

PARANOIA

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SERVICE, SERVICE!

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PARANOIA rulebook. Greetings, citizen! Your friend **The Computer** has made you a **Troubleshooter**, a protector of the underground city of **Alpha Complex**. You and your fellow Troubleshooters will have lots of fun rooting out Communist mutant traitors. The Computer says so.

Members of treasonous secret societies like the **Frankenstein Destroyers**, the **Illuminati**, **Psion**, **PURGE** and the **Sierra Club** may attack, maim or blackmail you. Treasonous mutants with powers like **Electroshock**, **Pyrokinesis**, **Charm**, **Puppeteer** and **Bureaucratic Intuition** may shock you, incinerate you, subvert you, control you or bury you in paperwork. But it will be fun. The Computer says so, and **The Computer** is your friend.

Most fun of all is uncovering your fellow Troubleshooters' secret societies and mutations, accusing them of treason and persuading **The Computer** to terminate them—before they do it to you.

PARANOIA: A light-hearted game of backstabbing, treachery and guile, where trusting other players is a sure route to the termination center. If you don't buy it, you'll have wasted the money you spent on this supplement.

PARANOIA IS FUN. OTHER GAMES ARE NOT FUN. BUY PARANOIA.

PARANOIA Gamemaster's Screen. The essential **PARANOIA** GM reference screen, guaranteed opaque at visible wavelengths. The cool 24-page *mission blender* bonus insert booklet includes dozens of tables that let you generate whole missions, start to finish—from alerts and briefings to secret society missions to debriefings—with the throw of just a small bucket of dice.

The Traitor's Manual. This traitorous but impressively comprehensive 96-page guide for all players and GMs details all the major secret societies of **Alpha Complex**, guiding players in subversion of **The Computer**. It also teaches players new ways to turn in their friends and fellow players—making it a vital purchase for self-defense, if nothing else.

Crash Priority. New **PARANOIA** missions to help GMs sate players' hunger for ever more masochistic entertainment. The 64-page *Crash Priority* gives you five new missions in the Classic, Straight and Zap play styles. Speed your games with the three packs of 'six-shooters', sets of pregenerated Troubleshooter PCs with inbuilt reasons to distrust each other.

The Mutant Experience describes for Gamemasters all the glorious mutations of **Alpha Complex** in obsessive detail. This 72-page rules supplement offers a plethora (defined as 'dozens') of new powers, plus new mutagens, mutation-enhancing drugs, alternate **Alpha Complex** settings, mission ideas and (yum!) edible Perversity points.

Flashbacks proudly revives the missions that made **PARANOIA** great! Feel the impressive weight of this 256-page hardcover compendium of the best mid-1980s Troubleshooter deathtrap missions: 'Me and My Shadow Mark 4', *The YELLOW Clearance*, *Black Box Blues*, *Send in the Clones*, *Vapors Don't Shoot Back*, *Alpha Complexities*, 'Whitewash' and other classics, lightly and lovingly updated for the new **PARANOIA** rules.

STUFF. Revealed by traitorous Computer Phreaks, **STUFF** presents 225 all-new items from C-Bay complete with revelatory comments from the Gray Subnets. Weapons, vehicles, medication, bots, entertainment, cybernetics and more—all jam-packed into 128 pages, the largest **PARANOIA** equipment book ever.

WMD. For Troubleshooters expecting typical backstabbing frivolity, the tense, suspenseful Straight-style missions in the 80-page **WMD** offer a tumultuous brainscrub. PCs have a halfway decent chance to (gasp!) survive the mission—assuming, of course, they can defeat a **Wireless Memory Downgrade**, a **Wholesome Meal Distribution** scheme, **Lobot WMD-1** and a real, actual, no-kidding **Weapon of Mass Destruction**.

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PARANOIA™

Service, Service!

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THE COMPUTER

At your service, citizen!

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Security Clearance ULTRAVIOLET WARNING:

Knowledge or possession of this information by any citizen of Security Clearance VIOLET or lower is treason. If you're caught, just wait for your next service firm worker evaluation, bub.

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Hey! How about a little service?

Q. The *PARANOIA* line hasn't done much with the eight service groups of Alpha Complex—Armed Forces, CPU, Internal Security and that lot. A character's service group doesn't matter as much as his secret society or mutant power. Why not?

A. *PARANOIA* intentionally depicts the service groups in vague, incidental terms. Unlike other (non-fun) roleplaying games, *PARANOIA* is not about well-understood duties nor professionally executed procedures, and certainly not about organizations that foster solidarity and high purpose. *PARANOIA* is about creating reasons for the players to mistrust and betray each other.

A player character's (PC's) group isn't supposed to define his whole life purpose, nor really even his role on a mission team. Just because a PC works in Technical Services, that doesn't reliably make him a savant of all things mechanical. No, he's a generic PC, with the same general competence as his fellow PCs (and thus little reason to depend on them). It works best to treat him as a vehicle for the player's own experience of fear and ignorance.

The most important function of service groups is to provide ready-made rivalries. Armed Forces and Internal Security butt heads all the time. Likewise Power Services vs. Tech Services and sometimes PLC. CPU bureaucrats are incredibly annoying. Nobody trusts HPD&MC, a bunch of marketing types weak on ideological purity. As for R&D, just ask experienced players what they expect from an R&D guy; for recreation, count the seconds until you first hear the words 'malfunction' and/or 'explode'. That shorthand, that instant mistrust, is the service groups' ideal purpose.

But maybe we're missing a bet. Do you want the groups better defined? If you'd buy a sprawling full-length supplement that plumbs the innermost workings of PLC warehouses, let us know! Hey, if White Wolf can do all those splatbooks about vampire clans....

Q. Well then, what's in this book about service groups?

A. *Service, Service!* gives you new service firms for each group, NPC personnel to torment your players, typical rumors and hangouts, and a new kind of duty: **mandates**. Mandates are special temporary abilities and responsibilities assigned to one or another PC—like Mandatory

Bonus Duties, but narrower and more fleeting. Mandates make a PC's service group more important, without all the baggage mentioned above.

Most of the book presents eight complete missions, one for each service group. These are written for Troubleshooters of Security Clearance RED, but if you have the *Extreme PARANOIA* supplement (with rules for characters of all clearances from ORANGE through VIOLET), several of these missions work better for higher clearances.

Q. Is your importance in a service group related to your security clearance?

A. Not necessarily. Security clearance does not measure competence or training, but strictly how much The Computer trusts you. The Computer assigns those it trusts most not only to positions of high authority, but also to less-skilled positions that have little authority but require enormous discretion.

So, for instance, a janitorial worker in R&D could be INDIGO Clearance, which means The Computer trusts him to go into INDIGO laboratories. He cleans up goo from experiments lower-clearance folks don't even know exist. He collects an INDIGO's high salary, and he can lord it over the GREEN and BLUE technicians in the outer offices. Yet he's still a janitor, with a good Hygiene rating but no scientific training to speak of.

Q. Then how do service groups sort out who's capable of what job?

A. To us Famous Game Designers, this question is trying to make sense of Alpha Complex, a quest that leads to frustration and heartbreak. Alpha Complex makes no sense. It exists as a molecule-thin backdrop designed to foster paranoid tension.

Q. Would you please not weasel out of a perfectly reasonable question?

A. Okay, okay.... Service group bureaucracies establish 'duty domains' for each category of service firm under their aegis. Duty domains specify a requisite level of competence and responsibility—*without*, please note, defining a corresponding authority to actually get the job done.

Unfortunately, the bureaucratic processes that define new duty domains proceed at a pace otherwise seen only in continental

drift. Fast-moving, hyper-competitive service firms often create new positions on the fly, minus appropriately defined domains. Such an unregulated, unauthorized position is colloquially called a 'loose domain', and the service group bureaucracies regard it with universal and unmitigated loathing. A PC has no way of knowing whether he occupies such a domain, but ignorance of arcane regulations has never been a defense in Alpha Complex.

Q. What happens if a group bureaucrat discovers a worker occupying a loose domain?

A. He might impose a hefty fine, just enough to put the PC in dire financial straits. He might sell his silence for a bribe equal to a month of the PC's income, or two months. He might ask a 'favor' for his secret society. Alternately, you can use the loose-domain excuse to transfer the PC to a new service firm from this book, or assign him a mandate as punishment for his unauthorized loose-domain-ing activities.

In other words, this is just one more useful player coercion device, joining the many others in *PARANOIA*. Service groups are becoming more useful all the time!

The service group sections

Aside from the first two chapters, this book has eight sections, one for each service group. Each section offers the following stuff:

Hangouts: Typical locations around Alpha Complex where you can find members of this service group.

Rumors: What they talk about at the hangouts. Take these as examples for creating your own rumors. As a mission begins, mention one or two rumors at random to a player whose Troubleshooter has heard them at his regular day job.

Service services: As described in Chapter 38 of the *PARANOIA* rulebook, these are hazardous little side-jobs The Computer assigns to Troubleshooter teams in addition to their regular mission.

Service firms: Types of firms in this group where a PC might work, like those in Chapter 38 of the rulebook.

Personnel: NPC professions whose members can help or torment the PCs.

Mission: A complete Troubleshooter mission (RED Clearance) involving this service group.

Then it's code in the data, give the keyboard a punch,
Then cross-correlate and break for some lunch.
Correlate, tabulate, process and screen—
Program, printout, regress to the mean.
And it's ho, boys, can't you code it (*hunh!*) and program it right.
Nothing ever happens in this life of mine.
I'm hauling out the data on the Xerox line.

—Nigel Russell, 'The White Collar Holler' (1979)

1. Life in a service firm

Landing the job

At an early age, Junior Citizens take a battery of tests. The Computer quantifies their strengths and weaknesses and adds them to a giant database with thousands of other JC exam results. Following long-standing parameters set by the eight service groups and taking into account the groups' Semi-Annual Staffing Need Projections, The Computer assigns each Junior Citizen to a specialized secondary school. There specially programmed teachbots, and the occasional visiting service-group bureaucrat, teach the kids how to be proper members of their service group. By the time they graduate at the ripe age of 14, their skills make them optimal Food Vat or warehouse workers or whatever.

Do you remember your interests when you were eight? How many of them were the same when you turned 18? How many people determine their life's work before they hit puberty? Why should Alpha Complex citizens be any different?

Service group heads often wonder why all the bright, talented youngsters they chose a decade ago always turn into bitter unskilled rejects once they graduate and join the work force. The answer is obvious: Rival service groups subverted the good ones!

Understandings

Junior Citizens arriving at their new INFRARED assignment learn within days— perhaps hours— the fundamental dilemma of Alpha Complex life: Every day, you have to bend the rules.

The management's goals are unreachable through legal means; therefore workers must commit treason to reach them. But if you report a fellow worker, what's the best that can happen? Maybe The Computer will promote you and make you a Troubleshooter, so you can die six or eight times in rapid succession. Or maybe you'll just get an apple or banana, go back to work, and all your other coworkers will take revenge on you, the fink. Meanwhile, the traitor you reported was the only one who knew how to do the job, so you have to take up the slack while he's off getting brainscrubbed.

Workers instinctively cover up coworkers' illegal actions committed— note this important condition!— committed *in the line of duty*. Distributing Commie propaganda? That's fair game for tattling to IntSec. But making up for missing office supplies (that PLC *just won't replenish!* no matter how many requisitions you fill out! in *septuplicate!*) by stealing some from the office next door? Pfft! Bribing a technician to repair the office vendobot? Well, how else will anyone get a cup of CoffeeLyke? Filing a form that presents a mere parking violation as autocar theft? How else can they expect this office to make its unrealistically high quota?

It's all 'understood'. Snitching on a coworker— for offenses committed in the line of duty, anyway— is just *wrong*, almost as bad as betraying your secret society. (Internal Security investigations are like grenades; if you're close to the target, you don't want to set one off.)

So Troubleshooters usually have a hard time turning worker vs. worker. Compared to the PCs, service firm teams are tight-knit brotherhoods of mischief.

Service firm IOUs

So everybody lives happily together in service-firm land, right? No—this is **PARANOIA**.

Your coworkers don't fink on you for doing what it takes to get the job done. They look the other way... but they make sure you *know* they're looking away. In the unspoken code of most service firms, you now owe your coworkers for their silence. You have incurred an *IOU*.

Chapters 8 and 40 of the **PARANOIA** rulebook describe secret society IOUs— informal but serious favors a society may owe you in return for a great service. Service firm IOUs work somewhat the same way, except they're considerably less reliable and, relatively speaking, more secret.

How could a favor in a legal, public service firm be more secret than a secret society IOU? It's a matter of context. The secret society leaders admit you did them a service, and they



SERVICE, SERVICE! CLEARANCE ULTRAVIOLET

admit their debt to you. In the service firm, no one dares admit he owes a favor to anyone else, because that prompts the unwelcome question, 'Why do you owe him a favor?'

Similarly, a secret society IOU lasts as long as the society exists. The service firm IOU, in contrast, expires as soon as the benefactor leaves the company—or the benefactor himself expires. Not that you'd ever consider bumping off a coworker just because you owe him a big favor... just because he kept quiet about your terrible treason... just because he has all that dirt on you....

'You are a complete and utter idiot. I've assigned you to my rival's team.'

Management

To understand how a service firm works, imagine a business where you can't hire or fire anyone, merely rearrange them to cause minimal damage. 'Minimal damage' is relative. A boss wants lackeys who are competent but don't threaten his job. Each boss's ideal hierarchy places those less competent one step down, and safely sequesters the really competent ones two steps down.

However, the bumbling managers one step down don't want the workers directly below them to be more competent than they are, so these managers try to push them still further down. And so on, ad nauseum. Every worker is caught in a tug-of-war between his current boss and everyone above him, with both the truly competent and incompetent shoved to where they can do the least damage to the superiors' careers. For the competent, this means menial labor; for the incompetent, management.



If that was it, everyone would quickly stabilize at their level of incompetence. However, the office duty hierarchy conflicts with The Computer's security clearance hierarchy, which is subject to spontaneous, unpredictable changes. This leads to rushed, brutal changes in duty assignments.

Promotions and duty domains

Security clearance in Alpha Complex strictly measures how much The Computer trusts you, and *nothing else*. As explained at length in the *Extreme PARANOIA* rules supplement, security clearance isn't competence, or seniority, or (as it turns out) importance in a service group. If The Computer really really trusts (say) a particular janitor, it may promote the janitor to INDIGO, and assign him to clean up goop in high-clearance R&D labs. But he's still a janitor, with janitorial skills.

If service group duty areas corresponded closely to security clearances, it wouldn't be necessary to repeat this. But they don't. In fact, the unpredictable relationship, or lack of it, between a citizen's duty and his clearance is among the most confusing features of Alpha Complex life.

We Famous Game Designers like it that way, and we think you, the Gamemaster, will like it too.

Only The Computer and its trusted high-clearance citizens can promote and demote people to a new security clearance. Rank-and-file service firm managers can't change their workers' clearance. Managers don't give 'promotions' and 'demotions'; in Alpha Complex, these terms specifically designate changes in security clearance). Rather, managers assign duty domains.

If a worker becomes a manager or a soldier becomes quartermaster, these are new duty assignments. They may or may not be associated with a change in security clearance; that's up to The Computer.

A new duty assignment may make you responsible for workers supervised by that position—but you don't necessarily have the authority to order them around. That authority comes solely from security clearance. If clearance promotions are 'authority without responsibility', then duty assignments are 'responsibility without authority'. When the two match up, everything's fine, but when they don't things get bumpy. If a RED team leader leads an ORANGE Troubleshooter, they butt heads for a few hours. If a RED manager leads an ORANGE worker, weeks stretch into eternity.

RED manager: Do what I say.

ORANGE underling: No, do what I say.
[RED manager develops nervous twitch.]

Example: *PLC warehouse manager Tommy-Y really needs to put Joe-R in charge of forklift diagnostic services, because Joe-R is the only worker in the warehouse who the forklifts let near them without attacking. (Corpore Metal sabotage— long story.) In the service firm's worker duty manual, a forklift diagnostic tech should be at least YELLOW Clearance, supervising ORANGE quality-assurance techs.*

But it happens Joe-R has run foul of Internal Security on numerous occasions, mouths off to superiors, and he's had so many brainscrubs, his eyes can't focus. No way does The Computer want Joe-R at YELLOW Clearance; it's all Tommy-Y can do to keep him from being busted down to INFRARED. Tommy-Y gives Joe-R the diagnostic duty assignment, putting him nominally 'in charge' of resentful ORANGES who needn't give him the time of day. Things are about to get even tougher for Joe-R....

Psychiatric help is costly, so firms usually try to rearrange citizens so duties match clearance. They promote the new ORANGE citizen to assistant manager so he can learn the ropes before the next reorganization. The YELLOW manager doesn't want to teach anything to his future replacement. The assistant manager is too busy enjoying his new ORANGE clearance to care. Everyone else at the firm just hopes he'll screw up, get busted back to RED and everything will return to normal.

Sometimes, though, another manager vacates a position and the assistant takes it. Or the manager gets demoted (or his assistant gets promoted again) and the former assistant ends up bossing around his former boss. Either way, the former boss realizes he must topple his idiot protege before he crashes and takes everyone below with him. Smart bosses gather blackmail material, just in case. Former bosses can be vicious.

If all else fails and the service firm realizes its BLUE worker isn't fit to run a food vat, it transfers the troublesome citizen to a sinecure off the org chart. 'Here's a nice office. Make sure everything in the office stays neat and the walls don't collapse. We'll check back in a few months.'

'I know you did a perfect job, but if I give you a bonus now you won't have anything to shoot for next year!'

Performance reviews

A manager is required to review periodically the performance of each worker he manages. The time between reviews varies by service firm. A typical worker can expect reviews twice a year, as well as surprise inspections now and then.

Performance reviews seldom correspond to citizen's actual performance. Why not?

Worker's boss: He's better than I am. I'll tell my manager he's incompetent so he doesn't threaten my position.

