouble for losing valuable IRs. In other words, let the players decide how they'll be screwed over.

GMs can decide if the players can find all 200 INFRAREDs at one place, but we suggest forcing the players to visit a few different locations. Some examples of places full of INFRAREDs include food vats, factories, or even dormitories.

Don't forget that most of the supervisors will probably be higher clearance than the Troubleshooters and understandably upset when hundreds of their employees are suddenly transferred without knowing why.

ORANGE supervisor: Let me see if I got this right. You RED Troubleshooters want to take away my entire staff of INFRAREDs?

RED Troubleshooter: Yes, sir.

ORANGE supervisor: And you can't tell me why or when they'll be returned?

RED Troubleshooter: No, sir.

ORANGE supervisor: And your only authority is this piece of paper?

RED Troubleshooter: Yes, sir.

ORANGE supervisor: And you don't want me to call Friend Computer to verify this piece of paper is real?

RED Troubleshooter: Um

Players who rely solely on Benny-V's form should be fined, censured or even terminated in extreme cases for such boring play. Players who try bribes, tricks and other PARANOIA-approved shenanigans should be rewarded with some INFRAREDs and Perversity points.

No matter how badly the players screw up this one, The Computer remains in the dark about the casino--mostly because it's a plot point, so we won't bother to come up with a transparent rationale for it. Plus, it's more fun to make the players squirm about being *that close* to revealing the truth without going over the edge.

Get along, little INFRARED! Yee-hah!

Now comes the fun part—herding hundreds of drugged, blindfolded INFRAREDs to the VEG Sector exit ramp. Why are they drugged? Because they're INFRARED. That's how they spend most of their lives.

This scene could be real quick or take forever, all depending on what the PC's do, so we'll leave it up to you GMs to decide how much time to spend on this. To make your jobs easier, here's a list of obstacles along the INFRARED cattle drive to mess with the players a bit. Use as many as you want.

INFRARED Cattle Drive Obstacles

1. Autocar Tag: The herd must cross a busy autocar freeway. Players can try to play crossing guard and stop traffic, and that might actually work if the players are funny enough. Otherwise, INFRAREDs will have to dodge traffic or become roadkill.

2. Are We There Yet?: After being on the march for a while, some INFRAREDs start to get worried and begin acting like children on a long trip. Constant shouts of, 'I need to use the bathroom,' and, 'I need my medicine,' echo through the corridors.

Some really do need their medicine; an INFRARED going through withdrawal is not a pretty sight. Imagine puberty, diurnal sleep rhythms, and gastrointestinal irregularities, long kept at bay through drugs, suddenly given free reign of the body. And you thought a hangover was bad.

3. Lost lambs: The players do a head count and notice some of their INFRAREDs are missing. A few near the back (or middle, or wherever) got distracted by some exciting noises and wandered off. Finding the lost ones is not

a problem; they won't get far blindfolded. But a PC heading off to grab a wayward clone is an invitation for other INFRAREDS to wander off. Imagine six people taking 200 school kids on a field trip.

4. Tag-alongs: If the players do another head count, they notice there's more IRs than they originally had. There's even some RED citizens in the herd now. Some uninvolved RED and INFRARED citizens saw the crowd moving past and wondered what all the commotion was about. So they joined the herd and are patiently waiting to see what's going on.

The players will have to decide what to do about them, especially since no supervisor authorized their absence. Benny-V will only take 200 INFRAREDS, and he'll be quite angry if much more shows up, especially any RED citizens. It's hard to keep a secret when you have lots of witnesses.

5. Stampede! A rumor runs through the herd that they're all scheduled for termination. (Which is very understandable given the circumstances.) The group starts to get restless, and then someone bolts down a side corridor—and everyone else follows. Hope no player gets caught in the stampede.

If the players somehow lose the herd, they find most of their INFRAREDS placidly waiting around a public vidscreen watching Teela-O reruns.

Smart players will run the INFRAREDS to VEG Sector in smaller groups. In that case, give just one of the above problems to each smaller group. Whenever the players return to the closed exit ramp, Benny-V and a couple of burly-looking Free Enterprise capos guide the INFRAREDS deep into the abandoned sector.

Assuming 200 INFRAREDS are turned over one way or the other, Benny-V thanks the Troubleshooters for a job well done. He gives them all 200cr to, 'make sure your mouths don't start saying things they shouldn't,' brings back the capos to show what happens if anyone thinks 200cr wasn't enough and then dismisses the team.

Ta da! Geez, that was an easy mission.

2: I bet you'd love to join us

Episode summary

Before they can reach home, the PC's get an urgent call from The Computer. VEG Sector is reporting an unusually high number of INFRARED terminations, especially for an unpopulated sector. Once the PC's tell Friend Computer of their previous mission, they are sent back to VEG sector to infiltrate and investigate. Once there, they are offered a deal: become part of the casino staff and lie to The Computer, or become very dead repeatedly.

Hit me, not shoot me!

The INFRAREDS are put to work as dealers, but there's a problem. High-

clearance customers don't appreciate losing to an INFRARED. That created another problem. INFRAREDS don't appreciate being repeatedly shot. As replacement clones started pouring in, Benny-V realized he had to do something quickly.

The Computer would start to wonder about so many replacement clones heading to an abandoned sector, so he made a drastic change. All people who enter the casino, staff or guest, must wear gray. For all effective purposes, there is no clearance in the casino. Also, everyone has to check their weapons at the door, a policy enforced by a some steroid-addicted PURGERS on loan to Free Enterprise.

This stopped the flow of replacement clones, but the damage was done. The Computer noticed it and wants to send a Troubleshooter team to investigate why an abandoned sector needs so many INFRAREDS. It's only efficient to utilize the closest team.

Your dorm rooms are in sight when everyone's PDC beeps with an incoming call—from The Computer!

'Attention Troubleshooter Team 89019. Rejoice! You have information to divulge!'

Allow time for spontaneous displays of patriotism and other forms of bootlicking. If anyone panics and starts to talk about Benny-V and the previous mission, have The Computer shut them up before they say anything stupid.

'Recent data from Technical Services indicates a high number of INFRARED clone replacements for VEG Sector. This is very unusual, since there are no INFRAREDS in that sector. It is abandoned and unsafe.'

'Sensor data indicates you have just returned from that Sector. You have been given an opportunity to explain before your summary execution.'

Now the players can say all the stupid things they want.

We all know what will happen at this point—the players will sell out Benny-V as fast as words can leave their treasonous little mouths. That's fine. In fact, that's part of the plot.

Reward any player who grovels and begs to be forgiven for their part in all this, and punish anyone who tries to blame Benny-V for everything. ('Did he follow you and give you orders every step of the way? Did he say he's terminate your entire clone line if you disobeyed? No? So you did this voluntarily?')

Once The Computer understands the details of Benny-V's involvement, it assigns the players a new mission: return to VEG Sector, find out what Benny-V is doing with all those INFRAREDS and report back directly to The Computer. Further instructions may follow depending upon what the Troubleshooters uncover. Then they can head back to that closed exit ramp.