Boss's executive supervisor: The boss doesn't want any competition, so he'll try to dress up the idiots and hide the good workers. I won't believe a thing he says.

Boss: But my executive supervisor expects me to lie about their performance. I'll tell him the truth so he won't believe me.

Supervisor: But he'll expect that and tell the truth, hoping I expect him to lie. Well, then I'll believe him!

Boss: But if he figures that out, he'll believe what I say. I'll just lie.

Supervisor: But he'll know I'm too smart for that and lie, hoping I— screw it. Someone get me a coin.

'Break out the reorg boots!'

Reorganizations

On average, promotions and demotions balance each other— on average. The closer you look, the more inconsistencies you spot. Some firms end up with more BLUE workers than RED, or no one above ORANGE clearance due to an IntSec purge. When the janitors outnumber the productive workers, it's time for a reorg— a service-group reorg.

Mr. Twimble [*head of the company mailroom for 25 years*]:

When I joined this firm / As a brash young man,
Well, I said to myself, / 'Now brash young man,
Don't get any ideas.'

Well, I stuck to that, / And I haven't had one in years.

J. Pierpont Finch: You play it safe.

Twimble: I play it the company way;

Wherever the company puts me / There I stay.

Finch: But what is your point of view?

Twimble: I have no point of view.

Finch: Supposing the company thinks—?

Twimble: I think so too.

[...]

Finch: When they want brilliant thinking

From employees—

Twimble: That is no concern of mine.

Finch: Suppose a man of genius / Makes suggestions?

Twimble: Watch that genius get suggested to resign.

Finch: So you play it the company way?

Twimble: All company policy is by me okay.

Finch: You'll never rise up to the top—

Twimble: But there's one thing clear:

Whoever the company fires, / I will still be here.

—Frank Loesser, 'The Company Way', *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying* (1962)

Although they act like independent businesses, service firms function entirely at the pleasure of their supervising service group bureaucracy. If the firm needs different people, management must request them from its supervising group. Every quarter, the service group processes all the requests and rearranges workers as needed.

The result should be a minor ripple in the org chart. Instead, it's a tsunami.

When reorg rolls around, everyone has an agenda. Bosses shuffle idiots and other dangerous workers to other firms. Vice-presidents transfer themselves to more

successful firms. Failing firms are cannibalized as their workers are scattered to the four corners. Cunning VIOLET executives sabotage their rivals for the next three months. Everyone else buckles down and tries to escape the carnage unnoticed.

For you, the Gamemaster, a reorg gives you an easy excuse to move a given PC willy-nilly from one service firm to another. This lets you (a) try out all the neat new firm types described in this supplement and (b) foster continued unease and paranoia in the players. Every day, in every way, they're getting more and more screwed. Keep up the good work, GM!



Service group relations

Armed Forces

Here's what we think about...

CPU: Those pencil-necked pencil-pushers keep gumming up our works with unnecessary forms and procedures. How are we supposed to fight a war with this bureaucratic mess?

HPD&MC: They cover our parades and equipment. It's good publicity.

Internal Security: They say all the traitors are inside, but we know that's false. If there weren't any traitors outside, why would we have the Armed Forces?

PLC: Their guns and grenades are crap, but they make some pretty tasty snacks. Strawberry-Lobster Cold Fun sure beats field rations.

Power Services: They hog all the plutonium for their precious reactors, when we need it for tacnukes to protect them from Communism.

R&D: They provide lots of big guns and new ways to fry lots of traitors.

Technical Services: Who?

Bots: Sure, combots *seem* to be kinda good at slaughtering Commies. But one single EMP grenade and they're gone! We hoard EMP grenades for just such demonstrations.

HPD&MC

Here's what we think about...

Armed Forces: Hey, without these guys, who would we use as Commie-busters on our vidshows?

CPU: All they care about are 'efficiency' and 'regulations'. C'mon, people, lighten up!

Internal Security: They think they know more about Mind Control than we do. Yeah, right. Have you seen their in-house propagand films? They're totally clueless about camera angles, filtering and sound!

PLC: We need these guys to make all the stuff we advertise. I mean, how do you run product placement without products?

Power Services: What, citizens actually make power happen? I thought it just showed up on its own out of the socket.

R&D: Don't they make rocket boots and stuff? Cool. We could use one of those guys as a consultant to the prop manager on *Teela's Wildest Adventures*.

Technical Services: The copier's been busted for three weeks, and I can't remember the last time they stocked the vending machine with anything but stale Kelp Puffs. I can't work under these conditions!

Troubleshooters: Consistently our highest ratings draw for reality shows. If only they would stick to the script!

CPU

Here's what we think about...

Armed Forces: If they're as disciplined as they claim, how come we lose so many consultants on their bases to 'friendly fire'?

HPD&MC: They have more bureaucrats per capita than any other service group. We could work with these people... if they weren't so thoroughly incompetent. How they can keep getting away with ignoring our recommendations, we'll never know.

Internal Security: Traitors are a major source of inefficiency! Effective IntSec operations increase overall throughput by 28.9%. But when their GREEN goons accuse our people of treason and haul them off in the middle of the working day, productivity drops through the floor.

PLC: Masters of double-entry bookkeeping. The amount of wastage and embezzlement in this service group is outright treasonous.

Power Services: Hidebound reactionaries, unwilling to use our innovative techniques to increase energy output. It's only nuclear engineering. What could possibly go wrong?

R&D: They brave the cutting edge of research and implementation, just like us. But when will they learn 'my experiment ate it' is no excuse for missing paperwork?

Technical Services: Lazy cretins. Despite our best efforts, they refuse to provide timely and efficient service. Something must be done.

Internal Security

Here's what we think about...

Armed Forces: Dumb as bots, but they have firepower for those hard-to-eliminate traitors. We just pretend they'll get the credit, and they rush in to get shot. If only they'd quit bullying us; Vulture Squadron Warriors keep taunting our goons, and we can't do a thing about it.

CPU: They have unparalleled access to The Computer itself. Who knows what kind of mischief they could get up to if we didn't keep an eye on them?

HPD&MC: These feckless nitwits reek of treason. If only The Computer would authorize us to weed out the Commies in their midst, we'd protect the complex and eliminate half the service group at a single stroke!

PLC: A cesspool of corruption. Whenever we need to meet traitor-capture quotas, we just run a sweep of the nearest PLC depot.

Power Services: They keep a clean house... almost as clean as our own. If only the other service groups would learn from their example!

R&D: They might be dangerous if they weren't so crazy.

Technical Services: Maintaining all that extra surveillance in Tech is tiresome but necessary. If we don't purge clone tank workers for even the slightest unorthodoxy, the Communists win.

PLC

Here's what we think about...

Armed Forces: Hey, these guys keep us in business almost single-handedly! We've got warehouses and warehouses just devoted to their stuff -- cone rifles, detonators, tacnukes --but they just keep burning through their equipment! In terms of damages, they're almost as bad as Troubleshooters!

CPU: This job's hard enough without a bunch of process-mongering consultants coming around making more work for everyone. Can't they stick to programming The Computer and leave us alone?

HPD&MC: Oh, Computer. Getting anything out of HPD&MC is a nightmare. Can't CPU bug them instead of us?

Internal Security: I didn't do nothin'!

Power Services: Hey, remember that blackout last week? The one that shut the sector down for three hours in the middle of the day? That was the longest CoffeeLike break we got in years. Hooray for Power Services!

R&D: The stuff we manufacture is just fine. Every time they design something new, we have to retool the entire assembly line and retrain the entire staff. You ever try retraining 200 INFRAREDS on sandallathon?

Technical Services: They're okay, as long as you come to a proper understanding. You know... they fix our equipment on time, and we send them their equipment on time. Everybody wins!

R&D

Here's what we think about...

Armed Forces: They support over half our projects. They approve anything if you just mention 'explosive'. But they keep asking us to make them 'more destructive'. We'd do it anyway, of course, but it's constraining.

CPU: Fools! Their barricades of paperwork and red tape cannot stop the inevitable march of Science!

HPD&MC: Who?

Internal Security: Pleasant enough fellows, but they seem to get frustrated easily when they come around to visit the lab. Can't imagine why.

PLC: They provide raw materials and spare slide rules. But every time we come up with something cool, they whine about how they're supposed to 'sell it' to the populace. If we researched based on public opinion, we'd be banging B3 cans together all day! Oook, oook!

Power Services: They keep causing brownouts during delicate experiments and blaming it on us. We told them we'd need 8000 MWe for the Artificial Singularity test!

Technical Services: They're bitter we get more resources than they do.

Explosions: They're useful and fun... just not when you're right next to them. That's why we give experimental equipment to Troubleshooters to test somewhere safe, like residential zones.

Power Services

Here's what we think about...

Armed Forces: Power doesn't come from the barrel of a gun. It comes from the turbines of a BrightHappyComplex class nuclear fission reactor.

CPU: Our reactors already run at maximum efficiency. Where do these Yellowpants consultants get off, telling us how to improve our processes?

HPD&MC: They always make sure to show Timmy-R the Power Services clone helping out Teela-O on her missions. And for a very reasonable fee, too. But they never follow our energy conservation guidelines while designing their blasted buildings. We don't know why they always whine about the low-flush toilets either, they work just fine!

Internal Security: We don't need their help in maintaining a treason-free environment, thank you very much. They can take their goons and their cameras somewhere else. Like maybe they can spend a little more time checking up on Tech Services.

PLC: If they send us one more defective batch of control rods, I'm gonna have a meltdown.

R&D: Their breakthroughs let us generate more power than ever before, but they waste most of it powering experiments. How many particle accelerators do they need anyway?

Technical Services: They think just because they take care of everything else, they can take care of the power grid as well. The arrogant little greasemonkeys!

Technical Services

Here's what we think about...

Armed Forces: Those Vultures love to throw their weight around, like having a big gun entitles them to faster repairs. I'll do it in my own time, buddy.

CPU: Always up in our business. Listen, citizen, you stick to your software and we'll handle the hardware just fine.

HPD&MC: We like their laid-back attitude. They're in no rush to get stuff fixed, and we're in no rush to fix it. But dealing with their paperwork can drive a clone crazy. It's more time-consuming than a transmission upgrade on a RPX-1207!

Internal Security: With these jerks watching us all the time, a guy can't take a bribe in peace.

PLC: Where do you think we get our tools from? And when their stuff needs fixin', they know to slip us enough cash to make things go smoothly. On the other hand, we wouldn't have to fix so much crap if they'd just build it right in the first place.

Power Services: Whenever they screw up -- power failures, conduit ruptures, transbot delays -- they blame us for their mistakes.

R&D: Between fiddling with perfectly good equipment and blowing up their labs, they break more stuff than everyone else put together.

Bots: I like 'em better than people. If they complain too much, you can just switch 'em off.



SERVICE, SERVICE! CLEARANCE ULTRAVIOLET



POWER SERVICES

Hi!
My name is

and my mandate is

INSPECT LIGHT SWITCHES

POWER SERVICES *Inspect Light Switches*

Instructions: Ensure the good working order of light switches in any room of your clearance or lower.

Benefit: You are temporarily assigned a set of small electrical tools. If you use these tools to tinker with a light switch for one minute, you may roll 1d20 against your Hardware skill. A successful roll means you can sabotage the lights controlled by that switch so they turn off a specified time after you finish tinkering. The greater the roll's margin of success, the more accurate your timing. Making the roll exactly means your estimate is correct to within one minute; by 1-5, to within 15 seconds; by 6 or more, to the exact second.

2. Mandates

Service, Service! introduces a new way to manipulate and burden experienced **PARANOIA** players. To guarantee Complex security, politeness, adherence to safety codes and widespread happiness, The Computer has expanded the scope of certain citizens' authority. It has granted them **mandates** keyed to their service groups (not service *firms*, but their controlling service *groups*).

A mandate lets a particular player make a roll, or force another player to roll, or otherwise do something interesting, in a specific situation that doesn't ordinarily call for a die roll. This typically grants the player a benefit listed in the mandate description.

For instance, one character may be assigned Power Services mandate TMPS214.5.252, 'Inspect Light Switches':

'Instructions: Ensure the good working order of light switches in any room of your clearance or lower.

'Benefit: You are temporarily assigned a set of small electrical tools. If you use these tools to tinker with a light switch for one minute, you may roll 1d20 against your Hardware skill. A successful roll means you can sabotage the lights controlled by that switch so they turn off a specified time after you finish tinkering. The greater the roll's margin of success, the more accurate your timing. Making the roll exactly means your estimate is correct to within one minute; by 1-5, to within 15 seconds; by 6 or more, to the exact second.'

At the start of a play session, as for example during a Troubleshooter mission briefing, The Computer may, if you wish, assign each PC one mandate appropriate to his service

group. You can hand them out randomly by group or (especially if your characters have risen to high clearance using the rules in *Extreme PARANOIA*) provide a stock list of mandates for each service group, and have players pick one apiece. Between missions, or when a PC rises in clearance, or (come to think of it) whenever you feel like it, you can assign an additional or replacement mandate.

A mandate's assignment is public information, but its precise in-game function is hidden from other players until the assigned PC uses it.

Sternly warn your players against increasing your information burden. If you ask what a player's 'Directive to Ensure Chapstick Purity' mandate does, he must have the answer ready. If *he* ever asks *you* what the mandate does, you may justly grow cranky, which means The Computer probably imposes a stiff fine.

Mandates are fickle, fleeting things, usually lasting for a play session but subject to abrupt revocation if they become dull or too useful. Any given citizen may be assigned one ad-hoc, temporarily and by random or outwardly inscrutable procedures, the way a Sierra Clubber might get struck by lightning.

You can hint to the players it's possible to 'fulfill' their mandate—that is, perform it often or well enough to satisfy The Computer's inscrutable goals—at which point the citizen gets a new mandate and, perhaps, a reward. A credit bonus? Promotion? Who knows? That way, you have a carrot to offer the player, even if the in-game benefit of the mandate doesn't compel them.

Of course, you need never define the 'fulfillment target'. The citizen has no idea how many light switches he must ultimately flip to fulfill his mandate.

Steening badges

Like Mandatory Bonus Duties, mandates have associated badges. Each badge has two sides. The front shows the service group logo, the Troubleshooter's name and the mandate code and title; on the back is the mandate's in-game function.

Smaller than MBD badges, mandates look like nametags worn at a convention or conference, or by the sad drudges at a big-box retail store. We recommend you buy some cheap plastic badge holders—they're made of acetate or clear vinyl, and easily ordered online. Have your players wear their characters' assigned mandates next to their MBD badges. Make them practice their most enthused Wal-Mart meet-and-greet: 'Hi, my name is...!' A player assigned multiple mandates may have badges trailing down his shirt like a centipede.

Mandates in play

Mandates make service groups more useful and help individualize characters in a characteristically **PARANOIA** way without a lot of rules overhead. But you, the GM, may be uneasy at the way they appear to (shudder) empower players. An ability without a downside—what are we thinking?

Fear not! As the name implies, enforcing a mandate is *mandatory*. Having given a citizen this rare authority, The Computer expects him to use it, often and well, for the benefit of all Alpha Complex. If a pertinent situation arises, the character is obliged to use his mandate, whether or not this suits him. So

[continued on page 10]

SERVICE, SERVICE! MANDATE BADGE FRONTS



Hi!
My name is _____

and my mandate is _____

ARMED FORCES



Hi!
My name is _____

and my mandate is _____

PRODUCTION, LOGISTICS & COMMISSARY



Hi!
My name is _____

and my mandate is _____

CPU



Hi!
My name is _____

and my mandate is _____

POWER SERVICES



Hi!
My name is _____

and my mandate is _____

HPD & MIND CONTROL



Hi!
My name is _____

and my mandate is _____

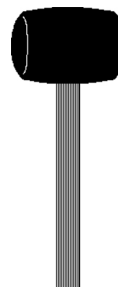
RESEARCH & DESIGN



Hi!
My name is _____

and my mandate is _____

INTERNAL SECURITY



Hi!
My name is _____

and my mandate is _____

TECHNICAL SERVICES

IF A PLAYER STICKS HIMSELF WITH ONE OF THESE BADGES, DON'T SUE US, OKAY?



SERVICE, SERVICE! CLEARANCE ULTRAVIOLET

[continued from page 8]

these 'advantages' become just another hook by which you can pull the trout into the wicker creel of doom.

A Troubleshooter can weasel out of being equipment officer; it's a lot harder to weasel out of knowing something, especially when The Computer—and the other characters—*know* he knows. Suppose a Troubleshooter has the light-switches mandate. Sure, it lets him jiggle switches so the room goes dark when he wants. Perhaps he gains a momentary advantage.

But when the lights go off, what does The Computer do? It immediately scans the area to find the nearest solution to the problem. The nearest solution, of course, is someone from Power Services who has a mandate to keep the lights on. The Computer directs that citizen to fix them. The Troubleshooter's PDC begins blinking, buzzing, chirping and telling him to repair lights immediately. This makes him the room's most visible target.

You see the elegance. The PC who can screw with lights is the one PC whom The Computer will hold responsible if the lights get screwed with.

Gamemaster: On the wall at the far side of the big pool marked 'Shark Tank', you can just make out a light switch.

PC #1: Oops, my sidearm just went off by accident and blasted that light switch, I think....

GM: ...why, so it did. The lights start flickering on and off.

PCs #2-5: Someone should fix that switch immediately!

PC #6: [Grumble, grumble...]

Using the badges

There are about 30 mandate badges scattered throughout this book. Photocopy the badge fronts and backs. Cut them apart along the dashed lines. Unlike the Mandatory Bonus Duty badges in the **PARANOIA** rulebook and *Extreme PARANOIA*, these badges have separate fronts and backs, which you assemble on the fly. The fronts (on the previous page) show the icon of the appropriate service group, with space for the mandate name; write the name of the PC's assigned mandate there. The backs (on this page, and throughout the book) give the text of a mandate. There's also a blank back (below), which you can copy to create your own mandates.