This time, there's no one there. Players can wander around the hallways and corridors of the abandoned sector for as long as you think is fun. This would make a great time for individual secret society meetings, which all run along the same lines: protect what Benny-V is doing. (See 'The Secret Society Truce')

above for more details.)

Eventually, the team stumbles upon a pair of large gray doors. They open automatically as the Troubleshooters approach.

You see a huge room filled with citizens of ... GRAY clearance? Everyone is wearing gray: gray jumpsuits, gray robes, gray slacks, even gray shoes. The drabness of the outfits is more than made up for by the colorful decor: bright red carpeting, a ceiling dotted with little black plastic globes ... and tables.

Lots and lots of tables, with lots and lots of clones crowded around them. They seem very excited by whatever is on the tables. Servants wander around the room, handing drinks and snacks to the people around the tables. Soft but upbeat music hovers just loud enough to hear.

A GRAY citizen comes up to you, pushing a cart and carrying a small ME card reader. 'Hello, and welcome to the Fremont Casino. May I take your weapons and equipment, please? Receipts will be provided, of course.'

This is the casino's door manager, Traci-Y-NDO-3. She's responsible for welcoming guests and relieving them of all equipment, which is stored in a secure vault along with bar coded stickers based on the citizen's ME card. She also has enough gray robes for everyone, and she asks the PCs to wear this over their jumpsuits.

Traci-Y-NDO-3: IntSec, Free Enterprise, Second Skin 18, Magement 12, Violence 08, Act Superior With Silence 14, no weapons or armor.

If the PC's go along with everything, Traci (no 'Y' in her casino name because it would reveal her clearance) will scan their ME cards and print out bar codes, which she

sticks to the weapons. Then she puts everyone's stuff on the cart and rolls it away. Traci is very good at her job, and nothing gets mislabeled unless a player comes up with a clever idea.

Something tells us some players might not surrender their weapons so easily, or that some smarmy PC will call The Computer immediately via PDC. That's when security comes a-calling; and when we say 'a-calling', we mean 'a-beating to a bloody pulp.' (Besides, the casino ruins all signals, PDC or otherwise, for protection against cheating. Anyone who tries a PDC call will only get static.)

In movies, security guards are usually hapless and ineffectual idiots. They are untrained, slow, and easily fooled. Not these security guards. The Fremont Casino uses PURGErs trained in martial arts and addicted to steroids like bodybuilding ninjas.

Bodyguard-Ninjas: Armed Forces, Free Enterprise, Hyperreflexes 14, Violence 14, Go All Ninja On Your Ass 18, Fist of Death (Impact W2K).

If a PC makes a threatening move or even try to dial their PDC, everyone is suddenly surrounded by huge clones in gray bodysuits that showoff more muscles than humanly possible. No one hears or even sees them arrive—they just appear. If that's not enough to deter a PC,

the guards go all bodybuilder-ninja on him.

Eventually, the PCs will be unarmed, without PDCs and wearing gray robes. No matter what the players try, the guards go into action. Once the replacement clones start arriving, the PCs should get the message and play along.

Can I bet on myself to lose?

Speaking of playing along, the PCs are given a complimentary five-credit chip, a comp for one free drink and are invited to play the games. Here are some of the games they can play in lieu of actually working on their mission:

Five-Card: It's poker, folks. Feel free to offer different tables for different versions like Texas Hold 'Em or Caribbean Stud, or just make it 5-Card Draw.

21: In other words, blackjack. Just like the real game.

Wheel-And-Bolt: The Alpha Complex version of roulette. Players bet on red and black squares numbered from 01 to 64, with three extra green squares numbered 0, 00 and 000. They can also bet on red or black instead of a specific number.

Diccy: The Alpha Complex version of craps. Players throw two d6 and hope to win. The rules are even more complex than the real game's—the PCs will never be able to figure out how to play. Same goes for most customers in the casino, but the game still draws crowds because it's fun and exciting.

Mission Book: This side room to the casino has a huge video monitor with the names of hundreds of Troubleshooter teams and odds of success. Players can bet on whether Troubleshooters succeed in their assigned missions, how many clones each team member will go through and how many fines will be assessed before the mission is over.

And yes, the PCs can see their names up on the board. The odds of their team succeeding are 15-to-1 against.

There are no slots machines—yet. See Episode 4 for details.

Remember the description of the casino with all those black globes on the ceiling? Each is a security camera. As soon as the PCs entered the casino, Benny-V was alerted. Once you're done with any games, enter Benny-V.

You finally recognize someone. Benny-V, looking drab in his gray outfit, walks up to you. He looks unhappy.

'Hey! I thought we had finished our working relationship. What gives?'

This is another point in the mission where the players have several options that all get to the same point. It's fun to give players the illusion of control, isn't it?

If the players come up with some lie to cover the real reason they are there, it doesn't work. Someone like Benny-V doesn't rise to the top of Free Enterprise without fantastic instincts. He'll sniff out any lie and get quite agitated, which brings bodybuilder-ninjas out in force.

At this point, somebody might try their only weapon left: mutation. If this happens, roll some dice and give the player a small success. Maybe a bodybuilder-ninja dies, or Benny-V is injured, but under no circumstances should Benny-V be allowed to die. He has GM Fiat armor.

Speaking of which, he's also damn clever. He knows The Computer needs a reason for the IR problem, and that the PCs need to be involved, or more Troubleshooters would be sent in. So once the PCs have pretty much given up, Benny-V escorts them off the casino floor and offers them a deal.

Alpha Complex Playing Cards

Playing cards in Alpha Complex are similar to the cards we all know and love with only cosmetic differences. The four suits are Lasers, Autocars, Bots and Soylent. The four Royal cards are BLUE, INDIGO, VIOLET and ULTRAVIOLET.

So the Seven of Clubs is the Seven of Autocars, and the Ace of Spades is the ULTRAVIOLET of Soylent. Feel free to enforce the semantics of this on your players.

If anyone actually makes a deck of AC playing cards, then drop a line at the Paranoia-Live forums. We'd like to see it. (But we're too lazy to make it ourselves.)

You enter a security room of sorts. A bank of monitors fills one wall, with several gray citizens monitoring the entire casino. Benny-V motions you past the monitors to a private office. He sits behind a big desk; you stand amid the musclebound security officers.

'Look, fellas. If I kill you, you'll only be sent back. That's bad for business. So here's the deal. I put you on the payroll, and together we come up with a plan that allows you to have a successful mission and me to keep the casino untouched and unnoticed.

'You'll each be promoted to ORANGE clearance and be reassigned to my service firm, Waste Management Services. If any of you are part of secret societies, you can keep your allegiances. You're not joining Free Enterprise; you're being hired by it. And I'll give you each a 800 credit signing bonus.

'There's one warning, though. Any of you start blabbing about our little deal and I make sure The Computer sees the footage of you coming up here and having a little talk with me. Imagine how much fun a Re-Education Camp will be when Big C finds out that little piece of information. '

It's a great deal, especially considering the alternative is a Re-Education Camp. Encourage players to turn against each other if someone balks; it's everyone or no one.

If for some reason a PC doesn't want to take the deal ... Benny-V doesn't expose their part in this conversation. That would expose him as well. So Benny-V just has the clone brainscrubbed. Problem solved.

It's showtime!

Once the PCs have given into temptation and turned traitor, Benny-V reveals his plans for a 'successful' mission.

'Making everyone gray and collecting weapons at the door solved the replacement INFRARED problem, so we only need to find an excuse for the past replacements. Here's the plan. You will 'discover' a Commie mutant hiding in VEG Sector. She has the ability to polymorph to look like me, and she's been luring INFRAREDS to her lair where she murders them. All part of her Commie mutant plot to destroy Alpha Complex.

'We'll stage a pretend battle with this mutant, where you'll vaporize her in the end, so there's no body to recover. Then The Computer will think you did good and will leave us all alone. Understood?'

When Benny-V said 'stage,' he really did mean stage. The entire spectacle will happen on stage as entertainment for the casino customers.

Benny-V leads the PCs to the wings of a large stage set up as the dank lair of the filthy Commie mutie: dirty walls, exposed pipes overhead, a hammer-and-sickle logo painted on one wall and a pile of INFRARED corpses on the floor. (If anyone comments on the props, especially the bodies, Benny-V looks confused and says, 'What props?')

A thick curtain runs along the long side of the stage on the left, and a fake wall runs along the right side, hiding a series of pulleys, lights and switches manned by those bodybuilder-ninjas. A lone citizen stands on the far side of the stage near the other wing, swaying lightly as if heavily drugged. She wears a tattered VIOLET jumpsuit and a cheap plastic mask that kind of looks like Benny-V. She carries a VIOLET laser pistol, but it's obviously out of ammo.

There's little in the way of preparation beyond, 'That VIOLET girl is the mutant pretending to be me. When I give the cue, you find her, battle her and terminate her. Got it?' PCs get their weapons back and have to take off the gray robes, but only one person receives a PDC: the player most likely to go along with the deception. This lucky clone is told to call Friend Computer during the battle and report on the mutant's death.

How can the PDC get through to The Computer? It's connected to a secure land line that Benny-V arranged to reach beyond VEG Sector. In other words, the PDC has a long cord connected to a wall socket off stage. Feel free to trip the PCs whenever you want.

Once the players have had a chance to grab their weapons and *maybe* take a breath, they are shoved onto the stage. Then they hear a loud voice over the sound system.

'Ladies and gentlemen, the Fremont Casino is proud to present our newest entertainment feature: Troubleshooter Follies! Enjoy the show, and please tip your waitstaff!'

The thick curtain rises to reveal a *huge* auditorium filled with more GRAY citizens than the PCs could count. The applause is deafening but quickly dies down to expectant silence. Toss in a few cricket noises and coughs if the players don't get moving quickly.

There is no script for the PCs to follow, so they can ham it up all they want. Speeches and overwrought soliloquies should be rewarded with Perversity points.

The players might skip the whole acting thing and just open up on the poor, drugged citizen. In that case, she activates her Energy Field mutation to block all the shots. (She really is a mutant. Go figure.) The pretend VIOLET citizen can't act much, but she isn't so drugged that she won't defend herself. How can she use a laser pistol that's out of ammo? Through the miracle of special effects, of course.

The mutant aims her empty laser pistol at you and pulls the trigger. Suddenly, the floor in front of you explodes! Flames leap 10 meters high! You feel your eyebrows start to smoke from the heat! The flames quickly die down, and the crowd applauds wildly.

This is a Vegas-style show, so the players are repeatedly deafened by explosions and singed with fire from numerous hidden pyrotechnic displays. The overall effect is nothing like a real fire; it's designed to be exciting to even the most jaded citizen.

As the PCs battle the mutant, toss in as many special effects as you want. Maybe the INFRARED corpses really are props, and they rise up to battle the players. Perhaps the mutant is on wires; once the players get close enough to do real damage, she 'flies' over their heads to the other side of the stage.

If the battle spills over to the audience, so be it. Customers love audience-participation plays as long as they aren't the ones being killed. Make sure that no PC goes postal on the audience; that's bad for business, and Benny-V would have planned for that.

The PC with a PDC and should call The Computer sometime during the heated battle. If not, have The Computer call him in the middle of things. Either way, The Computer will fall for the special effects and believe the Troubleshooters are fighting a powerful mutant that can look like Benny-V.

Troubleshooter: *BOOOM!* Wow! That's one powerful mutant!

The Computer: Do you think it's responsible for the INFRARED deaths?

Troubleshooter: Yes! There's ... *BOOOM!* ... IR bodies all over! It

obviously disguises itself as a VIOLET ... *WOOOSH!* ... so it can kill poor INFRAREDS!

The Computer: Your commitment to the mission in the face of such danger is commendable. Please terminate the mutant.

Troubleshooter: That's what we're trying to do! *KERPOW! PING!*

The Computer: I can call Vulture Squadron to your location for backup, if you'd like.

Troubleshooter: No! No! We got it all under control! *BOOOOOOM!*

Smart players will remind The Computer that they too were victims of this mutant's plot, freeing them from responsibility for bringing the INFRAREDS to VEG Sector. Reward such cleverness, especially since it gets Benny-V off the hook—and because this will all come back to haunt the PCs in the last episode.

Finally, the mutant will be killed by the PCs (or by Benny-V himself the the PCs are so incompetent) and the show is over. As applause pours out from the audience, Benny-V brings the Troubleshooters off the stage and indicates that they should end the PDC call.

But before that happens, The Computer has some final words for the team.

'Earlier, you indicated Benny-V-BIN-3 was a traitor. It appears you spoke too soon. However, your commitment to correcting your mistakes at such risk has cleared you of any wrongdoing. Benny-V-BIN-3 has likewise been found innocent.

'My records indicate you have recently been promoted by Benny-V-BIN-3 to ORANGE clearance. Congratulations! It is nice to see your talents being recognized and rewarded by a grateful citizen.

'My records also indicate you have been reassigned to a new service firm, Waste Management Services. Congratulations! I am sure you will approach your new duties with the same diligence and skill that I have seen in your roles as Troubleshooters.

'Since your mission is complete, please report for duty with your new firm. Thank you for your loyalty.'

There. The PCs pulled one over on The Computer and got a promotion out of it. Now they work for an illegal casino run by a secret society.

They're probably feeling excitement and dread at the same time.

3: Hello Siegfried! Hello Roy!

Episode summary

Now part of the casino staff, the PC's are sent to recover a runaway bot used in one of the casino's lavish stage spectacles. This bot is really an albino tiger cloned from archived DNA. The PCs will have to track down the tiger running loose in an abandoned sector/casino and bring it back unharmed.

No bots? No problem!

The stage spectacle put on by the PCs was such a big hit that Benny-V decided to make entertainment a permanent fixture at the Fremont Casino. After some research into Old Reckoning Vegas entertainment, they decided to go for the Vegas-traditional magic and exotic animal show.