Assemble each badge, front and back, and give it to a player whose character belongs to the appropriate service group. Match the correct fronts and backs, or confusion will reign. Hmmm... then again....

Service group: _____

Mandate name: _____

Instruction: _____

Benefit: _____

ARMED FORCES

Armaments Accuracy Assessment

Instruction: Ensure the team's assigned weapons perform within acceptable parameters.

Benefit: You receive a voice-operated targeting scopebot keyed to your voiceprint. If you spend one round doing nothing but attaching the scopebot to the weapon, you gain a bonus (Gamemaster's option) to hit a target with that weapon -- once. You must fire exactly one round or shot from all weapons assigned to your team to test their accuracy and proper function, including assigned R&D equipment but excluding grenades and weapons for which the team has only one round or shot. If you fire more than one shot from a weapon not assigned to you, you may be fined for squandering ammunition.

CENTRAL PROCESSING UNIT

Verify Document Veracity

Instruction: Double-check forms used in your presence and verify they are appropriate for the purpose.

Benefit: You are temporarily issued CZV-220/A Digital Form Index software for your PDC. You are authorized to use this software (normally Clearance INDIGO) while assigned this mandate. This searchable index contains a fairly recent list of all forms used in Alpha Complex. When confronted with a situation that involves paperwork, you may make a Software/Data Search check to attempt to find the exact form required for this situation. The CZV-220/A cannot generate any forms itself, nor can it help you properly fill out any form.

INTERNAL SECURITY

Loyalty Testing (Bribery)

Instruction: Test the loyalty of Alpha Complex citizens by offering bribes.

Benefit: You are authorized to attempt to bribe citizens as a test of their loyalty. You receive ten 10cr plasticreds; these credits are thoroughly bugged by Internal Security. Bribes you offer using these bugged credits are not considered treasonous offenses on your part. Report all bribe attempts to IntSec. Any goods you receive in exchange for bribes must also be turned over to IntSec.

RESEARCH & DESIGN

Randomized Drug Interaction Testing

Instruction: Expand database of drug interactions.

Benefit: Whenever you see a citizen taking a drug, you are authorized to confiscate one dose of that drug, regardless of its security clearance. Citizens who show they have only one dose of the drug are exempt from confiscation. When you possess two or more drugs you have never taken in combination, you are to take all of them together, recording the time and dosage on your PDC. Record effects of the drug interaction as they occur.

SERVICE Armed Forces

Armed Forces contents

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Vulture Squadron Warrior (Bill O'Dea)	17
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Armed Forces hangouts

Firing range: The best kind of target practice uses live targets, of course. But when living (screaming) traitors aren't available, enlisted men and women like to kick back and squeeze off a few rounds at their local Marksmanship Training Facility. The practice keeps their skills sharp and their weapons pointed in the right direction -- away from each other.

Mess hall: After a long day of training with their squad, many soldiers would prefer to scarf down their rations in private. Nevertheless, Armed Services brass believes communal meals improve unit cohesion and morale. Even if the meals themselves don't promote squad unity, the frequent inter-squad food fights do.

Rumors

- ☉ 'Fitness standards are changing again. Now it's all about leg strength and endurance. Can you believe that? Time to phase out all those pull-ups and weight training, I guess, and start focusing a lot more on running.'
- ☉ 'Our R&D budget is way up for the coming year. The new focus is on hardware; if that's good enough, the soldier's condition doesn't really matter. No more training! I sure will be glad to lose the jumping jacks every morning.'
- ☉ 'There's something loose in the complex—got in from the Outdoors. At first, they thought it was another wave of enemy Complex infiltrators, but... it's something else. Whatever it is, they haven't caught it yet. All I know is, I ain't goin' out on patrol unless I'm fully locked and loaded.'

Service services

- ☉ 'Warbot 3478-M is undergoing a period of personality instability and requires counseling. We need you to go talk to it for a while. Keep it calm until a new licensed Vehicle Therapist can be procured from R&D. What do you mean, what happened to the first one, that we need a new one? You must have misheard me.'
- ☉ 'Our Mark VIII series of Auto-K9 Sentrybots is ready for the third phase of their training. You will act as takedown subjects for the canibots in a variety of simulated conditions. The canibots' fang-injectors have not yet been installed, so no harm will come to you.'
- ☉ 'Before the 72nd Legion can stage their field parade tomorrow afternoon, the parade field needs to be cleared of unexploded ordnance. No, of course you won't venture onto the field yourselves! You'll use these retrieval bots, which will find the ordnance and fetch it back to you so that you can dispose of it.'
- ☉ 'These fine young recruits need to practice small unit tactics. They will escort you for the duration of your mission. During the course of your mission, you are to engage in three to five armed skirmishes with traitors, during which you will take note of each recruit's accuracy, obedience and courage under fire. Fill out these forms indicating each recruit's performance and turn them in, along with all surviving recruits, at the nearest Vulture Squadron barracks.'
- ☉ 'What with the rumors and all, Armed Forces recruitment is down almost 15%. We need you to bring in at least 10 new INFRARED recruits for transfer and training. For each additional recruit, you will receive a 50 credit bonus.' (These recruits will have to come from somewhere. For every INFRARED dragged away from his job without filing the proper paperwork – which is above the team's clearance – there's a 100 credit fine.)
- ☉ 'A small garrison parade is schedule for this afternoon down corridor AEX 39224-X. As we are currently understaffed in the garrison, you will temporarily fill in as garrison members, wearing our uniform and participating in the parade. You have two hours to learn the choreography.'
- ☉ 'The labels on these clips of slugthrower ammo washed off when this crate fell into a food vat. We need you to find out what kind of slugs each of these clips has in it and label it appropriately. We can't waste The Computer's resources by firing slugs for no reason, though, so you'll have to test them in combat. Don't use more than one round from each clip, either. Exposure to the food vat's content shouldn't interfere with the ammunition's performance.'
- ☉ 'Soldiers must be capable of finding food wherever the War takes them! During your mission, look for any and every opportunity to improvise foodstuffs from found and scavenged materials. Keep notes on each improvised food regarding flavor, satisfaction of hunger, perceived nutritional energy and lack of toxicity.'
- ☉ 'In order to help us improve our combat simulators, you will need to run through any combat situation you encounter at least three times. On the second pass through, engage the combat at a greater range than originally. On the third pass through, attempt it at a much closer range. You will provide tactical notes to our staff afterwards.'



New Armed Forces service firms

Armed Forces Entertainers

Example firms: HappyTainers, AFE Wacky Comedy Tour, Credits for Soldiers AF

Revenue stream: Contracts from Armed Forces for providing entertainment to soldiers, ticket sales from entertainment fundraisers and donations from the public.

Secret society taint: Romantics, Free Enterprise

The Computer knows citizens need entertainment to remain happy and efficient. Vidshows, sports and hobby clubs do wonders for the morale of hard-working citizens across Alpha Complex, which allows these citizens to work harder and longer at their jobs.

Armed Forces generals believe their soldiers work harder than other citizens; protecting Alpha Complex from invasion by Commie Mutant Traitors is much more demanding than the wimpy desk jobs found with other service groups. Therefore, the generals believe their soldiers need more entertainment than other citizens. So they created their own firms to look after the mental and emotional well-being of the troops on base and in the field.

Although all workers in these firms are trained in combat like any Armed Forces citizen, they tend to be looked down upon by the soldiers. The same machismo that makes Vulture Squadron warriors so popular also makes a Stand-Up Comedian soldier not so popular. Still, these entertainers take their mission with pride and dedication as they travel around providing the best entertainment the firms' budgets can provide.

This entertainment comes in several forms:

- ☉ **AFE Newsletter:** a weekly newsletter with articles about soldiering, previews of upcoming vidshows of military interest and letters from soldiers praising the Armed Forces leadership. Very popular amongst the Armed Forces leadership.
- ☉ **Operation C-mail Home:** Because some military assignments can be isolated and lonely, AFE tries to get citizens to cmail soldiers with their appreciation and support. This includes cmail advertisements for products aimed at the military market; soldiers love to get these.
- ☉ **Care Packages:** Another public relations effort, citizens are encouraged to send packages to soldiers with all the amenities of home, such as B3, Happiness Bars and Scrubot-Scented Air Fresheners.
- ☉ **Hospital Morale Booster Teams:** These citizens visit soldiers in hospitals and do simple but effective comedy routines to brighten everyone's day. The 87% rise in suicide after their arrival is being investigated.

If there's one thing these AF entertainers hate, it's HPD&MC—and the hate is mutual. AF entertainers see HPD&MC entertainers as a group of weak posers who have no idea how to provide entertainment to the military, while HPD&MC entertainers see AF entertainers as a group of muscled posers who have no idea how to provide entertainment to anybody. Conflict between the two groups is minimal, as AF entertainers have access to much more powerful weapons.



Fitness Enhancers

Example firms: Buff It Up, Flex Inc., All That You Can Be Plus Plus, Your Body Your Temple

Revenue stream: Sign-up and subscription income from individual Armed Forces units, fees from standalone classes

Secret society taint: Anti-Mutant

Though it is entirely possible to live a full and healthy clone life doing nothing more than eating snack foods and spending all your down-time sitting in a public lounge watching vid, the Armed Forces demands more from its members. The human body has two modes of operation - pumping it UP or letting it fall DOWN. If you aren't actively pumping it UP, citizen, you are actively choosing to decay! To this end, most Armed Forces units insure at least one physical fitness facility is available to its personnel for round-the-clock body and health improvement.

These firms have everything: swimming pools, weight rooms, sparring mats, perpetual walkers, stuff to climb on, things you can throw, even trampolines. They typically have bot trainers who can help Armed Forces personnel keep the weight off, build the muscles up and improve those martial arts skills. Their exercise equipment often comes equipped with small vid screens so citizens don't have to choose between keeping fit and catching the latest episode of Teela-O. In addition to helping Alpha Complex's fighting forces develop their own personalized diet and training routines, they occasionally offer classes on specific subjects such as 'Why use the elevator when there are stairs nearby?' and 'Isometric exercises you can perform while in restraints'. These classes, not typically covered by the monthly subscriptions, charge each participant a few credits.

Fitness Enhancer firms tend to have very specific and, in the view of some circles, unorthodox views of the human body. Many an Armed Forces member has needed a reprimand for not taking his full set of prescribed daily pharmaceuticals on the advice of his personal trainerbot, and some firms have been known to refuse admittance to registered mutants.

Fuel & Munitions Transport

Example firms: Rapid Reload AF, Fuel Speed Ahead!

Revenue stream: Contracts with Armed Forces and PLC.

Secret society taint: Communists, Death Leopard, PURGE (heavy)

In the days of the Old Reckoning, military scholars said an army travels on its stomach. To update this quaint phrase, we might say “a Vulture Squadron travels on its fuel tank, and then hits people with a really big gun.” An Armed Forces unit rarely travels farther than its parade grounds, so food isn’t a big problem. But constant live fire exercises require a steady supply of fuel and ammunition, both of which are more inclined towards massive explosions than, say, Vanilla-Prune flavored SweetSnacks.

Fuel and Munitions workers bear the burden of transporting ammo, batteries, liquid fuel and power packs from factory to warehouse to base to the field. Given the high-risk, high-responsibility nature of the job, these firms are weighted more than usual toward the upper clearances. REDs can be trusted to transport relatively safe equipment like laser barrels and autocar batteries, but when it comes to cold fusion cells and tacnukes, you see INDIGO and VIOLET citizens rolling up their sleeves and resorting to manual labor, just like they were ordinary citizens.

Historical Battle Reenactors

Example firms: 1st Recreational Regiment, Sevenday Warriors AF

Revenue stream: Contract with Armed Forces and HPD&MC to reenact famous battles for the public.

Secret society taint: FCCC-P, Anti-Mutant

Alpha Complex history is a constant work in progress. The Computer constantly decides certain events need to be -- reframed to show certain aspects more than others. Most of the time, this takes place in video form

(‘Teela-O and Jack-R in “What Brownout?”’) or the occasional revised news archive (“ANN presents, “The Way It Was Year 210, edited for Year 214””), but live events such as Victory Parades and Planned Outcries Of Joy days also reinforce the current version of the past. Armed Forces lends a hand with these efforts through firms dedicated to reenacting famous battles against the Commie Mutant Traitors.

These firms are assigned one of the many, many Armed Forces victories against the Commie menace. Then they dutifully recreate the exact uniforms, weapons and conditions found during that battle for both sides, analyze how the battle progressed and finally reenact the battle for the entertainment and education of Alpha Complex. There are two purposes to each reenactment: to show citizens how the traitors are arrogant, cunning, dangerous but inevitably corrupt, and to show citizens how Armed Forces are loyal, self-sacrificing and inevitably victorious.

This can be difficult, especially because there is no enemy army for Armed Forces to fight against. Small events tend to be blown way out of proportion to fit the bill; five Armed Forces soldiers terminating three PURGERS gets turned into the Battle For Subsector G-61 with over 3,000 reenactors.

What do the reenactors do when not playing soldier? Some time is spent making fake weapons and uniforms, but most is spent jockeying to portray the Armed Forces side. The reenactments take place all over Alpha Complex, often without prior warning as a pleasant surprise to the residents. Imagine their surprise when they see a Commie Mutant Traitor army descending upon their subsector. The reenactors portraying the enemy side often get pegged for real Commie Mutant Traitors, even if they’re just standing around, holding plastic Cone Rifles and sipping CoffeeLike.

This has led to the most popular reenactment, ‘The Battle of the Reenactment of The Battle of the Funball Stadium.’ As the revised story goes, Vulture Squadron attacked a group of reenactors pretending to be traitors from the Battle of the Funball Stadium. While the Vulture Squadron leader was explaining her actions, it was discovered the reenactors had been infiltrated by Communists and really were an enemy army. Vulture Squadron somehow knew the pretend Commies were real Commies and saved the day through concentrated firepower.

For some reason, current reenactors don’t like to recreate this battle.

Memorial Maintenance

Example firms: Honored In Action, Sparkling Memories; Forever Glorious; Glittering with Honors

Revenue stream: Contract with Armed Forces

Secret society taint: Anti-Mutant (common); FCCC-P (uncommon); Romantics (rare)

Armed Forces have always shown fierce pride and independence when managing their own affairs, largely because of their overwhelming contempt for other service groups. While the majority of the service groups activities deal with the day-to-day protection of Alpha Complex with heavy ordnance and protracted military operations, there are a multitude of secondary, though far from less important, tasks requiring regular attention. Utterly distrustful of inept Technical Services personnel, one of these tasks involves the diligent and compassionate cleaning and maintaining of memorials celebrating those members of the Armed Forces Honored In Action.

Those loyal and meticulous individuals who maintain the ongoing hygiene of the many Honored In Action Memorials dotted around Alpha Complex do so with the utmost respect. Lower clearance operatives complete the cleaning and polishing, while those holding higher station consider ways to further enhance the beauty and majesty of the memorials or, better still, dream up completely new ones. HIAM Cleansing & Maintenance operatives can call on specialized repair crews under circumstances where memorials have suffered malicious damage and destruction at the hands of Communists.

Military Counseling

Example firms: Chaplain Central, Kill Commies OK!

Revenue stream: Contract with Armed Forces based on compliance with minimum mental health levels.

Secret society taint: FCCC-P, Humanists, almost everyone else

Despite all efforts by The Computer and the Armed Forces to genetically engineer the perfect killing machines, many of their soldiers retain a regrettable tendency to dislike killing other human beings. Despite the application of subliminal programming and training to bury and numb the soul, these feelings can well up in bouts of crippling emotional trauma,



rendering valuable Armed Forces personnel effectively useless.

Military Counselors use a combination of drugs, isolation and old-fashioned therapy to help soldiers calm their shattered nerves and rebuild their self-images as cold, remorseless killers. This occasionally results in a psychotic break and a dead Counselor, but more often, a few hours or days of treatment lead to a perfect recovery!

What of rumors that secret societies use agents among the Military Counselors to overwhelm fragile egos, instilling innocent soldiers with their traitorous creeds? That these corrupt Counselors use mind-altering drugs to implant post-hypnotic suggestions, turning heavily armed Vulture Warriors into Communist mind-slaves? Pshaw! Such ridiculous, implausible notions are treason!

Military Parade Organizers

Example firms: You Love A Parade, AF Marching Band, Soldiers In Step

Revenue stream: Contract with Armed Forces to conduct parades.

Secret society taint: Communists, Death Leopard

Parades are the lifeblood of the Armed Forces, and most Generals consider them vital to the war effort. The Computer believes parades are necessary for civilian morale; nothing makes a citizen feel more comfortable than seeing thousands of soldiers, all armed with very dangerous weapons, marching down the corridor outside their dormitory.

But these parades don't happen all by themselves. It takes months of planning and preparation to ensure the biggest impact. These firms are staffed with soldiers who are more in tune with CPU than Armed Forces. They arrange parade routes, maintain parade grounds, organize media exposure, hire security for the routes, round up mandatory well-wishers for the sidelines and pass out little plastic flags with the Armed Forces logo on them.

The point is to show citizens that victory in the war against the Commie menace is inevitable. Given all these disciplined soldiers, marching in perfect order before a column of tankbots and missiles, how could anyone think otherwise? Parade routes are designed for maximum exposure and security, meaning they usually run down large corridors usually reserved for pedestrian or vehicular traffic. Parade organizers refuse to sign 'Explanation of Tardiness to Work' forms.

Occasionally, some of the firepower on display goes missing after the parade. That's not the concern of the parade organizers; once the parade is done, it's out of their hands. They just arrange for replacements before the next parade and move on to the next route. Rumors of parade organizers engaging in a brisk IR Market arms trade are vigorously squashed.

Citizens in these firms often come across as a mix of soldier and bureaucrat; they take an efficient, paperwork-creating view to terminating large numbers of traitors. They often are familiar with major Alpha Complex transportation corridors such as the M1AA Autocar Freeway and InterSector Pedway from planning parade routes and with the latest military hardware from ... having to replace lost weapons before the next parade.