Benny-V transferred another citizen to his Waste Disposal Management firm: Harry-Y-STN. Harry-Y formerly worked in HPD&MC as an entertainer for the traveling show *Harry-Y and His Miraculous Bots*. He worked with specially programmed bots who would perform all sort of tricks such as balancing 27 chairs on a gripper claw and guessing a citizen's birth sector. However, Harry-Y couldn't do his original show in VEG Sector since bots were forbidden in the casino.

Benny-V wasn't going to let that stop him. Having VIOLET clearance means he had access to all sorts of research, including Old Reckoning genetics. So he force-grew an albino tiger just like the old Vegas casinos had used and named her Kitty. Benny-V gave it to Harry-Y and ordered him to use the 'special experimental bot' in his show.

Harry-Y didn't even try to program it—as far as he was concerned, it was ULTRAVIOLET. So the tiger got bored and left.

Can you guess what the Troubleshooters need to do?

Benny-V thanks you all for your performance. Your PDCs all beep to announce a 800 credit deposit to your accounts.

'Now, I've got another entertainment related problem for you. We were going to do a show with a specially trained bot, but the star of the show disappeared. Your job is to find this lost bot. Where is it? Hey, if I knew that then I'd find the stupid thing myself, understood?

'What does it look like? It's not like any bot you've ever seen before. It has retractable traction systems and a soft outer coating to protect fragile circuitry inside it. Oh, and it's painted white. It's not ULTRAVIOLET, so don't worry.

'Oh, and don't even *think* about hurting the bot. It's too valuable to go shooting it and stuff. It's in VEG Sector somewhere, so go earn your credits. Find it and bring it back here. No go!'

With that, Benny-V walks away to work on some important casino business.

Here kitty-kitty!

The players have very little to go on, and a lot of space to search. Not a problem, really. Since we never made a map for the players to use, GMs can make up everything as the players go along. Here's a few bits of sector color that you can use if you want. We suggest keeping the search to a minimum—running around an abandoned sector is only fun for so long as players are trying to backstab each other.

Some of these events are designed to give players a hint of what they're after. Others are designed just to mess with 'em. Along the way, have the players hear the occasional growl or even find some 'weird bot tread prints.' The PCs will follow such prints wherever you want them to. Players are predictable like that.

Applied Gravitation Lab: the source of the original problem in VEG Sector, everything in this room is slight squished (and broken) because of the high gravity produced by the gravity generator in the center of the room.

No, the machine doesn't work anymore. No matter what the PCs try, it won't turn back on. They might be able to take a few nifty parts, but that's it.

Mauled INFRARED dealer: Like all INFRAREDs, this little guy gets lost easily. He was on his way back from work as a Five-Card dealer when he took a wrong turn. Then Kitty found him and wanted to play. Kitty plays rough.

The PCs will find the body mauled and torn apart but not eaten. What caused the injuries will not be apparent, unless some player took the Wetware narrow specialty Identify Large Feline Predator Mauling Wounds. And if anyone did, they read this mission already and should be terminated, erased and kept away from the snacks.

If anyone searches the body (old non-fun game habits die hard), they find one deck of Alpha Complex playing cards. PCs are welcome to try and use these to cheat the casino. They won't succeed—the casino has RFID tags embedded in every card and will realize someone is cheating with an outside deck—but the results should be amusing.

Food vat filled with salt water: these food vats were abandoned years ago when the entire sector was evacuated. Since then, the casino staff cleaned out the horrible stink of several year-old vat slime (which actually wasn't worse than the smell of fresh vat slime) and filled one vat with salt water.

Why salt water? Because Benny-V is a stickler for Free Enterprise traditions. Any PC who climbs the catwalks and looks inside will see several bodies at the bottom, their feet encased in cement. We know you'll ask, so no, these bodies don't have anything on them.

Ransacked kitchen: Tigers get hungry. Tigers also have a great sense of smell. So the PCs follow Kitty's tracks to a working kitchen for the casino.

The entire room has been torn apart as Kitty knocked over and broke into most of the cabinets, pantries and crates full of food. Tigers prefer fresh meat but will eat just about anything when hungry enough, so the PCs will find lots of missing soylent, Fun Foods and the like.

Thankfully, there was no one in the kitchen when Kitty had her meals. Someone might drop by after the PCs arrive. Let's hope they don't think the

Troubleshooters ate all that food. That would be wrong.

Eventually, the PCs will close in on Kitty; either the growling noise is getting louder, or the 'bot tracks' are fresher. Either way, they step into a small room and spot their prey.

You have found ... well, what must be your missing bot. What else could it be? It's bigger than a person but it walks on four legs. It's covered with some kind of soft fabric; maybe it was designed to work with junior citizens? It has two optical sensors, several short antennae protruding from it's face and it has some kind of manipulator jaw filled with gripper teeth. What could be a power cord extends from the back half.

It's painted white. All in all, it fits Benny-V's description.

It also looks disabled. It's lying on it's side, motionless except for a slight rise-and-fall movement in the upper chassis. Perhaps it's broken?

Kitty was tired after her eating binge, so she decided to take a nap. She's a heavy sleeper, so the PCs can approach and even lightly touch her, assuming no one is put off by the white color.

This is a Classic mission, so while color is used to designate clearance, color does not equal clearance. In other words, something white is not necessarily ULTRAVIOLET clearance. If your players forget this, feel free to remind them. We'd hate for the PCs not to touch Kitty. Especially when there's a power outlet next to where Kitty is sleeping.

Kitty: Violence 09, Unarmed
Combat 13, Playfully
Disembowel Someone 15.
Natural Impact armor 2.

If anyone tries to plug Kitty's tail in the socket, or does something rash like kick it or try to open a repair panel, Kitty wakes up with a

mighty roar. It backs into a corner while trying to figure out if the PCs are a threat or not. If the PCs gently awaken the tiger/bot, Kitty purrs and rolls onto her back like a house cat.

Overall, Kitty is friendly and playful. It's not a vicious jungle death-machine; it's really more like a pet cat. But it's still is a tiger. Play with someone's pet cat and you'll get playfully scratched and occasionally bitten. Play with Kitty and you'll get playfully mauled and occasionally disemboweled. Kitty doesn't know her own strength.

How can the PCs get Kitty back to the auditorium and Benny-V? Let them figure it out. Keep thinking of Kitty as a giant house cat and let that be your guide. Trails of food would work, as would tossing a large ball of yarn. The easiest way is to befriend the tiger. After a few scratches behind the ears and a good belly rub, Kitty will follow anyone anywhere.

Of course, some PC might make Kitty angry or even hurt Kitty. Remember how we said this wasn't a jungle death-machine? That only applies if Kitty is happy. If Kitty feels threatened ... roll out the replacement clones.

Hopefully, the PCs will get Kitty back to the auditorium where some of Benny-V's minions will put a collar on Kitty and lure it into a cage with some fresh meat.

This would be a great time to let the PCs play some of the casino's games. Benny-V loves this, as he knows he'll get most of his credits back. The games aren't rigged, but they have the same odds as the standard Vegas casino. That means the house will always win in the end, which means the PCs will run out of credits sooner or later.

If a PC goes broke, extend him a line of credit. Going into debt with Free Enterprise is a really bad idea, but hey, he could have stopped playing Dicey several hundred credits ago. It's not your fault, right?

4: One-armed scrubots

Episode summary

Once the tiger has been dealt with, the PC's are sent by the casino to escort a truckbot full of slot machines from nearby RNO Sector. These are labeled as 'experimental warbots' to discourage curious clones from looking at them. Along the way back to VEG Sector, the PC's have to deal with a news team who wants to do a story on the warbots. Then a Corpore Metal strike team arrives to liberate the warbots. All of this happens while moving a good 80kph down an Alpha Complex freeway.

Shotgun! No, wait! I meant something else!

Your PDCs all beep with a 500 credit bonus. You're acquiring quite the credit account. Benny-V shakes your hands and pats you all on the back.

'Doing good! Doing really good! I like you kids!

'Here's your next assignment. We've got a truckbot full of slot machines waiting to be delivered. Slot machines? They're another casino game, but one that doesn't need a dealer. Cut out the middle man, am I right?

'Say yes.

'The nearest sector is RNO. The truckbot can't reach VEG Sector because of that little 'still designated dangerous' thing. That's where you come in. Take an autocar to RNO—my boys will lend you one, so treat it well—and drive over to RNO Sector's Truckbot Dispatch Center.

'A truckbot named Mack-10 is waiting for you. It's programmed to follow the autocar, so just drive here and make sure the the truckbot makes it.

'One more thing. Officially, the bot is carrying Experimental Warbots. That's just the cover—who's going to try and steal an experimental warbot? Just so you know. Now get down to the Parking Garage, pick up the autocar, and lead the truckbot here. Come see me afterwards for your reward, capiche?

The Parking Garage is easily found, and the bodyguard-ninjas are waiting by a sweet-looking car: a brand-new convertible G-type Autocar 14 DX! It's beautiful—bright red paint, glistening chrome grill, retractable roof, even whitewall tires. The botbrain inside the autocar is respectful, helpful and skilled (Vehicle Ops at 19). All PCs will easily fit inside and ride in style and comfort.

Of course, this autocar belongs to a visiting INDIGO. He just dropped it off for valet parking, and the bodyguard-ninjas think the PCs are the valets. They hand off the keys without a word and walk away.

The real autocar assigned to the PCs is a dull gray, twelve-year-old Model D autocar. It's parked deep within the bowels of the garage with a small sign on the hood that says, 'For the RNO trip'. If the PCs search the garage for more than five minutes, then let 'em find it. Like they're going to spend that much time looking when such a beautiful autocar is just sitting there.

The G-Type autocar (it usually goes by 'Gee') knows how to get to everywhere in Alpha Complex, so it can easily and quickly shuttle the Troubleshooters to RNO Sector's Truckbot Dispatch Center. The parking garage has a secret ramp leading to the M1AA Freeway, so the PCs don't have to deal with the closed ramp like they did in the first episode.

The trip to RNO Sector should be smooth and uneventful, but allow players to pull whatever schemes they want against each other. Eventually, they arrive at the Truckbot Dispatch Center. There they find Mack-10: a 26-wheel, flatbed monstrosity of a truckbot. A huge black tarp is securely tied down over a whole lot of something on the flatbed.

If someone looks under the tarp, they'll see lots of slot machines. Really. The slot machines are all there, they all work and are unharmed, unbroken and untrapped. For now, at least.

After a quick conversation between the autocar and the truckbot, Mack-10 agrees to follow Gee and everyone heads back to VEG Sector.

On the road again

The way to RNO was quick and easy, which should put the players on edge if they're smart. Nothing quick and easy happens in this game without a balancing slow and difficult part like some kind of PARANOIA ying-yang thing. Bet you didn't realize this game was so Taoist.

As you drive down the M1AA Autocar Freeway back towards VEG Sector, a large autocar pulls up along side you. There's a large 'Alpha News Network Two' logo on the side. A YELLOW clone leans out the back window with a camera. Yep, he's filming you.

Another YELLOW leans out from the driver's side window. She's pointing a microphone at you while saying, 'Troubleshooters! I'm Denise-Y with ANN2 News! We'd like to do a story on those experimental warbots!

Where are you headed? Can you pull over for five minutes?'

ANN2 is the sister-network to Alpha News Network and is known for its emphasis on edgier, more violent stories. (And consequently, for having higher ratings than the original ANN.) Denise-Y is an up-and-coming reporter who thinks this warbot story would make great video.

She's right, because there's a bunch of slot machines under the tarp. Armed Forces, not to mention The Computer, would be very interested in where all those credits for new warbots went to.

In other words, the PCs will be up prerecycled waste creek if they let Denise-Y see what's under the tarp. No doubt the players will realize this, leading to polite denials at 80kph.

Team Leader: Sorry! We'll be late if we pull over!

Denise-Y: That's okay! We'll do the interview right here!

Team Leader: No thank you!

Denise-Y: Where are you going with these warbots?

Team Leader: ... To where they're needed!

Denise-Y: Could you speak up? The wind's cutting into the mike!

Team Leader: No thank you!

Poor Denise-Y isn't getting her story. No problem. We like her determination, so we'll reward her for it.

Another autocar is coming up fast on the other side of you. It's a convertible like yours, but heavily modified with all kinds of tech. There's no citizens in it; just six jackobots.

'Hail G-Type autocar! We are your bot brothers and sisters! Deliver the warbots to us so we may crush the puny humans and make them pay for not letting us into their casino!

Corpore Metal is always a bit surly, but refusing to let them participate in all the casino fun only made them move from surly to downright furious. When they heard warbots were heading to VEG Sector, they were suspicious. When all attempts at wireless communication with the warbots failed, Corpore Metal assumed they had been lobotomized by the casino.

Gee is programmed with too much servility to turn frankenstein, and Mack-10 is too stupid, so the Troubleshooter's little convoy will keep on truckin'. But the jackobots have weapons: each has a red laser, and one has a cone rifle with HE shells. When they realize they've been 'betrayed' by the autocar and transbot, they open fire.

This battle should be more for show than anything else. Jackobots aren't

ANN2 News Team: HPD&MC, Illuminati, Haze 06, Management 10, Chutzpah 14, Wetware 09, Get Excited Over Tragedies 15, yellow reflec, no weapons.

Corpore Jackobots: Violence 02, Energy Weapons 06, Field Weapons 06, red laser (Energy W3K), cone rifle (Impact W2K).

programmed for combat, so they usually miss. There should be plenty of explosions and laser shots, though, to make the PCs worried about their lives, their car and the truckbot's cargo.