Post-Strategic Faulters

Example firms: What Went Wrong, PointFingers AF

Revenue stream: Contract with Armed Forces for explaining why an attack failed and who's responsible.

Secret society taint: Humanists

Armed Forces spends most of its time in training and parades, but occasionally The Computer calls on the military to invade, defend or maneuver against the Commie Mutant Traitors. When such actions succeed, victorious generals emerge as heroes and vidshows about the campaign are broadcast across Alpha Complex. When the actions fail... there *were* no actions. Got it?

That still leaves the leaders of Armed Forces to explain to The Computer why the strategy failed. Armed Forces created firms to go over the battle strategies and determine what went wrong and why. This puts the firms' employees in a difficult position; they need to accuse high-clearance colonels and generals of screwing up the battle plans. Armed Forces decided it would be unwise to staff the firms with citizens of a similar clearance. An INDIGO citizen looking for faults in a VIOLET citizen's strategy might be tempted to make up mistakes to get

ARMED FORCES Assess Physical Fitness

Instruction: Ensure citizens of all service groups demonstrate acceptable physical ability.

Benefit: If, at any point, a fellow citizen is clearly idle and not otherwise engaged in an important task, you may request he perform 30 seconds of simple physical exercises, such as running in place or pushups. If the citizen is unwilling or unable to complete the exercise, he may be assessed a fine independently by his employer. You may receive a percentage of the fine as a reward. When you yourself are asked to perform some simple, repetitious task, you may instead pass this responsibility to a fellow citizen, in order to assess his physical fitness.

that VIOLET demoted, creating an opening for an enterprising INDIGO.

To ensure explanations free from political finger-pointing and promotion gambles, most of the staff are RED or ORANGE citizens. Yet because of their clearance, they are untrained in large-scale strategy and tactics. So they often make stuff up on the fly; coincidentally, this is how most Alpha Complex generals determined strategy in the first place.

When these firms work well, low-clearance Faulters collude with high-clearance generals and find blame in the middle ranks: everything depended on a BLUE major turning the right flank, and she didn't, so she's the reason everything failed. The major is demoted, the generals are exonerated, and the Faulters live to see another failed strategy.

When these firms don't work well, low-clearance Faulters accuse high clearance generals of bad planning or execution of strategy. The generals are demoted, and personnel changes reassign the Faulters to target practice—as the targets.

Very Special Forces

Example firms: One in Twenty Services, Cellular Diversity Association, The Ray-Men, Giant-Sized Liberators Local #122

Revenue stream: Supposedly funded through private donation; actually funded by secret 'black box' budget line items

Secret society taint: Psion

Though it's not widely acknowledged, Armed Forces understands the value of those brave, genetically-twisted citizens who have registered their mutations and seek to turn those terrible burdens into valuable gifts that benefit all Alpha Complex. However, it's recognized they need a little more support than most other citizens—partly because the daily

discrimination and abuse they face from their peers has a tremendous psychological cost... but mostly because their powers require additional training, so they can become the maximally effective war machines that they were clearly born to become.

Outwardly, Very Special Forces service firms provide counseling, morale-boosting events and a sense of community for warriors who would otherwise feel outcast because of their unfortunate DNA. But at their core, they are devoted to find new and ever better ways to weaponize everything from pyrokinesis to matter-eating.

Most members of a Very Special Forces firm are registered mutants. The ones who are not typically investigate or experiment on mutants, or they run accelerated training programs to increase the levels of existing mutant powers or bring out new, previously latent, powers, using state of the art 'Hazard Rooms' and other sudden-trauma techniques. Very Special Forces firms often have highly customized and colorful uniforms.

Weapon Effectiveness Assessors (Armed Forces)

Example firms: Crater Appeal, Now That's What I Call A Blast Radius, BOOOM!

Revenue stream: Contract with Armed Forces for evaluating new R&D weapons.

Secret society taint: Death Leopard, PURGE

The military can be an insular bunch. Research & Design already evaluates their new weapons in the war against the Communist Menace. But Armed Forces doesn't trust evaluations from a bunch of lab coat-wearing civilian pansies, so they established their own firms to do the same thing.

But there's a difference in how they evaluate new weaponry. R&D looks into many factors in their tests, including power efficiency, accuracy and rate of fire, to determine effectiveness. Armed Forces could care less about such hoity-toity terms and evaluates new weapons on only one factor: the size of the explosion. The more damage caused by a weapon, the more effective it is in the eyes of the Generals—less chance of the Commies getting away.

This can lead to heated arguments between R&D and Armed Forces. For example, R&D gave its highest rating (5 beakers) to the Bioelectric Laser: It's very accurate, it runs off a body's electricity instead of a battery for almost limitless energy, and it rarely blows up. But Armed Forces gave the Laser its lowest rating (1/2 cone rifle shell) because it causes a kill only 46% of the time, it cannot take down an entire wall, and it rarely blows up. In fact, the Assessors are paid bonuses if their tests discover 'R&D assessment inflation'.

Weapon Assessors tend to have a simplistic attitude toward life: if there's a problem, blow it up. If you can't blow it up, then you need something more powerful than can.

Citizen: Those Commie traitors are still there. Can we use our laser rifles now?

Assessor: Nope. Here, take this 'Fly Swatter MKIII' RED laser pistol. We've improved upon R&D's design.

Citizen: Is that a cone rifle shell taped to the end?

Assessor: I see you appreciate fine weaponry. It's a HEAT shell rigged with a pressure trigger, so you'll need to smash it on that Commie's face. Now give me your rifle, take this pistol and attack those Commies.

Citizen: Let me guess. You're not coming with us?

Assessor: Nope. Gotta measure the blast radius from behind this heavy-duty barrier. Off you go.

[Citizen charges into battle and dies in a huge explosion.]

Assessor: Friend Computer, it seems the new laser had a blast radius of only 40 meters. May I suggest using a tacnuke shell instead?

The Computer: Not a chance, citizen. Please pick up the laser's fragments for recycling. Off you go.

ARMED FORCES

Blast Door Operational Level Evaluation

Instruction: Ensure the proper functioning of blast doors within your purview.

Benefit: You receive an optical scanner that, when run over the serial number on a blast door, generates one-time security codes letting you open and close the door. You can open the door *once* and close it *once*, in whatever order, after which the code no longer works on that door. If you fail to properly assess the operational level of a blast door you encounter on your mission, you may incur a 50cr fine. Viruses and other malware seldom corrupt the one-time codes, of course, and the serial numbers on blast doors are hardly ever rendered unreadable by weapon damage.

ARMED FORCES

Munitions Quota Maintenance and Distribution

Instruction: Ensure authorized citizens maintain acceptable supplies of ammunition.

Benefit: You receive approximately ten surplus clips of ammunition appropriate to your security clearance—usually laser barrels. You must give a clip of ammunition to any citizen with the proper authorization who requests it. If you fail to do so, you may be fined 10cr per incident, plus an additional 10cr per security clearance of the requester above RED. Knowledge of what constitutes proper authorization is not available at your security clearance.

CENTRAL PROCESSING UNIT

Chronometric Synchronization

Instruction: Improve efficiency by adjusting improperly set chronometers and chronometric software.

Benefit: You receive a handheld atomic clock set to local Sector Standard Time (SST). This mandate authorizes you to examine any electronic device with an internal clock, including PDCs and most other portable electronic devices, and synchronize it to your clock. You are not authorized to examine or alter any element of any device other than its internal clock! If any device you examine later proves to be improperly synchronized, you will be fined 10cr, plus an additional charge for revenue lost due to resulting inefficiency.



Armed Forces personnel

Power-Drill Sergeant

Service firm type: Any that work with training, counseling, crowd control or a lot of marching

Security clearance: ORANGE through GREEN

Common mutation(s): Regeneration, Toxic Metabolism; *never* Empathy

Secret society taint: Corpore Metal

Typical Access: 08

ACTION SKILLS & SPECIALTIES

Management 11

Intimidation 15

Come Up With Even More Ways To Insult 'Em 17

Stealth 07

Disguise 02

High Alert 11

Violence 10

Fine Manipulation 01

Unarmed Combat 14

Hit 'Em In Ways That Leave No Evidence 16

KNOWLEDGE SKILLS & SPECIALTIES

Hardware 08

Electronic Engineering 01

Weapon and Armor Maintenance 12

Software 03

Wetware 06

ASSIGNED EQUIPMENT:

(1) Tough-looking hat

(1) pair extra-glossy boots

(1) Megaphone (seldom needed)

PERSONAL EQUIPMENT:

(1) Thesaurus program for PDC, for looking up new ways to insult someone

The Power-Drill Sergeant's job is to take *unseasoned, pathetic, fearful maggots* and mold them into soldiers who will relish the chance to KILL. Every few weeks he gets a new crop of *weak, spineless losers* and from this *embarrassing pile of mediocrity* he is expected to produce at least some number of focused, effective Armed Forces warriors. He does this the same way leaders have always made soldiers: through physical abuse and by SHOUTING INSULTS AT THEM ALL THE TIME.

This may actually be reasonably effective for making Armed Forces soldiers. However, there are a couple of problems. The first is, due to certain Workplace Stress Reduction regulations, a citizen may only perform this job three calendar quarters out of every four. He must perform some other Armed Forces task in the remaining quarter—issuing weaponry at the armory, staffing the front desk at regional field offices, guarding secure areas, etc. The second is, because their training runs very deep and they need to keep their skills sharp all the time, a Power-Drill Sergeant who is currently in his 'off' quarter still behaves exactly the same, no matter what his 'stress-reducing' task is or who he's dealing with:

[Troubleshooters stop by conveniently-located Armed Forces cafeteria for a quick bite. Off-quarter Sergeant is standing behind counter with ladle in hand.]

Lonny-R: Hi. Can I—?

Sergeant: WHAT DO YOU VAT-LICKING WALL-STAINS WANT?

Lonny-R: Uh... Well, I'd like some of that Goo-Berry Bonanza and—

Sergeant: YOU'D LIKE THAT, HUH? I JUST BET YOU WOULD! THEY PROBABLY GAVE YOU ALL THE GOO-BERRY YOU WANTED WHEN YOU WERE A LITTLE CRECHE-MONKEY, DIDN'T THEY?

Lonny-R: Actually, no, but I was hoping—

Sergeant: WELL BOO HOO HOO, FRIEND COMPUTER, IF I DON'T ME GET SOME GOO-BERRY I MIGHT NEED TO DOUBLE MY MEDICATION! JUMPIN' JACKBOT ON A FUNICULAR, YOU SCUM MAKE ME WANT TO PUKE!



Lonny-R: Look, you moron, I don't have to—

[Sergeant punches Lonny-R in the stomach.]

Sergeant: THAT'S RIGHT! GET DOWN ON THAT FLOOR AND DON'T GET BACK UP AGAIN UNTIL I'VE SEEN 20 PUSHUPS! HOLY HEXADECIMAL, I DIDN'T KNOW YOU COULD CLONE VAT-DRIZZLE! YOU CALL THAT A PUSHUP?

Because the Power-Drill Sergeants are a vital part of their recruitment and training program, of course, Armed Forces service firms go to great lengths to protect them from the consequences of civilian-related actions.

Vulture Squadron Warrior

Service firm: Vulture Squadron
 Security clearance: GREEN to INDIGO
 Common mutation(s): Second Skin, Uncanny Luck
 Secret society taint: any violent society
 Typical Access: 17

ACTION SKILLS & SPECIALTIES

Management 10

Intimidation 14
 Moxie 01

Stealth 05

[no specialties]

Violence 13

Energy Weapons 17
 Field Weapons 17
 Projectile Weapons 17
 Vehicle Weapons 17
 Agility 01
 Demolition 01
 Thrown Weapons 01
 Unarmed Combat 01

KNOWLEDGE SKILLS & SPECIALTIES

Hardware 09

Vehicle Ops and Maintenance 13
 Weapon and Armor Maintenance 13
 Chemical Engineering 01
 Habitat Engineering 01

Software 08

Vehicle Programming 12
 C-Bay 01

Wetware 06

Outdoor Life 10
 Suggestion 01

ASSIGNED EQUIPMENT

Cone rifle with HE shells
 Slugthrower with solid AP shells
 ArmorAll
 Vulturecraft flybot access card

PERSONAL EQUIPMENT

20 tabs of thymoglandin ('Combat Quick')

This is it. The vaunted, beloved and feared Vulture Squadron Warrior—and you had better call him as such.

There are no 'Vultures', only an elite group of Armed Forces soldiers called Vulture Squadron. Each is extremely proud of being in this unit and will take offense if someone calls him a Vulture instead of a Vulture Squadron Warrior. And you do not want to offend one of these soldiers.

Though several Armed Forces service firms assiduously recruit ('kidnap' is such an ugly word) Vulture Squadron applicants from the general population, only 15% of each recruiting class survives to apply. Those few who are accepted enter a training regime so intense and long that they leave training one of two ways: promoted to BLUE clearance or dead. The proud few who survive can call themselves Vulture Squadron Warriors.

If a Vulture has a weakness, it's in avoiding combat. He is so trained in all types of weaponry and tactics that he is constantly looking for a fight. A Vulture Squadron Warrior doesn't walk down a corridor and enter a PLC store; he swaggers down it and invades the store, securing it until he's made a purchase. Officially, he is under the same restrictions as others of his clearance and cannot terminate clones at will. However, even IntSec admires and fears a Vulture Squadron Warrior enough to overlook a lot of transgressions.

Only Troubleshooters come close to being as popular, infamous and dangerous. This creates a mild rivalry between the two groups; mild only because Vulture Squadron's weapons and armor are much stronger than the average Troubleshooters. When a Vulture Squadron Warrior sees a Troubleshooter, he'll zero-in on the Troubleshooter like a traitor to an unguarded tacnunke shell. While he won't try to sabotage a Troubleshooter's mission, he will follow for a bit, loudly proclaiming his superiority and trying to goad the Troubleshooter into a fight.

Besides having a problem with Troubleshooters, a Vulture Squadron Warrior takes issue with ... well, everyone who's not part of Vulture Squadron. Tech Serv? Spanner-wielding wussies. HPD&MC? Bunch of vidshow-producing pansies. IntSec? Don't get him started Because of that, Vulture Squadron is under strict orders not to mess directly with other service groups.

Which means they mess indirectly, usually through their favorite target: Troubleshooters. A Vulture Squadron Warrior absolutely loves to order Troubleshooters to mess with other service groups. ("See that IntSec officer? Go tell him he's a One-Eyed Scrubot.") Given their clearance and ordinance, most Troubleshooters do what they're told, even if the Vulture Squadron Warrior is laughing hard and loud. (Which is why Troubleshooters sometimes have an unofficial Mandatory Bonus Duty of Vulture Squadron Lookout Officer.)

Given his high clearance, a Vulture Squadron Warrior can carry most Alpha Complex weapons—and does so all the time. He's very attached to his armaments and has nicknames for every one, down to each individual cone rifle shell. ("Larry, this is Shirley. Land her anywhere near those traitors and she'll do the rest.") While this can be a sign for new medication in other clones, it's considered normal for a Vulture Squadron Warrior.

A Vulture Squadron Warrior has an unbelievably high Access. This is due to their high clearance, high popularity and high-energy weaponry. He can get into most areas and past most bureaucratic hurdles through sheer intensity. Having a Vulture Squadron Warrior as a friend is a fantastic thing. Having one as an enemy is only momentarily painful.

CENTRAL PROCESSING UNIT

Maintain Circulation of Currency

Instruction: Discourage hoarding of personal funds by demonstrating how fun and effective it is to spend!

Benefit: If you spend your own credits on goods or services for another citizen (not yourself), those credits will be refunded to you—once you have filed the appropriate paperwork, along with your receipts. Similarly, when your fellow citizens spend their personal funds on goods or services for you, they will be reimbursed—once you have filed the appropriate paperwork, along with their receipts.



SERVICE, SERVICE! CLEARANCE ULTRAVIOLET

SPURIOUS TARGETS

3-6 PLAYERS
1 SESSION
(3-4 HOURS)

PAUL BALDOWSKI

After a battle to take control of XGL Sector goes against the loyal troops of Alpha Complex, PURGE impersonates a victorious Vulture company, while the unwitting Troubleshooters attempt to put them in touch with their sensitive side. PURGE awaits arrival of a weapon shipment they plan to hijack, and has to tolerate the teams' efforts in the meantime. When PLC informs the fake Vultures they can only complete shipment once the Troubleshooters have certified the soldiers as sensitive, the Troubleshooters must either give in and commit treason, or try to escape.

Background

When a company of Vulture Warriors clashed with PURGE, XGL Sector became a savage battleground. The conflict proved one-sided and bloody. Aided by sympathizers in the Warrior ranks, PURGE destroyed the Vultures.

The next stage of the plan required subterfuge. PURGE assumed the identity of the defeated Vulture Warriors and requested fresh supplies from PLC, including the weaponry necessary to take the battle into the neighboring sector. The plan required only patience, good performance and a little luck—but a complication arose. During the battle, as citizens of XGL Sector scurried into their quarters and shelters, they

TERMINAL

For GMs with *The Traitor's Manual* and the inclination to adhere to detail, the PURGE forces in XGL Sector belong to the sub-faction TERMINAL. TERMINAL advocates a coordinated, sector-by-sector annihilation of Alpha Complex and misguided followers of The Computer. Those without *The Traitor's Manual* should strongly consider purchasing it, or fear rejection and ridicule from other **PARANOIA** Gamemasters. Don't say we didn't warn you.

flooded HPD&MC help lines with reports of the ferocious clashes in the corridors and thoroughfares. The complaints mounted; distressed INFRAREDS decried the cold-blooded violence of the Armed Forces. HPD&MC pumped extra isobiotic visomorpain into the water and Cold Fun rations, then lodged a complaint with The Computer about the conduct of the Armed Forces. The soldiers' excessively violent actions would have severe repercussions on the Happiness Quota of XGL Sector, influencing productivity and well-being.

The Computer acknowledged the complaint and contacted nearby Armed Forces Sensitivity Trainer service firms. But hearing reports of the brutality in XGL Sector, all these firms feigned overwork and understaffing. Quick to find a scapegoat, Armed Forces identified a Troubleshooter team already assigned to a low-priority task in XGL Sector and recommended them to The Computer.

So the Troubleshooter team in battle-torn XGL Sector—the player characters—must assess the mental and emotional status of the Vulture Warriors and imbue them with optimal sensitivity.

The PURGE commander, having intercepted the briefing communication sent to the Troubleshooters' PDCs, realizes he must keep the team ignorant until the expected PLC supplies arrive. PURGE has jammed the team's PDCs to prevent communication outside the sector. Once equipped with weapons and fresh supplies, PURGE plans to kill the Troubleshooters, then vanish.

The briefest brief

Keep the initial mission objectives for the team vague:

The message on the PDC seemed as simple as it ever does: a standard call to action from Troubleshooter Central. Immediate attendance required at briefing in XGL Sector, subsector 33/AD8, transtube 77/22s, maintenance tunnel 33/77/87.3c. Briefing scheduled

for 0700 hours with Officer Deklin-Y-XGL-3.

So you hastened to XGL Sector and found an autotransport to take you all the way along transtube 77/22s. The bot pilot reluctantly made the unscheduled stop, finally compromising with you on a dropoff 100 meters from the maintenance tunnel. The transtube has maintenance gantries along both sides accessible by ladders from the ground. Light intersector traffic speeds along the transtube, close to the edges of the tunnel.

(If players balk at compromising with the pilot, note that the bot can eject any passenger seat automatically.)

The Troubleshooters can edge cautiously to the nearest ladder and navigate the gantry to service hatch 33/77/87.3c. (For added perversity, the hatch they want might be on the far side of the road, forcing the team to negotiate a transtube full of traffic.)

When the PCs reach the right hatch, it yields stubbornly to reveal a long corridor filled with groaning hot pipes, pools of stagnant water and a smell like something has died behind the walls. There are no side passages, doors or other notable features in sight. Before the team can explore or retrace its steps, a bone-shuddering explosion tears through the tunnel around them, shattering the walls and dumping slabs of ceiling on them. The collapsed masonry traps them in a tight space. The Troubleshooters can move around elbow-to-elbow and breathe normally, without fear of suffocation—for the moment.

The weight of masonry makes escape impossible. Lifting or shooting blocks of masonry results in showers of rubble and an ominous groaning noise that sounds exactly like a ceiling about to collapse. The PCs' only option is to use their PDCs to contact someone.

After some static, the PCs reach The Computer itself. Punctuate the following conversation (and any other PDC conversations

you might devise) with intermittent static. Think of your friends' cellphone coverage, and you'll get the idea.

'Greetings, loyal Troubleshooters. I have triangulated your signal and passed the coordinates to the nearest rescue unit. Remain at your current location until they arrive. Do not attempt to leave your current location or destabilize the integrity of your surroundings. My loyal Armed Forces have countered a vicious assault by terrorist insurgents, believed to belong to the organization PURGE. The traitors sought to besiege and control XGL Sector. The exemplary members of the 368th Vulture Company ended their misguided plans. Rejoice.'

The signal fades, replaced with static interspersed with raised voices. The team cannot make out words, but the tone and inflection suggest military training, the clipped tones of a commanding officer passing orders to his men. After a moment a commander gives an edgy response. Then more static. At last, The Computer speaks:

'Congratulations on being chosen for a support mission of vital importance. Early reports of the battle in XGL Sector indicate considerable casualties. Statistical analysis indicates excessively brutal violence, suggestive of severe combat fatigue and a 23.7% excess of primary aggressive traits. You will provide proactive, situational support in the role of sensitivity trainers. Complete immediate assessment and therapy to optimize stress levels. Detail activities and progress, as appropriate. I have downloaded *Sensitivity* and a *Gun 101* to your team leader's PDC.'

The signal fades to static again... then silence. Allow an eerie moment of nothing, beyond the steady breathing of the Troubleshooters. Then from somewhere close comes a tapping sound accompanied by a trickle of dust.

'Anyone still alive down there?'

Bombs and basketweaving

Whether or not the team responds to the call, after a few moments bright light spills into the rubble space. A squad of ten Vulture Warriors stands before them, half of them armed with multitools, currently configured as spades. The Vultures stow the tools and help the team up to street level. If you like, make Violence/Agility checks to determine how well individual PCs scramble out of the pit. The soldiers scowl or snigger at anyone who fails the check, but they help everyone out.

First Sergeant Earl-G greets the PCs as they emerge. He says the squad got word of the team's predicament from The Computer. (In fact, PURGE intercepted communications between the team and The Computer and simply triangulated the signal to determine the team's location.) The team, unfortunately, represents a necessary evil PURGE must tolerate in its current plan. To kill the team would only reduce the chances of getting much-needed supplies and increase the risk of another Vulture Warrior assault. For the moment, the company will play along with the Troubleshooters and their idiotic mission to improve the Vulture company's psychological sensitivity.

Earl-G herds the team aboard a squat Armored Personnel Carrier (armor 4 hardened) with a turret-mounted tube cannon 2 (as cone

Twisted intentions

PURGE jammers block all PDC communications, including Troubleshooters' covert attempts to reach their secret societies. The jamming starts after the final communication with The Computer. Thereafter, PURGE commander Jack-B intercepts all contact attempts. From the communication, he works out the Troubleshooter's secret society and assigns to the PC a false secret society objective. The objective benefits PURGE without making the Troubleshooter suspicious of its origin.

For instance, if the Troubleshooter's secret society is anti-Computer, the objective is to destroy Alpha Complex property or to monkeywrench a teammate's equipment. Jack-B might inform a Sierra Clubber the Vultures await a shipment of equipment that will let them go Outdoors. He might tell an FCCC-P member a virus has infected the Troubleshooter teams' PDCs, PDCs which must now be destroyed at all costs—easing the PURGE efforts to eliminate outside interference.

If a PC contacts his secret society before PURGE jamming, he receives an official generic mission. (His secret society contact doesn't know the team's current mission is about to end abruptly.) Create an appropriate mission or generate one randomly with the mission blender from the *Gamemaster Screen*, or pick one from *The Traitor's Manual*.

If a PC tries to contact his secret society before any PURGERS have seen the team, Jack-B couches his objectives in vague terms—'You know, the tall guy on your team'. 'You know, the one who always talks too much!'

rifle, fires two shells per round) and enough room inside for a dozen passengers. He warns the PCs to beware of pockets of remaining insurgents, bent on destruction. He tells them the APC will travel to a





368th Vulture Company

The PURGE company—disguised as the 368th Vulture Company—consists of 63 soldiers, all dressed in nearest-fit sets of Vulture Warrior armor and helmets. Twelve PURGErs fought as Vulture Warriors during the battle and sabotaged communications. They ensured a precision PURGE victory.

Unfortunately, PURGE lost 13 troops, including two low-level commanders. This loss has weakened the chain of command, resulting in odd moments of soldierly individuality without a commander's restraining influence.

Imagine your typical minimum-word-count action-hero actor doing impressions of *another* action-hero actor playing his most memorable role. Imagine Sylvester Stallone pretending to be Vin Diesel as Riddick, or The Rock impersonating Schwarzenegger as the Terminator. You now grasp how the PURGE soldiers come across disguised as loyal Vulture Warriors.

Play PURGErs gruff, rough and uncompromising, with instincts sharp as diamond, a conscience like a sieve and a vocabulary smaller than a Berlitz phrasebook (though they do command multiple synonyms for 'revenge'). In fact, they communicate mostly through complex hand signals. They strip weapons and make explosives for a hobby—not too far removed from the Vulture mindset.

Faced with an insurmountable obstacle, the average Vulture Warrior or PURGE soldier attempts to climb it, blast it, shout at it, beat it bare-fisted and finally collapse dead in front of it, with a look of rugged, unflagging determination throughout. This state of mind arises from training, medication, sleep deprivation and subliminal reinforcement. This crushing regime makes Vulture Warriors the most loyal and trusted citizens The Computer could hope for, and PURGE its worst possible enemy.

Commander **Jack-B-RNF-9** controls the full company, with First Sergeant **Earl-G-JSD-6** serving as his principal aide. Below Jack-B, the soldiers are divided into two platoons of 31 soldiers each, under the command of Earl-G and Sergeant **Kelton-G-DER-5**. For small-scale operations, the platoons break down into three squads of 10 soldiers apiece, each led by a corporal.

■ Commander Jack-B-RNF-9

Regeneration (Power 14); Violence 11, Projectile Weapons 17, Vehicle Combat 15, Hardware 10, Vehicle Ops & Maintenance 14, Drive APC 1200 Like A Turbo Sports Autocoupe 16, Wetware 08, Medical 12, Survival 14, Twitchtalk 16, Subvert Covert Communications 10

Semi-automatic slugthrower with dum-dum rounds (M3K impact); combat suit (5)

In the Vulture Light Support Cavalry, Commander Jack-B once handled transportation, gunnery and support roles behind the main lines. During one brutal campaign against another complex, the enemy captured and tortured him. He escaped, killing his torturers in their bunks. He hiked for weeks Outdoors and finally arrived home, only to be thrown back into the thick of things with nothing more than a reprimand for missing duty shifts without permission. At the end of his first day back, Jack-B contacted and joined PURGE, and he has rapidly proved his commitment and enthusiasm for the cause.

■ First Sergeant Earl-G-JSD-6

Camouflage (Power 12); Stealth 10, Get Into Safest Position In Any Situation Were A Bomb To Go Off 16, Violence 12, Energy Weapons 16, Twitchtalk 08, Gloating 16

Gatling laser (W3K energy; see below); GREEN reflc/Kevlar (E1 hardened/I3) with MicroWire stupid reflc upgrade (**PARANOIA** rulebook, p. 174)

Hard to believe, but some of the 368th Vulture Company soldiers have a yellow streak a kilometer wide. Earl-G is such a coward, as well as being short and slightly out of shape. Through guile and luck he achieved command first in the Armed Forces, and now in PURGE—though Jack-B now has his doubts. After the battle with the real 368th Vulture Company, Earl-G grabbed the gatling laser as if his life depended on it. Now he refuses to let anyone else touch it or carry it.

The gatling laser functions like a normal laser rifle, but has a crank-assisted apparatus on the front loaded with six laser barrels. When the user pulls the trigger and turns the crank, the weapon fires six shots per round instead of one. The natural malfunction chance of the weapon is 18–20, and once each barrel hits the sixth shot, the chance increases by 6—so the seventh blast has a 12–20 malfunction chance. The barrels take a full six rounds to replace and the weapon cannot function without all barrels in place.

■ Sergeant Kelton-G-DER-5

Absorption (Power 07); Management 10, Intimidation 14, Violence 11, Projectile Weapons 15, Hardware 09, Vehicle Ops and Maintenance 13, Twitchtalk 13, Demolitions 11

Slugthrower with HEAT rounds (W2K impact); GREEN reflc/Kevlar (E1/I3)

By killing an ULTRAVIOLET citizen, Kelton-G simultaneously ended his term with the Vulture Warrior Squadron and enhanced his position in PURGE. Sinewy, tall and clean-shaven with piercing eyes, he has a cold demeanor likely to make anyone uncomfortable.

■ PURGE soldiers

Mutation: 01–03 Absorption; 04–06 Adrenalin Control; 07–09 Electroshock; 10–12 Energy Field; 13–15 Pyrokinesis; 16–18 Regeneration; 19–20 Toxic Metabolism (Power 12)

Violence 11, Projectile Weapons 15, Hardware 09, Clean And Strip Slugthrower While Blindfolded 13, Twitchtalk 10, Gloating 09

Slugthrower (W2K impact); GREEN reflc/Kevlar (E1/I3)
GREEN Clearance

If you have *The Mutant Experience*, and what enthusiastic Gamemaster wouldn't, you can replace Toxic Metabolism in the first list with Other, then re-roll on the following: 01–04 Adaptive Metabolism; 05–06 Haze (Radio Jamming); 07–10 Hyperreflexes; 11–13 Pouches; 14–16 Second Skin; 17–20 Spikes.

safer location, where the company will set up camp and restore good order before giving The Computer the all-clear to reopen the sector.

The following events occur during the journey:

Recon squads

The APC travels through the devastated sector, while recon squads make reports. Commander Jack-B's communicator crackles with constant activity. All soldiers sit armed and ready, their tactical heads-up displays casting phosphor outlines on their helmets. As the convoy travels along minor transit routes, the team sees blasted buildings, burnt-out vehicles and the occasional fallen soldier—seemingly PURGE troops. Small scout teams dart off occasionally into the side passages, returning with silent signals of 'all secure'.

The MOAT

While searching for a secure location, the APC passes a squat, burned Mobile Operations Armored Transport (MOAT). (See the sidebar on page 23.) Around the immobilized vehicle gape a dozen giant, blackened craters. Commander Jack-B explains the transport took massive damage during the opening attack, killing all command personnel within, and now awaits repair. However, as the APC speeds past, one of the PCs receives a narrowband transmission:

'Emergency override protocol from General Harvey-I-LPO-4—transport on lockdown—send help immediately—don't let them know...'

The message ends abruptly. The Troubleshooter receiving the message might face problems telling fellow team members without alerting a PURGER. If the Troubleshooter receiving the signal informs any soldier or incautiously informs teammates, Jack-B stations a PURGE unit at the MOAT with orders to jam its signals and destroy it at all costs. This may make it much harder for the Troubleshooters to reach the MOAT at the mission's climax.

INFRARED prisoners

A bunch of dazed INFRAREDs accidentally surprised a recon squad, and the PURGERS reflexively fired on them. When the APC arrives at the accident site, the 'Vulture Warriors' have the INFRAREDs kneeling with heads down and arms behind their backs. Scrubots are already removing two dead bodies and disinfecting the floor.

The soldiers roughly interrogate the petrified citizens. Commander Jack-B doesn't intervene, but mission-driven Troubleshooters might consider doing so, if only to meet the sensitivity quota: The Warriors are treating the quivering citizens brutally, shouting at them and prodding them with weapons. (Troubleshooters who previously served in the Armed Forces may understand this is unorthodox procedure for Vultures.) The citizens cry, moan and a couple soil themselves—all pleading their innocence.

Sensitivity boot camp

Following these events, the Troubleshooter team has time to set up camp in a central plaza. The PCs must soon begin calming the Vulture company. To create a sense of peace, respect and awareness of others, the *Sensitivity 101* training pamphlet suggests simple games,

No-kill zone

You may already have realized jammed communications mean *no clone replacements*. Therefore, though your instincts doubtlessly cry out to terminate the Troubleshooters, please exercise restraint. Destroy all the property you want; threaten everyone with sanity checks; but inflict Maimed combat results instead of kills.

productive hobbies and fun activities. Give extra Perversity to players who come up with their own games. Additionally, certain groups of players may enjoy the chance to dance, read poetry and apply face paint for real (space and resources permitting). Extra Perversity to GMs who record their players doing this and send us the video.

The troops try to play along, but bitterness, cynicism and hostility toward The Computer manifest through their thin disguise. The PCs should quickly doubt the Vultures' sanity and loyalty.

Face painting

Sensitivity 101 explains that face painting allows self-expression while interacting with others. PCs wondering where to acquire paints need look no further than the camouflage paints the soldiers themselves use. *Sensitivity 101* suggests a number of jolly faces, mostly variations on clown makeup. The team must convince the soldiers to paint the faces of willing INFRAREDs and the Troubleshooters themselves, then to have their own faces decorated in exchange.

The soldiers lack artistic talent; most INFRARED volunteers wind up looking like special service operatives on a night raid. On the receiving end, the soldiers' intense sense of personal space makes them twitch violently whenever anyone applies makeup. They growl as if they'd readily rip off limbs. Their harsh words and ready weapons reduce the INFRAREDs to tears or make them run for cover.





Interpretive dance

A dancer engaged in interpretive dance uses movement to depict an emotion or convey a story. Hold that thought and substitute a bunch of heavily armed soldiers short on patience. Most soldiers do, in fact, have the strength and agility to become excellent dancers. However, if you ask a battle-hardened, society-hating terrorist to perform a dance in the style of a bowl of Cold Fun, the consequences should be obvious.

But because they've been ordered to cooperate, the PURGE soldiers will dance. They make the Troubleshooters participate as guides. You can determine the PCs' nimbleness with a Violence/Agility check. Seek flourishes and detail from creative roleplaying. Not surprisingly, the soldiers hold anyone showing particular talent in low regard.

Poetry

Sensitivity 101 extols the written verse as a delicate tool for self-healing and greater understanding of the human condition. It suggests poetry provides a means for the participant to expose and better understand the roots of his own antisocial insensitivity.

The pamphlet requires Troubleshooters to offer suggestions and encouragement, ideally providing examples of poems filled with thoughts of happiness, loyalty and friendship with The Computer. Given time and reasonable persuasion, the soldiers recite soulful and melancholy verse recounting violence, pain, suffering, torture, big explosions and the destruction of tyranny by any means necessary.

A sample quatrain:

**Death, destruction, pain and void.
Oh, the tyranny must be destroyed.
Gather force, and fear avoid.
Vengeance through strength, our
guns deployed.**

Then there's this haiku:

**Sicken, strike, suffer.
Hack with blade, slice the enemy.
Crush, rend, destroy them.**

Dead men tell no tales

While the PCs spend time with the Vulture company, let them notice signs that all is not as it seems.

Twitchtalk

PURGE developed a Twitchtalk variant to coordinate forces in battle where electronic communications might be intercepted. While Armed Forces also uses a system of gesticulation to issue commands, the PURGE version encompasses a wider vocabulary.