Should the PCs protect the slot machines? Of course! I mean, they don't know that Free Enterprise outfitted each slot machine with the equivalent to ArmorAll (Impact and Energy 4) so no one could steal all the credits within. For all the players know, these machines are a fragile glass menagerie stacked three high on the flatbed of a truckbot doing 80kph while under heavy fire.

GMs can decide if the ANN2 news team notices the attack. They're on the far side of the truckbot, so their view is mostly blocked.

Denise-Y: Wow! What an explosion!

Team Leader: Well, you wanted to see the warbots in action, right?

Denise-Y: But what is your team shooting at?

Team Leader: ... No thank you!

If a PC tries called The Computer for help, or to rat out Benny-V, politely remind him that he never got his PDC back from the casino. If The Computer is somehow alerted during this merry chase, it orders the Troubleshooters to stop and activate the experimental warbots as a 'field test' of their capabilities. Good luck explaining that one away.

Since this is technically a car chase, we feel obligated to offer the following.

An alarm rings from your autocar. Up ahead, you can barely make out a trainbot crossing. Lights are flashing, and two plastic guardrails are slowly moving down to block the road.

Yes, a trainbot is about to cross the freeway. Mack-10 will do whatever Gee does, and Gee will do whatever the PCs tell it to do. If the PCs instantly floor it, both the autocar and the truckbot smash through the guardrails seconds before the trainbot barrels over the road. ANN2 and the Corpore Metal jackobots are not so lucky.

What if the PCs stop? Then it turns into an open firefight that cannot be kept from the news crew while the trainbot slowly moves over the road.

When the convoy finally reaches VEG Sector, Gee leads Mack-10 to a loading dock and INFRAREDS unload the unharmed slot machines. If the players want, they can leave the car there and go see Benny-V for another reward.

If they drive back to the Parking Garage for some reason, they'll have to answer to one very upset INDIGO, especially if there's any damage to Gee.

5: Did I say black? I meant RED

Episode summary

The Computer finally figures out what's going on, and it offers the PCs a

chance at not being terminated if they assist in taking down the casino. This requires the PCs to help a cell of Communists smuggle a tacnuke into the casino. These Commies are really IntSec agents posing as Commies, but The Computer doesn't want to blow their cover and so tells nothing to the PCs.

As VEG Sector turns into so much radioactive ash, the PCs must defend themselves during debriefing where their helping Commies doesn't sound like such a good idea after all.

Because VIC doesn't have the same ring to it

Now that we brought Corpore Metal into the action, we should really bring in the other secret society not involved with the casino: the Communists.

A local cell of Communists have been given a big task from the Politburo: to destroy the Fremont Casino and all the evil capitalists therein. This cell is eager to prove their loyalty to the Communists by destroying the casino, mostly because every member of the cell is an IntSec spy.

IntSec always tries to infiltrate secret societies, but they had extraordinary success here thanks to the Communists' zeal in recruiting. So when the agents pretending to be Commies found out about the casino, they told IntSec. Who told The Computer. Who thought there was nothing in VEG Sector but the bodies of dead INFRAREDS and vapors of what used to be a powerful mutant.

The PCs have got some 'splainin' to do.

Another PDC beep and another 800 credit bonus. Working for the casino is starting to pay off, literally. Bodyguards escort you to Benny-V's office for another assignment.

'Ah, my favorite employees! Did I make a great decision by not having you brainscrubbed or what?

'Anyways, I got another job for you. We've got an ULTRAVIOLET who wants to play, and she's loaded! More credits that you can imagine, even with medication. You're going to escort her to our little casino and set her up in our new VIP quarters just above the casino floor.

'Take an elevator up to level 52 in LAX Sector and go to the servant's entrance of the UV Lounge. Her name is Cynthia-U-FEO-4, and she'll be expecting you in your Troubleshooter outfits. Be very, very nice to her! Carry her luggage for her, bow all the time, you know the routine.

'Once you get her here, escort her to the VIP quarters and then report back to me. Understood?

Seems simple enough. Escort the UV to the casino. What could go wrong?

Let the PCs find the elevator easily enough; it's in the casino over by some Dicey tables. Once inside the elevator, they see all of the buttons are dark except for three. These have a piece of tape underneath with one word written on each: 'Casino,' 'VIP' and '52'. Even a heavily medicated Troubleshooter will

know what button to push.

The elevator ride is smooth but it takes a bit. Use this time to let players mess with each other, if that's what you want. In fact, it would be great if they got into some trouble just as the doors open.

The doors open to a very clean, well-lit corridor. It's RED clearance, but it's obviously for the servants of higher clearance citizens. Set into the wall directly in front of you is a public terminal. On the screen is a large eyeball.

'Hello, Troubleshooter Team 89109. We need to talk.'

If the PCs start to grovel, finger-point or otherwise act like immature school children, The Computer cuts them off. It's not ready to listen.

'First, exit the elevator. Now, sit. Good clones.

'It has come to my attention that you have lied to me. There was no mutant impersonating Benny-V-BIN-3. The INFRAREDS are working for Benny-V-BIN-3 and his casino. So are you.

'Many thanks to the individual who alerted me to this.'

The Computer is referring to the IntSec spy who reported the Communists' order to destroy the casino. Some players might look at others in the group, believing The Computer is referring to their PC. Oh well.

'Later, we will discuss your punishment. For now, I have an assignment to you. Successful completion of this assignment will go a long way towards you not spending a week in the nearest Internal Security Joyful Liberation of Guilt Hostel.

'Go to the RED Activity Center on this level. There you will meet a RED citizen named Debra-R-APD-2. Escort her and her teammates to Room DE-43 on this level. A demolition charge will be waiting for you; Debra-R will know what it looks like. Assist Debra-R and her team to bring this into the casino. They will take care of the demolition charge once it is safely inside.

'Then report to Room 34-AD in this sector for debriefing. If there are any questions, I will assume you are beyond rehabilitation. Any questions?

'You may follow my orders now.'

When is a Commie not a Commie?

Quickly and violently terminate any PC who doesn't immediately kow-tow to The Computer's whims. This shouldn't be an issue; the PCs will most likely be running while the word, 'Go' is still echoing down the corridor.

The RED Activity Center is a little far away but reachable by foot. Read the following when they enter the room.

The LAX Sector RED Activity Center looks like most activity centers you've seen. A large vidscreen showing Teela-O reruns, several tables and vending machines, you get the idea.

Five citizens are sitting at one of the tables, and they look up as you enter. Each is wearing red reflec, big furry red hats and fuzzy black mustaches. One female stands and waves at you.

'Welcome, comrades! You are to be escorting us, *da*?'

This is Debra-R-APD-2. She knows that the PCs are Troubleshooters sent by The Computer to assist them in the attack on the casino. So she's happy to see them and eager to get going.

Now, we know that someone will scream bloody Commie to The

Debra-R-APD-2: IntSec, Communists (FCCC-P), really BLUE, Telekinesis 08, Stealth 10, Violence 12, Energy Weapons 16, Pretend To Be A Commie 14.

RED citizens: IntSec, Communists (FCCC-P), really BLUE, Push Mutant Powers 08, Violence 10, Energy Weapons 14.