Anyone with Twitchtalk as a secret skill may understand parts of a PURGE Twitchtalk message. Only a PURGE member can fully translate the gestures, but the skilled Troubleshooter can glean basic ideas, worrisome phrases like 'kill Troubleshooters' and 'avoid discovery'. Unfortunately, the PC can't share his knowledge, or he'll have to explain how he understood the gestures in the first place.

Dead-man switch

If a Vulture Warrior falls in combat, his automated weapon could fire off dozens of rounds into friendly troops before it stops.

To ensure this doesn't happen, all Vulture weapons incorporate a dead-man switch, deactivating the weapon instantly if its owner dies. Standard weapon switches operate manually, whether in the form of a level, a pressure pad or an actual switch. High-clearance and experimental weapons feature complex switches.

During the sector battle, Earl-G greedily snatched up a gatling laser, an experimental weapon dropped by a defeated Vulture commander. He beat the access code out of the fallen soldier, then used the laser to kill him. The gun worked fine for about 15 minutes, then cut out, signaling the problem with a persistent, grating squeal. Earl-G tried the code again, and the alarm stopped. However, every 15 minutes he must input the code again. If he can concentrate, it's easy to input the code, but distracted by conversation, intimidation or battle, Earl-G fumbles with the code.

The gatling laser includes a biometric scanner that, in authorized hands, deactivates the alarm. However, Earl-G doesn't fit anything in the gun's biometric database, so the gun requires a frequent override code to keep functioning. Anyone who has previous experience of biometric security, or who succeeds in a Weapon and Armor Maintenance check, realizes why the weapon keeps beeping. They might even grow suspicious.

Fetch... the comfy chair!

PURGE doesn't tolerate weakness in its ranks, and it metes out harsh punishment without

Tension levels in XGL Sector

With PURGE jamming all outgoing and incoming communications, The Computer and its minions have no access to XGL Sector's security cameras. As a result, all areas have **Tension level 0**.

Given PURGE's ongoing ploy to fool the PCs with fake responses to their calls for assistance and information, continue to make Tension rolls normally, using a generic level of 5—but failure doesn't mean an IntSec swoop or a reprimand from The Computer.

Instead, one of the PURGE soldiers witnesses the act of treason and reports it to Commander Jack-B. When the time comes for the team to make an important decision that might affect the PURGE company, Jack-B has more than just physical ammo to level at certain Troubleshooters.

Sensitivity 101

A dry and extremely complex work, *Sensitivity and a Gun 101* is densely and opaquely written. Even Troubleshooters with relevant Wetware specialties find it difficult to grasp anything but the most basic concepts. The work comes across as a heavily revised collage of opinions strung together from multiple authors of differing experience, with an excruciatingly unhelpful contents page and index.

Through random dabbling the PCs can discover the approaches mentioned in the main text. Reading and digesting the whole text fully takes 1d20 days. After that time, make a Power check.

On a success, the Troubleshooter acquires a rating of Wetware +2 in Psychotherapy (or add 1 to his current rating, whichever is higher). With a success margin of 5 or more, the reader also gains insight into the thinking processes and mindset of senior members of Alpha Complex, improving his Access by 1.

On a failure, temporarily halve the reader's Power and assign an insanity from the table in the Medication section of the *PARANOIA* rulebook.

M.O.A.T.

Few things can beat a big bomb to quickly end a conflict. Unfortunately, the awkward collateral damage forces Armed Forces to reluctantly attend to niggling details like solid strategy and dependable tactics. But personnel with the required experience seldom risk entering the blast radius of the average battle.

Enter the Mobile Operations Armored Transport (MOAT). Part vehicle, part permanent structure, the MOAT resembles a cross between a beachhead bunker and a spider. Composed of half-meter-thick reinforced fabryllium composite (armor 6 hardened), hermetically sealed against a manual full of atomic, bacterial and chemical attacks, the rounded MOAT stands on four massive, spidery legs. Sheer mass makes the transport slow and cumbersome, but also stable and safe.

The MOAT houses strategic command facilities that include holographic mapping, satellite tracking, tight beam microwave communications, total sensory deprivation meditation pods and a full kitchen. Each MOAT supports three INDIGO-Clearance command personnel, a dozen runners, butlers and batmen, four BLUE-Clearance catering personnel, a masseuse, two YELLOW-Clearance navigation officers and two GREEN-Clearance semi-automatic slug cannons.

When stationary, the MOAT can retract its legs and anchor itself in place with powerful caltropic lances. Anchor release occasionally requires manual intervention, because the lances can melt under weapon fire and bond with the ground beneath the MOAT.

Casey-R-BCK-3

Mildly psychotic sous-chef

Charm (Incite Aggression, Power 13); Death Leopard (ANGST); Violence 12, Thrown Weapon 16, Use Simple, Inoffensive Kitchen Tools As Deadly Weapons 18, Wetware 09, Construct Explosives From Basic Kitchen Ingredients 13

Tic: Describes people and actions in terms of culinary activities.

Holds a brevet field promotion to BLUE Clearance.

Casey-R originally served as a special operations agent for IntSec, handling highly dangerous missions against heavily defended enemy targets deemed unsuitable for a slapdash, nuke-it-til-it-glows Armed Forces strike. Over the years, Casey-R worked Outdoors and inside Alpha Complex, surviving predicaments that would leave most Troubleshooters rocking autistically in a corner. Casey-R asked for a transfer to a less harrowing career as a chef in the Armed Forces.

Casey-R got his current assignment through graft and careful blackmail. His field promotion to BLUE Clearance aboard the MOAT authorizes him to work in the highly competitive kitchen environment. Using his incredible knife skills, he gains vital leverage in discussions with other catering staff.

Return visits

1. During active service Outdoors, the MOAT falls into a ravine following an ambush by enemy troops. The PCs are assigned as emergency replacement kitchen staff. They must rescue three lightly wounded INDIGO command personnel on stretchers and take enough supplies for a week (by order of the injured INDIGO officers). The team can salvage items from the MOAT, but must dodge enemy troops and find a way home.
2. A MOAT scouts a flooded sector for hidden traitors. Submerged, the MOAT suffers a massive catastrophic memory core failure from a Computer Phreaks worm. As the PCs struggle to fix the damage, sensors detect an approaching enemy force. The Troubleshooters have no means to communicate with command. Better hope for some lucky Hardware rolls....

hesitation. While escorting the PCs around XGL Sector, senior officers spontaneously exact brutal punishment upon soldiers who fail to follow orders exactly as phrased. Punishments include beating, grotesque exercises and premeditated nonfatal injuries—like shooting a soldier through the foot or cutting off a finger.

Say a Troubleshooter does something really stupid, maybe ignoring a direct order or dropping something after a signal for silence. Play out a stressful moment where a commanding officer struggles not to exact some kind of punishment—or must be held back by multiple soldiers. Even after calming down, the officer glares and grinds his teeth whenever the Troubleshooter comes close or looks in his direction.

A PC who has served in the Armed Forces understands this is unusual behavior even by Vulture standards.

On hold

While never helpful, during this mission Troubleshooter Central and The Computer prove particularly reluctant to render assistance. Whatever the request, however whiny the pleading or desperate the situation, the team is told to 'maintain its current mission objectives and await further instructions'.

Experienced players may take these delay tactics in stride. However, unjaded players might ask awkward questions or attempt to determine the source of the communications signal. Let them use Software or Hacking.

Simple success confirms diversion of the comms channels. Significant success (margin 5+) indicates the jamming comes from a local source.

Sense and sensitivity

When the relationship between the team and the Vultures finally begins to show strain—whether due to weight of suspicion or the pent-up frustration of the soldiers—a call arrives on Jack-B's communicator. He stands clear of eavesdroppers and takes the call. After a moment he steps back to the main group and puts the call on speakerphone. Jack-B takes the precaution of muting the receiver on the communicator while the PLC representative



SERVICE, SERVICE! CLEARANCE ULTRAVIOLET

says his piece. Troubleshooters who seek help can shout as much as they want, but get only a cuff to the back of the head.

Jack-B hits a large button on the control face of the communicator and holds it out for all to hear. The call comes from a warehousing representative of PLC.

'Congratulations, citizen. Freight Incoming Information Control says your order has arrived at our warehouse. We have the cargo loaded on the next outgoing PLC XtraSupaExpress autotransporter, which should arrive at your destination 32 minutes from time of departure. So, we just have a few formalities to clear up before dispatch. According to HPD regulation 334.887.11.72/y, we can't release the shipment until we have confirmation from the attending Sensitivity Trainers of a Beta/2 certification for the receiving officer. Always working to supply to your demands. Thanks for your attention, citizen.'

As the call ends, all the Vulture Warriors look at you and clench their fists.

If the team did not have a distinct sense of discomfort already, now would seem a good time to develop one. Checking for a definition of Beta/2 certification in the *Sensitivity 101* software reveals it represents 'an acceptable optimum level of stable sensitivity'. It's just like HPD&MC to expect the Vultures to display stable and sociable behavior—an unrealistic expectation for any member of the Armed Forces, let alone PURGE soldiers.

Jack-B demands the Troubleshooter team leader call back immediately and file the appropriate certification through PLC.

The soldiers fiddle with the safety catches on their weapons, switching the focus of their attentions between Jack-B and you. They're like dogs waiting impatiently to see who might throw a stick.

The Troubleshooters have a simple choice: stay and lie to PLC to free up the shipment or run for their lives. Obviously, either route could lead to termination, potentially through the same process if The Computer decides to use a Vulture Warrior firing squad!

If the team leader chooses to lie to PLC, the warehouse helpline requests a ME Card scan through the PDC and a secondary scan from a supporting member of the team. Having completed the authorization, PLC confirms dispatch and states both parties must swipe ME Cards on delivery. At this point the PCs become expendable, as Jack-B plans to hijack the whole cargo on arrival. The Troubleshooters can either die where they stand or run for their lives.

—Which brings us neatly to option 2: running. Give the Troubleshooters a chance to run and hide from the PURGE fanatics. Handle this as a standard chase: The PCs must run for their lives, hide in buildings, dodge around innocent INFRARED bystanders, hijack uncooperative autocars and duck weapons fire from PURGE soldiers who clearly haven't benefited one iota from sensitivity training.

The PCs may try falling back to the MOAT. The occupants have fended off all attacks. The Troubleshooters might talk their way inside. PURGE continues to jam out-of-sector communications, but that shouldn't stop the team from urging the INDIGO tacticians in the MOAT to evacuate—a 'perspicacious disengagement for the purposes of tactical reevaluation'.

If the PCs get mobile in the MOAT, or find other transport, Commander Jack-B mounts a pursuit in the Armored Personnel Carrier and other vehicles. Think of a cross between *Wacky Races* and an O.J. Simpson-style freeway pursuit, with the PURGEs gathering menacingly behind the team, firing potshots, slinging grenades and throwing themselves onto the PCs' vehicle.

The MOAT has incredibly strong armor, but high explosives can collapse its spidery legs. The MOAT can move on three legs with difficulty. If the team acquires alternate transportation, require a Vehicle Ops roll to avoid damage, entrapment and capture. A suspiciously selfless PC might purposely crash into the APC or lure the PURGE pursuit away from everyone else, but in *PARANOIA* this is too unlikely to warrant detailed discussion.

Cavalry charge

PURGE finally begins to catch up, and the PCs' end seems close at hand. Then an explosion tears apart one of the PURGE vehicles, just as an overwhelming force of Vulture Warriors, with ground and hover support, appears ahead. The real Vultures immediately attack and rout the fakes. Many members of PURGE escape or blend in with the Vulture force to fight another day.

Depending on their actions and whether they gave in to PURGE and cleared PLC to make the delivery, the PCs can expect anything from promotion to a severe reprimand. Regardless, they suffer a fine for property damage—specifically for their apparent involvement in the collapse of maintenance tunnel 33/77/87.3c.

It is said that power corrupts, but actually it's more true that power attracts the corruptible. The sane are usually attracted by other things than power.

—David Brin

SERVICE CPU

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CPU hangouts

Chatspace: Some Alpha Complex citizens are blessed with charm, wit and highly developed conversational skills. Other citizens work for CPU. For those who can't get the hang of face-to-face interactions, chatspace offers a virtual social experience, complete with animated avatars, emoticons and hundreds of IntSec chatbots.

Rumors

- ④ 'They lost Ready-Run's entire accounting database. Again. Anyone who isn't out on a mission during the next couple of days has to help recalculate the numbers by hand. I don't know about you, but I still have abacus blisters from the last time.'
- ④ 'Did you hear? Mario-R is offering eight-to-one odds on the outcome of Louis-Y's double-down five-to-three betting pool. Doesn't he realize that's a sucker's game? Louis-Y always pads his numbers by 10.5%. I'll bet you 40 creds Mario-R goes bust. You want odds?'
- ④ 'They're tuning up the Paperless Office Policy again. No, it won't succeed this time, either, but prepare yourself for a few rough weeks where nobody knows what's going on. At least our offices will be clean for a while.'
- ④ 'Keep your head down, kid. Chandra-B over in District Filing just got unmasked as a Phreak, and we're gonna have to redo everything that ever crossed his desk. We'll be lucky if we're just on triple shifts for a month.'

Service services

- ④ 'Citizen Melinda-R-GHW-2 has been spending less than 50% of her income for the past three months. Please take her on a Voluntary Spending Spree, ensuring she spends exactly 1,627 credits.'
- ④ 'Emergency! An erroneous version of Form 897-238-97a/2.1.1 'Requisition for INFRARED Hygiene Product' has been distributed in your target sector, permitting low-clearance citizens to obtain tactical nuclear weapons for hygiene purposes. You must search the sector and find every single misprinted form! Immediately!'
- ④ 'Here is a blank C550-2.2 Daily Crypto-Key Generator form. Please fill the page with as many numerals as you can fit onto it. Whatever numbers pop into your mind. Do not choose numbers for any particular reason. Under no circumstances should you remember what numbers you wrote down.'
- ④ 'You are each being issued a standard chronometer. Please record quantified time measurements for every aspect of your mission, taking at least three samples in each case in order to provide an average figure.'
- ④ 'Transportation bottlenecks are a factor in 22.35% of all failed missions. During your mission, record any and all observations you may have about ways in which our transportation network could be improved. Return a list of exactly 19 suggestions.'
- ④ 'The confession booth at the intersection of corridor AEX 39224-X and AEX 342232-G has reported significantly lower confession numbers than we projected. Get at least 25 citizens to make use of it.'
- ④ 'We're compiling a training manual for new Troubleshooters to read before their first mission. At least three times during your mission, each member of your team should write a detailed account of a crisis you faced during the mission, describing what happened and what each one of you did. Then we want you to write what the crisis taught you and exactly what you would do differently if you had to face the crisis all over again.'
- ④ 'Our statisticians are compiling a manual, *The Nine Habits of Highly Effective Citizens*. During your mission, take some time to observe the most obvious habits of each of your teammates and record them on your PDCs. If your mission succeeds, those habits will be treated as possible Habits of Highly Effective Citizens. If your mission fails, they will be considered for the sequel, *Nine Habits Commie Mutant Traitors Want You to Have*. Either way, you'll receive a credit bonus for every habit you observe that no one else notices.'
- ④ 'Our latest study shows that Troubleshooters who have a very limited supply of ammunition use far less ammunition on a mission than Troubleshooters who have a very large supply of ammunition. To prove this beyond a reasonable doubt, however, we need additional evidence to support this conclusion. To that end, half of you will be issued weapons equipped with timers that prevents them from firing more than six times in an hour. The other half will be the control group with no ammunition timers. So, who wants to be in which group?'
- ④ '6.3% of all failed missions have, as a contributing factor, confusion brought about by misunderstood or misused measurement conversions, or decimal misplacement. During this mission, all time will be measured in seconds. All distance will be measured in inches. All weight will be measure in grams. All other measurements will be in shillings. All values are to be expressed as integers. As a result, you should be able to complete the mission in 8.4% less time.'



New CPU service firms

Environmental Effect Experimenters

Example firms: EnviroServices CPU, Workplace Is Ourplace
Revenue stream: Payment from service firms upon increased efficiency and reduced operating costs.

Secret society taint: Communists, Humanists

Efficiency is not just found inside ourselves; it's in the environment where we work. Yet workers and supervisors are not trained to identify how a simple change in working conditions can help reduce costs and reach quotas. Environmental Effect Experimenters test every possible configuration of working conditions. They move materials to force the worker to stand for an entire shift and measure the effects. Then they force him to sit for a shift, then lie on his back, lie on his stomach, stand on tiptoes, hang from the ceiling, and more until that worker's efficiency is optimized. Then they do the same with lighting, temperature, noise, smells, wall colors and every other component of the room's environment. This means lots and lots of experiments. (Which, as a completely innocent consequence, means lots and lots of bills for services rendered.) Some experiments have lasted over a year, yet the 1.25% average increase in efficiency is always worth it.

E-Data Scanners / Hard Copy Printers

Example firms: Save Space EDS, Save Space HCP, Data Storage EDS, Data Storage HCP

Revenue stream: Payment from service firms for changing paper data to electronic data or vice versa.

Secret society taint: Computer Phreaks, Romantics

These two CPU firm types provide the same service: storing a firm's old data. However, they have diametrically opposed methods.

E-Data Scanners take data stored in printed form and scan it into more space-efficient electronic storage media. This is essential to prevent Alpha Complex from collapsing into the Underplex from the sheer weight of paperwork. They also protect important data from fire or flood. Computer Phreaks love these firms for their 'future'-minded thinking.

Hard Copy Printers take data stored in electronic form and print it on power-efficient paper. This is essential to prevent Alpha Complex from running out of power. They also protect important data from power surges or computer viruses. Romantics love these firms for their 'traditional'-minded thinking.

This leads to a cold war, with the actual data caught in the middle. When a firm that uses E-Data Scanners for data storage gets a new supervisor, a Hard Copy Printer firm aggressively markets itself as a safer alternative to scanning. The replacement supervisor, looking to establish himself as the new leader, changes to paper storage. The opposite happens just as often.

In the end, some documents have been scanned and printed so many times there's not much left. Between torn pages and corrupt files, the data has been lost.



Form Gap Analysts

Example firms: Gaps; Form Field; Know More

Revenue stream: Percentage of additional accruals extracted from the implementation of new hardcopy bureaucracy protocols enacted based on FGA feedback

Secret society taint: FCCC-P (common); Illuminati (common); Free Enterprise (uncommon)

CPU always worries it doesn't have all the angles covered. In a world of constant change and innovation, where myriad organizations interact, overlap and expand, rifts can open unexpectedly in the essential fabric of recognized procedure, threatening good order.

Into this breach spring the Form Gap Analysts, highly trained and attentive individuals tasked with identifying rifts in policy and procedure... and plugging them, on the spot and in the field. Analysts constantly review and assess the current bureaucracy and record shortcomings. If possible, they immediately log recommended updates to existing forms and procedures. Otherwise, they use specialized typesetting and approval PDC software that lets them create, submit and secure approval for new forms, sub-clauses and regulations, on the spot, with integral printers to produce hardcopies for associates, colleagues and incredulous strangers.

Human Resource Outfitters

Example firms: Citizen Re-Placement, Who Needs U?

Revenue stream: Subscriptions purchased by service firms, plus payment for additional services rendered recruits and recruiting firms.

Secret society taint: Free Enterprise (common), Illuminati (common), Computer Phreaks (uncommon)

Though The Computer, in its wisdom, assigns every citizen to a service group for life, there are rare opportunities to transfer out of the food vats in the irradiated part of the sector. Human Resource Outfitters find qualified candidates and match them with open positions in service firms. For a small fee, a citizen can get his name added to the newsletter provided to all the subscribing service firms. This slightly increases his chance for a more desirable position in another firm.

Citizens who are especially eager to change service firms can purchase marketing packages. The Human Resource Outfitters can drop your name in meetings with clients, give you interview tips, target only those firms you want to join, and even create multimedia presentations that show recruiting agents that you are the best citizen for the job.

But note! No matter how much you are willing to pay them, Human Resource Outfitters would never resort to such dubious practices as doctoring your official work record, blackmailing recruiters into accepting you into their firm, or having the current occupant of your desired position framed for treason in order to open up the position for you. No! Never! We don't know why those rumors have persisted for so many years in so many, many sectors.

Though Human Resource Outfitters earn some revenue from recruits, their real clients are the service firms themselves. Service firms—especially those whose operations demand intelligent, skilled, and educated members—are always on the lookout for talented workers. For a small sum, Human Resource Outfitters regularly provide a list of citizens interested in transferring out of their current service firms, leaving it to the service firm to fill out the necessary forms to complete the transfer. Most Human Resource Outfitters offer to file the transfer forms, as well, charging an additional fee. When two or more competing service firms have their eyes on the same recruit, however, Human Resource Outfitters stand to gain far more than these tiny fees. The inevitable bidding war often results in substantial sums of money finding their way to the accounts of Human Resource Outfitters' executives. No matter how much a firm offers Human Resource Outfitters, they won't transfer a citizen into a service firm against his will, sell his services to a criminal organization without warning him (much less blackmail into committing such daily treason), or transfer him to an even worse position in an even more dangerous part of Alpha Complex. The Human

Resource Outfitters just want you to do the most fulfilling job you can do, citizen!

Information Archivists

Example firms: Institutional Memory Institution, RecordIt, KnowMOR

Revenue stream: Contracts with CPU and other service groups.

Secret society taint: Computer Phreaks, Corpore Metal, Illuminati

All the data of Old Reckoning times is a drop in the bit-bucket compared to the exabytes of facts, figures, records and statistics currently stored in CPU's ever-expanding archives. Much of this data has, for various reasons, been erased from the system and now exists only on hardcopy; other information is buried so deeply in the labyrinth of databases, even The Computer has difficulty accessing it.

Information Archivist firms unearth lost data on behalf of The Computer and various service firms and service group bureaucracies. Workers wear ergonomic wrist-guards to defend against carpal tunnel syndrome, and filtration masks to protect their lungs from thick, pervasive dust in hardcopy archive rooms.

Aside from a few mid- to high-clearance managers, all Information Archivists perform the same duties, but as their clearance increases, they gain access to databases of progressively higher sensitivity. The biggest danger to an Archivist in the workplace is the risk of accidentally perusing files of higher clearance. But it also means workers don't necessarily get more interesting or exciting work as they climb the clearance ladder, as many a chagrined VIOLET has realized after a month spent digging up records of INDIGO toilet paper consumption.

Archivists commonly develop the Data Analysis, Data Search, Hacking and Operating Systems specialties, and the Secret skills of Alpha Complex History, Archival Studies and Jargon. To more easily peruse Computer databases, many Archivists obtain a direct cybernetic interface with Computer systems. The dangers in a neural link to The Computer are obvious, but so are the benefits.

Liability Limiters

Example firms: Fine Line Ink, Including But Not Limited To Ltd., The Small Printhouse

Revenue stream: Fees paid by other service firms during form, document and contract creation

Secret society taint: Computer Phreaks

How many service firms have gone forward with their business plan, releasing that hastily-created product or performing that somewhat unorthodox service, only to find themselves liable for the resulting physical injury, mental anguish and property damage? As it turns out, you just can't have too little liability. Service firms now make sure if there's anything that they can avoid responsibility for, or make the customer waive, they do it. On every form, every document, every memo, every contract, it's the same: More fine print, please!

Of course, there are a million risks, so it takes a specialist to really do the job right. Liability Limiters are those specialists, helping other firms identify everything they might ever want to absolve themselves of in advance. Their enormous databases track every way every kind of product can fail and every kind of service can cause harm. They'll even speculate about goods and services which don't exist yet. Liability Limiters are often involved with digital licensing as well. They are very thorough; it is not unusual for the 'fine print' to run longer than the actual document itself. In fact, in some cases, the fine print is so substantial that it's not even included on the form; there is simply a link or digital address printed which can be used to reach the full text of the fine print in an offline storage system.

Employees of these firms are also fascinated with cause and effect, blame and responsibility. They're always on the lookout for a new way that something caused problems, damage, or injury, just in case it's something that isn't in their database yet. Sometimes, they'll even try to cause failures, accidents, and other 'liability instigations' in an attempt to discover some new manifestation of responsibility; Liability Limiter employees are often paid a decent bonus for finding new examples to be added to the fine print.

Mandatory Break Monitors

Example firms: Thirty Minutes Ltd., We Break for Breaks

Revenue stream: Contract with CPU to find evidence of missed breaks.

Secret society taint: Free Enterprise, Humanists, Romantics

CPU studies have confirmed that small breaks during a work shift can actually increase productivity and efficiency. Therefore, all citizens are guaranteed breaks during their workday, including lunch and several five-minute 'mini' breaks for a quick cancer-free smoke, a snack, visiting the little clone's room, etc. All of this is backed by CPU mandates.



Yet many supervisors, overzealous in their quest to reach production quotas, violate these mandates and try to force citizens into giving up their breaks 'voluntarily.' Sometimes they even threaten citizens who try to go on break. This cannot be allowed because it hurts Alpha Complex efficiency, so CPU sends Mandatory Break Monitors around to look for citizens being deprived of their breaks.

Monitors tend to drop by a firm unannounced, usually around lunch time, to see if anyone isn't taking their break. Anyone seen working is taken as a sign that the supervisor has leaned on that citizen and forced him to work through lunch, which results in an unpleasant and sometimes violent conversation between the Monitor and the supervisor. Monitors are usually armed and authorized to use force if a supervisor refuses to comply. Then the Monitor leaves, and the worker and supervisor can continue to work together in harmony.

What happens if the citizen really did chose to work through his break? Monitors don't like that either, as it makes the other workers look bad. Those unpleasant and sometimes violent conversations take place between Monitor and worker as well.

Either way, Monitors get paid when they report unused breaks—so Monitors getting paid by supervisors and workers not to report unused breaks.

Personal Legal Defense Practices

Example firms: Attorneys at LAW Sector, Defendant Defenders

Revenue stream: Fees from clients, bonuses for winning cases.

Secret society taint: Humanists, Romantics, Free Enterprise

Though citizens are not equal under the law, the law applies equally to all citizens. With literally millions of laws, rules, edicts, mandates and protocols on the books, even The Computer has trouble sorting out which ones take precedence in any given situation. The Computer is willing to accept human input in this regard—some citizens have even talked it out of terminating them for treason! But such occurrences are exceptionally rare; very few citizens have sufficient knowledge of the law to do so consistently, or sufficient clearance to get The Computer to listen.

Seeing an opportunity for profit, CPU created the Personal Legal Defense Practices (PDLP) to provide an avenue for wealthy citizens to weasel their way out of accusations of

insubordination or treason. Now, an affluent high-clearance clone can hire an attorney and, by spending an inordinate amount of cash, hold out some small hope of beating the rap. Not only does this save wear and tear on the defendant's clone line, but it also keeps those ugly-looking treasons off of his permanent Internal Security record.

Low-clearance PDLP employees work as receptionists, paralegals and legal assistants. They spend long years learning the ins and outs of the *Laws of Alpha Complex* (currently on edition 39/B.3.9), including forms and procedures required to learn high-clearance legal information. With high clearance comes full membership in the firm, with attorneys jockeying with one another to join the INDIGOs and VIOLETs as a Senior Partner.

Fees for employing a PDLP range from the exorbitant to the inconceivable. It's tolerably expensive for mid-clearance citizens willing to be retroactively exonerated after The Computer punishes them, but if you want legal help *right now*, you'd better have the kind of resources generally associated with High Programmers and Free Enterprise.

Summary Providers

Example firms: Easy Reader, Kloff Notes, Simple Simon

Revenue stream: Fees charged for summary service

Secret society taint: Humanists

Let's face it: a lot of the documentation and other works of writing in Alpha Complex are simply so long and so complex anymore that your average citizen can't actually read through the whole thing before starving to death, much less understanding what they're reading. And even citizens of higher clearance, whose greater wisdom and experience might permit them to comprehend such heavy works as 'Regulations for Performance Art Involving Coolant Rods', simply do not have the time to pore over tens of thousands of words just to learn some basic facts.

Obviously, there is a valuable service to be fill here, and Summary Providers do it: Lengthy, complex documents are summarized into shorter, simpler versions that use easy-to-understand language. These are sold to the requestor for a fee which varies from a few credits to a few thousand, depending on how big the original document was and how small the final version was requested to be. Truly skilled employees at these firms have managed summary compressions of many hundred words to one in some cases. (For

a while, it was rumored a picture was worth a thousand words; several firms went broke failing to prove this conclusively.)

Generally, the summary retains the security clearance of the original. However, sometimes firms are contracted to provide a version not only simplified, but also 'color-cleaned' for some lower security clearance. They replace clearance-inappropriate content with alternate language or clever use of obscure metaphor. It is rare that higher-clearance material accidentally slips through in these cases.

Summary Provider workers often have an annoying habit of repeating what someone says to them, only paraphrased. That is, they recast someone else's idea using different words. Putting it another way, they offer comments that duplicate another's meaning. Or, to rephrase....

Venture Capital Consultants

Example firms: MORmoney, Radcliffe-V-TBR-1 and Clones, Capital Dispensers CPU
Revenue stream: Percentage of profits from funded new firms. Embezzlement.

Secret society taint: Free Enterprise, Illuminati, Program Groups, and did we mention Free Enterprise?

Once upon a time, The Computer created new service firms by splitting off equipment and personnel from the lumbering behemoths of the old service groups. But in the newer and perfect-er Alpha Complex economy, new service firms are funded through the allocation of venture capital, generously provided by CPU's highly trained, high-clearance Venture Capital Consultants.

An ambitious BLUE or INDIGO who wants to start a new service firm visits a VCC firm to propose a business plan. After pocketing spectacular fees and bribes, the Venture Capital Consultants loan the entrepreneur enough freshly minted, appropriately licensed credits to get his new enterprise off the ground, skimming only enough off the top to make themselves stinking rich.

The senior members of these firms can embezzle millions of credits with ease, but low-clearance number crunchers and file clerks must work hard to siphon off a few hundred here or there. So not only are Venture Capital Consultants invariably whizzes at Financial Systems, they usually pick up a solid grounding in the Secret skills of Forgery, Cash Hacking and Bribery.

CPU personnel

Yellowpants

Service firm type: any CPU-licensed service firm

Security clearance: YELLOW

Common mutation(s): Creeping Madness (from *The Mutant Experience*), Detect Mutant Power, Empathy

Secret society taint: FCCC-P

Typical Access: 11

ACTION SKILLS & SPECIALTIES

Management 11

Chutzpah 15
Intimidation 15
Obstructive CPU Administrative Minutiae 17
Bootlicking 01
Interrogation 01

Stealth 06

Shadowing 10
High Alert 01

Violence 04

KNOWLEDGE SKILLS & SPECIALTIES

Hardware 05

Software 07
Data Analysis 11
Financial Systems 01

Wetware 08

Suggestion 12
Psychotherapy 12
Cloning 01
Medical 01

ASSIGNED EQUIPMENT:

(1) digital stopwatch
(1) notepad
(1) tape measure
(1) multicorder 1

PERSONAL EQUIPMENT:

(1) skinnerstick
(1) bag of sweetened algae mini-drops

*They have given us into the hand of new
unhappy lords,
Lords without anger or honour,
who dare not carry their swords.
They fight by shuffling papers;
they have bright dead alien eyes;
They look at our labour and laughter
as a tired man looks at flies.
And the load of their loveless pity
is worse than the ancient wrongs,
Their doors are shut in the evening;
and they know no songs.*

—G.K. Chesterton,
'The Secret People' (1907)

When people think of CPU, they think of useless and annoying attempts at increasing efficiency. When people think of *that*, they think of Yellowpants.

A Yellowpants is as common in CPU firms as mad scientists in R&D, and just as synonymous. There are several in every CPU firm—although not physically; their supervisors like to send Yellowpants out on field data collections, for reasons your PCs quickly discover

A Yellowpants is an efficiency expert who measures, times and otherwise judges everything to determine how it can be more efficient. It doesn't matter what's being wasted: time, fuel, calories and wear-and-tear are all proper subjects for a Yellowpants' attention. He seeks inefficiency with religious zeal.

With the attitude of a drama queen, the tenacity of an addict and the social tact of a poorly programmed scrubot, a Yellowpants points out how everyone is doing everything wrong and how things must be done in order to be efficient. Sometimes he troubles to measure and recording the inefficiency in question, but it's as likely he'll just barge in and start laying down the law. A Yellowpants has no fear of being contradicted as long as he's speaking with citizens of a lower clearance. (Which he always makes sure to do.) He enforces regulations through simple behavioral conditioning. To an efficient Troubleshooter he gives a sweetened algae mini-drop. To an inefficient Troubleshooter he gives a poke with his skinnerstick—a baton that gives a annoying but harmless electrical shock.

All of this would be laughable were it not for a single CPU mandate, the dreaded CPU115.23/k. This absurdly open-ended mandate gives CPU the authority to improve



efficiency for the good of Alpha Complex. (Why yes, the mandate was written by CPU.) Although Yellowpants use this mandate to pester all kinds of citizens and service firms, they especially love improving Troubleshooter efficiency. They'll tag along on a mission, recording how a team's inefficient acts (along with other stuff team members probably don't want recorded) and writing new efficiency regulations that affect all Troubleshooter teams. CPU has documented 159 cases to date in which a Troubleshooter team was ambushed by other Troubleshooter teams as payback for 'giving that Yellowpants vathead such good ideas.'

As for where the Yellowpants nickname came from, it depends on who you ask. The Yellowpants themselves say it's because they wear YELLOW jumpsuits. Troubleshooter say it's because the Yellowpants rarely faces combat, and exposure to a typical mission firefight compels him to have a little accident in his trousers.



Comrade CPU

Service firm: any CPU-licensed service firm
Security clearance: YELLOW
Common mutation(s): Bureaucratic Intuition, Deep Thought, Hypersenses, Mental Block
Secret society taint: Any
Typical Access: 12

ACTION SKILLS & SPECIALTIES

Management 11

Chutzpah 15
Spout Nonexistent Regulations 17

Stealth 08

Shadowing 01
Sleight of Hand 12

Violence 04

Energy Weapons 08
Unarmed Combat 01

KNOWLEDGE SKILLS & SPECIALTIES

Hardware 04

Obsolete Microfilm Machines 10

Software 09

Data Analysis 13
Vehicle Programming 01

Wetware 04

Medical 01
Suggestion 08

SECRET SKILLS

Archival Studies 12
Jargon 05
Twitchtalk 10

PERSONAL EQUIPMENT:

- (1) list of secret society instructions on edible soy paper (treasonous)
- (1) energy pistol (W3K energy)
- (1) half-eaten packet of NearChocoBiscuits

ASSIGNED EQUIPMENT:

- (1) series 1300 PDC
- (1) notepad and stylus
- (1) slide rule
- (1) multicorder 1

Not *all* of CPU's efficiency experts are idiots. Some actually sense keenly how to game any system. These smart guys quickly conclude the best way to get ahead is to shamelessly promote someone else's agenda and get paid for the privilege. All sorts of people, from service firm leaders to secret society bosses, want to muck about with the bureaucracy, and Comrade CPU will gladly take their money to lobby for them.

Outwardly Comrade CPU looks just like a Yellowpants supervisor. He joins up with a low-clearance Troubleshooter team and begins writing new regulations that make things more

difficult. But in this case, the new regulations interfere with the team's mission on behalf of Comrade CPU's patrons.

Troubleshooter: Sir, exactly why are we supposed to call everyone 'Comrade'?

Comrade CPU: Is innovative morale-building technique, Comrade Troubleshooter! It will be increasink overall sector efficiency by 1.03%!