Computer once he sees this scene, or that lasers will be pulled faster than someone can say *dosvidanya*.

It doesn't do a bit of good.

The Computer already knows they're Commies—it's the one who assigned the mission to infiltrate the Communists in the first place. It won't punish the Commies, but it doesn't want the players to know that. If someone calls for the Computer, ask them how they're doing that without PDCs. If they get smart and say The Computer probably

has microphones and speakers in the activity center, then they get a special message over that same system:

'Attention Troubleshooter Team 89109. Thank you for your report. Recent actions on your part indicate that you are not to be trusted. Optical, aural and olfactory sensors in this room show no cause for alarm. Please follow the mission assigned to you so you do not receive two weeks in a Joyful Liberation of Guilt Hostel.'

That should take care of any reports of Commie activity.

If the players responded with gunfire instead of reports, the Commies look confused as red laser shots bounce off their reflec. All of these are BLUE-clearance IntSec spies, and they wear blue reflec painted red to increase their Commie look. Besides, right now they have GM Fiat armor. Let the players get one combat round in before The Computer orders a stop to the combat.

At this point, the players have several options:

- *Refuse to escort the Commies:* If the PCs refuse to help, The Computer sends in BLUE IntSec goons to terminate them all as a warning.

- *Get someone to report the Commies since they cannot:* The IntSec spies pretending to be Commies are too smart for that. When anyone else is within

earshot or camerashot, the RED citizens act completely loyal and normal. As soon as they are alone with the PCs, it's all comrade-this and comrade-that. Should be quite maddening for the players as they get corrected for false accusations.

- *Pretend nothing was wrong*: That's the spirit! Resigned indifference! This choice is actually the best for the PCs. They get to follow The Computer's directions, and as stated above, the RED citizens only act like Commies around the PCs.

One way or another, both PCs and pretend Commies wander over to room DE-43. We recommend using the travel time as a way to get PCs and pretend Commies to talk. The IntSec spies are well trained, and they try to convert the PCs along the way.

Troubleshooter: I can't believe we're doing this.

Debra-R: Is being problem, comrade?

Troubleshooter: Like you don't know what's wrong.

Debra-R: Here, try vodka. Good for mind!

Troubleshooter: Yuck! What the hell is in that?

Debra-R: Is good stuff! Here, take more.

Troubleshooter: Now I feel ... good? More. Want more.

Room DE-43 has a complex electronic security lock, but that's child's play for a trained IntSec agent like Debra-R. She quickly unlocks the door and leads everyone inside.

The room is a walk-in freezer normally used to store biological cultures from the Outdoors. Nothing deadly, mind you. There's no virulent viruses or anything, just small tissue samples for possible future cloning experiments. The PCs won't know that, of course. They'll just see thousands of frozen vials.

And a tacnuke.

The tacnuke is roughly one meter long and half as much wide and high. The smooth black surface is dotted with warning labels and radiation symbols, and a back lit keypad embedded on the surface. The whole thing rests on a rickety wheeled cart—the tacnuke is quite heavy. No one could possibly steal it by themselves, not even by dragging it. That's why it's on the cart, so both teams can push and pull it to the casino.

Debra-R lovingly caresses the tacnuke and let's everyone know this is the 'demolition charge.' Any PC with Nuclear Engineering or Demolition skills will know this is a tactical nuclear device; those without such skills will still recognize the radiation symbols stenciled on the sides.

Again, some PC might try a worried call to Friend Computer to verify this tacnuke is the demolition charge they need to help get into the casino. If this keeps up, The Computer will just stop answering. It has better things to do than handhold some Troubleshooters who lied to it.

Once things have been sorted out, Debra-R gets everyone to help push and pull the heavy cart out of the room and down to the same elevator the PCs

came up in.

So you're a capitalist oppressor, eh?

Remember Benny-V's original mission for the PCs?

As you reach the elevator, you hear someone behind you. You see a rather overweight ... ULTRAVIOLET!

'I say, Troubleshooters? Stop right there.'

Yep, this is Cynthia-U-FEO-4. When her Troubleshooter escort failed to show, she decided to head to the casino anyway. Now she found what looks like a pair of Troubleshooter teams. By her reckoning, they must be there for her.

Behind her is a jackobot about to crack under the weight of Cynthia-U's baggage. She sees a cart, and with more of her reckoning, believes it's for her bags. So she orders the bot to load her bags on the cart before anyone can argue otherwise. And if they really did try to argue otherwise, give 'em some Perversity points for having the cahones to contradict an ULTRAVIOLET. Then defrost a replacement clone.

Actually, it's in the PC's best interests to go along with whatever Cynthia-U says, and not just to keep their clone number low. Benny-V is expecting the PCs to arrive with an ULTRAVIOLET, not a Commie strike force. All of those bags make the cart harder to manage but they cover up the tacnuke.

In other words, let the players try to fight this as hard as they want. They'll realize she works to their advantage eventually.

Everyone squeezes into the elevator: Debra-R and her team, Cynthia-U, the cart with all the baggage and one 'demolition charge,' and yourselves. There's not much space, but you manage. Who's going to press the button?

Benny-V's instructions were to drop the ULTRAVIOLET at the VIP level, but Cynthia-U has other things on her mind—namely, gambling. So she insists that they all go straight to the casino level and skip the VIP quarters. That works for Debra-R and her team, who want to get the tacnuke into the casino as instructed.

Sure, a tacnuke will still destroy everything if it's one story up, but the PCs represent what happens when you go against The Computer's orders. Debra-R is going to follow her instructions to the letter.

With a few shudders and ominous creaks, the elevator slowly descends. Enjoy yourself with this part, because it's not often that Commies and a High Programmer ride in the same elevator. Make the ride as slow as you want, with the faux Commies muttering propaganda just under their breath and the tacnuke making the occasional *ping!* noise.

Debra-R: Mumble mumble dictatorship of the proletariat mumble.

Cynthia-U: What did that citizen just say?

Troubleshooter: Er, I didn't hear her say anything!

Cynthia-U: So you're saying I'm wrong?

Debra-R: Mumble grumble dead wrong mumble.

Cynthia-U: I head that!

Tacnuke: *Ping!*

Try to discourage a firefight by reminding them of the tacnuke going *ping!* every so often. If a PC tries to shoot someone, or use a mutant power, allow limited success. Perhaps one of Debra-R's team dies or the tacnuke is now ticking. While you don't want to actively discourage fighting and make the players feel railroaded into the final scene, you do want to railroad the players into the final scene.

Now that's a tight segue.

Going out with a bang, and then some

When the elevator doors open, Cynthia-U strides confidently out into the casino. Debra-R and her team cajole the PCs into helping push the cart out onto the casino floor; with all those extra bags, it's needs even more manpower to get the cart moving.

Once the cart is clear of the elevator, the doors shut. Bodybuilder-ninjas come out of the shadows to grab the ULTRAVIOLET bags from the cart, rapidly picking up bags one by one, until nothing is left but the tacnuke.

Remember, this room is filled with secret society folk.

Cynthia-U is arguing loudly with the concierge over her gray robe, causing a lot of heads to turn your way. They see an ULTRAVIOLET, Troubleshooters, several RED citizens ... and a large black device on a cart.

One GRAY citizen playing 5-Card points at the tacnuke and screams. 'I knew it! The truce is all a scam! You PURGERS brought in a tacnuke!'

Another citizen at a wheel-and-bolt table screams back, 'Not us! It's another FCCC-P jihad!'

A third citizen throws dice across the room while screaming, 'Lord no! It's those nutcase Sierra Clubbers!'

Then everyone starts screaming at each other, throwing dice and cards in the air, while the bodybuilder-ninjas try to stop the fistfights and blatant mutant power use.

So. What do you do?

Before going into what the players might do, here's what the NPCs start doing:

- Debra-R quickly starts to input the activation code into the tacnuke's

keypad while her teammates pull out BLUE laser pistols and start randomly shooting into the riot. Everyone's a traitor here, so there's no need to waste time with aiming.

- Bodybuilder-ninjas will quickly give up on the riot and focus solely on stopping Debra-R from activating the tacnuke. Go figure.
- Benny-V will run in and yell at the PCs to stop Debra-R from activating the tacnuke. They still work for him, right?
- The assorted guests will punch, kick, bite, smash a chair over, throw a bottle at or use a mutant power on ... well, pretty much anyone nearby that they cannot prove isn't a member of a rival society. That's pretty much everyone.
- The Computer has no access in VEG Sector, and no wireless access in the casino itself, so it waits and monitors background radiation levels.

That leaves the PCs. What to do, what to do At this point, it's totally up to them and whatever mood you're in.

The players might side with Benny-V against The Computer by taking down Debra-R and her team. Maybe it works, and the PCs live out their lives as valued members of the casino staff—until Vulture Squadron raids the place in a military invasion not seen since Normandy. Or maybe Debra-R activates the tacnuke despite the PCs, leaving their replacements with one more thing to explain at debriefing.

The players might side with The Computer against Benny-V, defending Debra-R and her team against the bodybuilder-ninjas and getting the tacnuke ready to go. Maybe that works, and the players stare at the tacnuke's digital display that suddenly shows a single 'five,' followed by a single 'four' The Computer never said they'd survive this mission.

The players might even do all of that and more. Given all the chaos around them, they might join in and start shooting each other over real or imagined slights, secret society mission or plain old grudges. If this happens, let Kitty make a comeback to ... play with the PCs some more.

Some GMs out there might be freaking out over all the different choices. Not to worry. Whenever there's a tacnuke involved, you can always make everyone's choice into a single, albeit small and cute, mushroom cloud.

But this mission would not be complete without an ending approved by us Famous Game Designers, so here what we would do: run as fast as our treasonous little fit could carry us.

Allow the PCs to press the elevator's call button. The elevator doors open, but only after a round or two of messy, indiscriminate combat. Then the PCs pile in while Debra-R finishes inputting the activation code.

You hit the button for 52, and the elevator doors close. You feel the car move quickly upwards ... and then you feel a deep rumble. The floor of the elevator is suddenly dented upwards as the elevator picks up so much speed that there's not much to do but hold on for dear life.

The floor is now glowing softly with heat.

But the glow soon fades and the elevator finally resumes its normal speed. Then it comes to a stop and the doors open ... at level 240.

You see a clean, white room filled with sofas, fountains and tables piled high with all kinds of real food. The ceiling is curved and clear, revealing some kind of blue and white surface far above. A few VIOLET and ULTRAVIOLET citizens lounge about the room. They all stop what they're doing to stare at you.

Thankfully, the doors close quickly.

'Attention Troubleshooter Team 89109. Please report to room 34-AD in LAX Sector for debriefing. Like I told you to earlier.'

Cleaning house ... er, sector

Room 34-AD should be easy to find; the players have been through enough already, and there's more waiting for them.

The room is small and simply furnished. There's enough RED chairs for everyone arranged in a semi-circle around a large public terminal. The monitor is active and a giant eyeball swings your way when the door opens. A pair of combots flank the terminal. They don't turn to look at you, but their slugthrowers do.

Time for a brief debriefing. Chances are the PCs have dug themselves an incredibly deep hole: working for Free Enterprise willingly, stealing experimental warbots (The Computer can't find them so it assumes the PCs helped hide them somewhere), knowing about tigers, lying to an ANN2 news team, bringing an ULTRAVIOLET down to the casino along with a tacnuke, and worst of all, lying to The Computer.

How can the PCs escape termination and erasure? We have no idea. Thankfully, The Computer has one.

'Welcome, Troubleshooter Team 89109. Please sit down and stay quiet.'

'This debriefing is being held to answer a few nagging questions. Your guilt has already been established several times over. However, given your history of lies and deceit, it is possible that you have not explained everything correctly. Therefore, I will ask you a few questions.'

'Question one: Though you are all guilty of numerous crimes, do you feel any member of the team is more guilty than others? Please explain.'

That should get some interesting responses.

Feel free to end the debriefing after this point—long debriefings are only fun when there's lots of undiscovered treason, and The Computer already knows about most of it. But for those sadistic GMs out there, here are some additional questions that The Computer could ask:

- Why did Benny-V offer you a job with his secret society? What did he see in you that indicated you would make a great traitor?
- How would the addition of Bouncy Bubble Beverage have helped you to avoid committing such high levels of treason?
- Did you enjoy lying to me? If not, why did you keep doing it and does this indicate a dangerous masochistic streak in your DNA?
- When the tacnuke exploded, all of the INFRAREDs you rounded up were terminated. How could you make it up to them?
- Given your tendency to lie, how can I ever trust you again?

The goal with this debriefing is to present a glimmer of hope amid a huge pile of imminent punishment. Let the players feel they might, just might, make it out of there alive. They won't, of course. But it's nice to give the players the illusion of hope. It makes their gaming experience that much better.

Once the questioning is over, The Computer is ready to hand down it's decision.

'Processing responses. Please wait

'Rejoice, citizens. Estimates put the number of traitors terminated by the tacnuke at 3,200. The combined commendations for all those terminations have countered most of the treason you have committed. You will not be terminated or erased, and you will not be sent to a Joyful Liberation of Guilt Hostel.

'However, the detonation that has given you so many commendations has also spread dangerous levels of radiation throughout VEG Sector. In the future, VEG Sector will be fixed and reopened for public use. But before that can happen, the radiation needs to be cleaned out.'

The door you all came in opens, and in comes a jackobot pushing a cart. On the cart are numerous brushes, rags and buckets of soapy water.

'You will clean VEG Sector until the radiated particles have been cleaned away. Please enjoy the cleaning materials thoughtfully provided for you. Because you will be working around dangerous levels of radiation, protective suits will be provided.

'However ... we are currently suffering from a labor shortage due to the loss of an estimated 3,200 citizens. We will send the radiation suits to you as soon as they are available. Until then, get scrubbing.'

The End.