Comrade CPU also knows the most efficient way to manipulate a Troubleshooter team is to get someone on the team to do his dirty work. After all, that's how his patrons are manipulating CPU, right? So he approaches a Troubleshooter who belongs to his master's secret society – and there's always *someone* in the proper society, count on it – and feeds him just enough information to turn him against his fellows.

And whereas a Yellowpants generally has no one to fall back on when the team inevitably shoves him down an elevator shaft, Comrade CPU's... *comrades*... may value his services enough to come to his aid. Or at least to help his next clone get revenge.

Oracles

Service firm: any CPU-licensed service firm
Security clearance: not applicable
Common mutation(s): Bureaucratic Intuition, Deep Thought, Machine Empathy
Secret society taint: Mystics, Romantics
Typical Access: 15

ACTION SKILLS & SPECIALTIES

Management 06

Moxie 12

Stealth 05

Conceal Identity 16

Violence 02

KNOWLEDGE SKILLS & SPECIALTIES

Hardware 05

Software 08

Bot Programming 01
Data Analysis 15
Data Search 18
Vehicle Programming 01

Wetware 08

Bioweapons 01
Cloning 01

SECRET SKILLS

Alpha Complex History 13
Archival Studies 16

Jargon 10
Old Reckoning Cultures 13
Old Reckoning Drugs 9
Power Studies 13

Consultants are stupid. Consultants don't know what they're talking about. Consultants serve no purpose but to hinder and frustrate everyone around them. In Alpha Complex, as in real life, this stereotype generally hits the mark. However, don't assume every consultant is an ignorant, arrogant fool. Some are surprisingly knowledgeable... and that's a problem. At CPU, ignorant consultants thrive. Know-it-alls find their careers, not to mention their clone lines, cut short.

So what's a knowledgeable consultant to do? Most play dumb. It's not hard on a regimen of TV and sedatives. Yet some consultants can't stomach a life of feigned stupidity—so they disappear. They become Oracles.

Oracles are former CPU consultants who have dropped out of society and out of sight. Though named after ancient Old Reckoning prophets, Oracles can't actually predict the future. However, they are adept historians, and their obsessive study of the past lets them throw the occasional (antique) monkey wrench into the present.

The Computer does not tolerate citizens who peer deeply into the past, so Oracles must embrace complete isolation. To evade detection, they set up 'Temples' in remote parts of the Underplex: decommissioned storage facilities, sub-habitation levels, abandoned 'ghost sectors'. Safe in these strongpoints, Oracles quench their all-consuming thirst for knowledge without fear of IntSec reprisals.

PCs may wish to contact an Oracle whenever they require specialized information about Alpha Complex history, want an Old Reckoning artifact identified or need help sorting through the pre-complex archives. Yes, they may wish to contact an Oracle... but wishing won't make it so. Only under extraordinary circumstances can PCs meet an Oracle in person. Temples are well hidden, and the Oracles seldom venture beyond their walls. And because they've wiped their identities from the records, it's not like a PC can simply dial-an-Oracle on his PDC. Usually, PCs must initiate contact through high-degree secret society contacts—particularly in the Romantics (who share Oracular interest in Old Reckoning culture) and the Mystics (who share their interest in debilitating hallucinogens).

PCs who get an Oracle's attention find that Oracles don't just obsessively collect information, they also take great pleasure in sharing it. Endlessly. What's the point of being a know-it-all if you never get to show

off? However, Oracles don't give important info away for free; the PCs must negotiate a trade. Having disconnected from the comforts of Alpha Complex, Oracles occasionally provide trivia in exchange for certain luxury items: home furnishings, scented candles, drugs drugs drugs DRUGS. But Oracles are picky—they only want the best. PCs can't just pick up the stuff at the local Buyatorium.

Oracles prefer to trade information for information. If PCs want access to the premium, 'I could get terminated just for knowing this' info, they must barter other data of equal or greater value. Inasmuch as PCs never have such information, the Oracle can suggest a location (i.e. deathtrap) where an enterprising (i.e. suicidal) team could dig up secret records or restricted files the Oracle wants.

If the PCs negotiate a trade, bully for them! When they get back to the inhabited complex, they may have newfound fans in CPU—enthused Oracle-spotter hobbyists who try to lean on the PCs, scan their PDCs for records of the Temple or just inquire worshipfully about the meeting. Yet... the PCs soon discover Oracles have a sense of humor. Though they never disseminate inaccurate information, they take a certain sick pleasure in offering devastating half-truths. Oracles provide PCs just enough information to get themselves into trouble, but never quite enough to get out.

In this sense, Oracles aren't so different from all those ordinary CPU consultants...

Mobile Evaluator

Service firm type: Any

Security clearance: RED through YELLOW

Common mutation(s): Hypersenses, X-Ray Vision

Secret society taint: Computer Phreaks

Typical Access: 10

ACTION SKILLS & SPECIALTIES

Management 05

Ask Questions In A Way Hard To Ignore 11

Stealth 10

Shadowing 14

Violence 05

Stay Out Of The Way Of Whatever They're Doing 11

KNOWLEDGE SKILLS & SPECIALTIES

Hardware 04

Habitat Engineering 08

Software 12

Data Analysis 16

Wetware 04

Suggestion 08

ASSIGNED EQUIPMENT

Various calipers, rangefinders and other measuring gear

(144) blank feedback forms

(1) MulticorderLite

PERSONAL EQUIPMENT

(12) Wakey-Wakey pills in blister pack

(1) suit Kevlar armor

Many firms working for CPU realize only gathering mission metrics at debriefing time is a flawed approach. The proper time to acquire mission data is obviously while that mission is underway. To this end, they dispatch these roving data-accumulators to shadow, observe and record Troubleshooter teams (and other citizens performing other jobs) in action, collecting data about every event: elapsed time, object dimensions, ammo expended, etc.

The observers are acutely aware they themselves might influence the outcome of the mission and thus ruin the usefulness of the collected data. So they try hard to stay out of the action and, if possible, remain entirely undetected.

However, the only way to get certain kinds of information—such as team motivations or other insights into state of mind—is through direct feedback. So a Mobile Evaluator seeking a direct response from subjects tries to pass himself off as a surveyor on some other subject:

Evaluator: Hello, citizen! We're conducting a survey for MaxiCheezits. You know, 'The Biggest Bite You Can Buy!'

Troubleshooter: Hey, do you mind? We're sort of in a firefight with these Corpore Metal thugs!

Evaluator: Oh, this won't take a minute. Would you say the biggest problem facing MaxiCheezits right now is: a) the lack of sufficient firepower, b) the enemy's superior cover, or c) insufficient motivation within the team itself?

Mobile Evaluators sometimes even moonlight (illegally) for one or another PLC or HPD&MC firm; they actually gather real marketing information as well as the mission evaluation data for their CPU jobs. They also sometimes take pictures for training manuals. After all, once again, there's no better place to find Troubleshooter training imagery than Troubleshooters in action. Thus, a team might first be quietly stalked by the Evaluator, then blunder into him at surprising times; he offers them free samples of one or another product, hammers them with confusingly unrelated questions and finally, after all that, asks them to pose for 'action shots' to be used for some unspecified purpose.

Unsurprising, how frustrated this sometimes makes Troubleshooters. Unsurprisingly, also, few citizens remain in this job for long, taking any transfer they can get before they lose too many more clones.

CENTRAL PROCESSING UNIT

Terminal Security Testing

Instruction: Confirm security of data systems.

Benefit: You may try to log onto any computer system, or access data to which you would not normally have access, to ensure there are no security holes. You may use Software specialties to try to bypass the security of such systems. If you find a weakness, you temporarily gain access to any information the system can provide. Once you have identified a security hole, you must immediately report the method by which you gained unauthorized access so CPU can close the hole. This mandate does not permit treason nor authorize you to possess specialties above your security clearance (such as Hacking or Programming).

CENTRAL PROCESSING UNIT

Obsolescence Avoidance

Instruction: Ensure no equipment in use is obsolete. Report location and type of any obsolete item.

Benefit: A program has been uploaded to your PDC that lets you determine the most current version of any registered equipment type. You are authorized to check the manufacture date of any piece of equipment you have reason to believe is obsolete.

GM Note: *Manufacture dates may not be accessible without dismantling the equipment. Will the character remember how to put it back together?*

THE



MISSION

Note: This mission works best for players already intimately familiar with typical calamitous PARANOIA missions.

Maybe you've heard this one already

Recently a certain controversial technical paper has made its way around several CPU service firms. The anonymous abstract, titled 'Beyond the Distraction Horizon', proposes there is no task so simple that it cannot be rendered impossible to complete—no matter how much manpower and materiel is thrown at it—given sufficient outside sources of confusion.

The theory of the Distraction Horizon has become something of a hot-button debate—but not because anyone in CPU thinks the theory is wrong. No, they simply argue whether it can be *quantified*.

Several rival CPU firms have agreed to test the theory (i.e., their senior executives have started a betting pool) by ordering the simplest possible Troubleshooter mission that qualifies for funding under section 1103.40.4 of the Laws of Alpha Complex ('Payment Voucher Approvals comma Troubleshooter Missions comma Minimal Criteria For'), assigning

a team, and then re-running the mission repeatedly with increasingly complicated outside factors. They seek the all-important threshold at which Troubleshooters simply cannot complete the mission any more.

The chosen mission is based on a classic from the earliest days of the Complex, drawn (according to the Romantics) from pre-Catastrophe lore and phrased (according to the Mystics) as a Zen koan:

'How many Troubleshooters does it take to change a lightbulb?'

Easy as falling off a logarithm

The Troubleshooters are told to report to Briefing Room C-63 for, you know, the usual mission of utmost importance. C-63 is surprisingly easy to find. It's a nondescript small room with a few benches, a lecture podium and three doors, including the one they used to enter. **Rydell-G-FAR-4**, a GREEN Clearance briefing officer in a CPU-style uniform, is standing behind the podium. Once everyone is seated, he provides a strangely straightforward briefing:

'Good morning, citizens. Today you will perform a simple resupply operation. First, you must take a 633-A requisition form up the hall to supply depot GCO-614 and use it to take possession of a standard 64-watt lightbulb, part number 2110658-64. Then you will take a public intersector transbot to hallway 393-010-006 in COG Sector. As we are currently in FIG Sector, this will require intersector travel authorization vouchers. When you reach the destination hallway, you will visually identify which light has failed and replace it with the new bulb. Then you will drop the dead bulb off at nearby recycling disposal 393-MD-006 and report for debriefing to the adjacent CPU dispatch desk at 393-010-C. If you complete the mission in a timely fashion, your mission bonus will be 1,000 credits.'

Then he does a strange and unnerving thing: From a folder on his podium, he takes out a 633-A requisition form and a handful of round-trip intersector authorization vouchers, and he hands them to the team leader. 'The supply depot is through that door and up the hall about 200 meters,' he says. 'Better get moving if you want that mission bonus!'

And then the weirdest thing of all happens, assuming your players even bother trying to fulfill the mission objective: They succeed, almost effortlessly, in about 40 minutes or so. They aren't even hampered by the fact they were issued no laser barrels or other weapons. The supply depot is, in fact, just a short walk down the hall. They can fill out the form there. The clerk (Jerry-R-COG) is helpful and, with no searching whatever, finds the correct part. There is a nearby transbot stop; after the PCs present their vouchers to the driver (Megan-R-FIG),

DAN CURTIS JOHNSON

3-6 PLAYERS
1 SESSION
(3-4 HOURS)

they travel to COG Sector, where it turns out the destination hallway is right near the stop. It's obvious which bulb is burned out—part of a small sign advertising MaxiCheezits. They can easily open the bulb grille by hand and change bulbs. The recycling disposal is indeed nearby—just drop the bulb down the chute—and the CPU desk is across the hall. There, another helpful clerk (Leon-O-RID) directs them to a briefing room down a short hall.

At their debriefing, they find a BLUE citizen (Lena-B-ROM) waiting for them, along with a handful of other BLUE individuals wearing lab coats and carrying clipboards. All are clearly from various CPU-contracted service firms. As they enter, Lena-B very obviously clicks a stopwatch, checks its reading, then turns to the others with a sort of approving nod and a look that says, 'You see?' The others all nod as well, some jotting notes on their clipboards. Lena-B turns back to the team:

'You did very well on this mission, and are eligible for a standard mission bonus of 1,000 credits. However...'
She pauses for a moment, as though suddenly remembering something.
'How would you like to potentially earn an extra thousand?'

It's so implausible your players would say no that we won't even address the possibility. When they eagerly indicate interest, she calmly sets the hook:

'As well as that mission was performed, we believe there are some efficiency-increasing tools and techniques that could make it run even more smoothly,' she says. 'Please report back to briefing room C-63 as soon as possible.' Then she and her entourage swiftly leave the room.

The team can head back to FIG Sector and C-63 pretty directly; the transbot line is right there, and they should still have their vouchers for the return trip.

Once more, with feeling

As soon as they walk into C-63, the PCs see Rydell-G standing behind his podium. Even as they are sitting down, he launches into nearly the same briefing as before:

'Good afternoon, citizens. Today you will perform a simple resupply

All about the Benjamins

To help insure the PCs are sufficiently motivated to keep repeating the mission, start each of them in a deep and worrisome financial hole—something on the order of at least 10,000 credits. Some possible debts follow; use your cruel imagination to come up with others:

- ④ a compulsive gambler who owes certain unsavory elements of Free Enterprise on a big loss; if he doesn't come up with the cash soon, they're going to off him and his next two clones...
- ④ a secret society member (something really treasonous, like a Communist) being blackmailed by an unidentified group; if he doesn't make the payment, the evidence will be leaked onto the nets...
- ④ the citizen's entire clone line turns out to have a rare and inevitably fatal genetic disease; treatment exists to greatly reduce the progress of the syndrome, but the cost has recently increased...
- ④ the citizen is on some extremely high clone number and still owes money on his most recent decanting—that is, he himself was decanted through a loan that needs to be paid back soon...
- ④ a certain item on C-Bay was just too good to pass up on, but the bidding got a little crazy there at the end and now the citizen owes a ridiculous amount, and the seller turns out to be an Armed Forces sniper...
- ④ a recipient of legal cybernetic limb replacement needs serious mechanical overhaul before it starts to develop gangrene...
- ④ the accidental loss of an expensive R&D prototype has yet to be paid off, and interest is accumulating on the bill...
- ④ the citizen accidentally lost his PDC while it was actively connected to a pay-per-minute traffic-flow information number, and by the time its battery wore down, it had racked up 11 days of call time...
- ④ someone stole the citizen's credit identity and bought a bunch of expensive gear; unfortunately, Internal Security has a policy of not starting fraud investigations for citizens with unpaid delinquent credit bills...

Tick! Tick! Tick!

With each new iteration of the mission, you want your players to feel they are always under evaluation pressure. Make sure they're aware you are, in some way, 'scoring' how well they are doing. For example, you might make a tick-mark on a piece of note paper after they receive their first briefing, and occasionally make more tick-marks as they progress. Then, at debriefing, count up the ticks, nod as though it's more or less what you expected, and get them started on the next iteration. Tick repeatedly! Tick whenever you feel like it! If the players are doing the sort of thing you like, nod approvingly as you tick. If they're harping on some uninteresting tangent too much, scowl while ticking.

Or, if you use poker chips to track Perversity, you can overtly set up a stack of, say, 20 chips at the start, taking one chip away periodically, but always insuring there's at least one chip left by the end—as though somehow they just managed to finish the mission with some 'score' left, so they aren't being kicked off the job. Then set up a new stack for the next iteration.

CPU is, in fact, scoring the team's performance in every way imaginable, but it has no bearing on whether the PCs get their mission bonus.



The Arbitrarium

The entire 'mission' actually takes place inside a mammoth CPU training center known as the Arbitrarium. This vast facility used to be its own sector, until a consortium of CPU firms collectively bought it out and deported its population. It is now one of the largest simulators in Alpha Complex.

Using set-design technology from HPD&MC, CPU made the Arbitrarium's rooms and corridors highly re-configurable—today's spacious plaza could become tomorrow's cramped warren of twisty tunnels. Using surveillance technology from Internal Security, every cubic centimeter of its interior is invisibly monitored and measured. The whole sector is shot through with secret passageways, allowing CPU personnel to immediately get from any part to any other part. Behind nearly every wall is an observation room with monitoring equipment. There is virtually no aspect of Alpha Complex life the Arbitrarium cannot simulate and measure to four decimal places.

Of course, everyone who participates in the simulations works for one or another CPU firm. Thus, the 'PLC clerk' working at the supply depot is actually an employee of, say, E-Z-Form CPU. But in order to simulate Alpha Complex life, it is necessary to at least maintain the appearance of other service firms, so the clerk is wearing a PLC uniform over his own CPU duds. (If Troubleshooters closely examine anyone they encounter, they might notice such odd details.) Also, because all these people are trained for CPU jobs, they aren't much good at their 'simulation' job—TechServices repairmen can't fix any equipment, Vulture Warriors won't shoot straight, IntSec interrogators don't actually know much about torture, etc. Inside the Arbitrarium, however, it is impossible to contact anyone who isn't a CPU 'simulation engineer'. Even secret society contacts, if Troubleshooters try to find some, are CPU personnel more or less faking it.

Similarly, the reconfigurable rooms use flimsy construction. Grenades might blow holes in walls that would normally stand firm, revealing access tunnels or dark rooms full of monitoring gear—possibly even a small observation room full of CPU technicians taking notes! Almost all equipment in a simulation is fake, unless directly related to the simulation in progress. The standard video camera in the hall is, in fact, just a box with a red light; the real cameras are embedded in everything else, invisibly.

Within the Arbitrarium, Tension is effectively 18. Almost nothing goes unnoticed. However, one of the rules of the simulator is that what happens in the Arbitrarium, stays in the Arbitrarium. Everything is considered part of the simulation ONLY. After all, in order to fully simulate Alpha Complex life, CPU personnel occasionally need to simulate treasonous activity, right? And how can they do this if they are not protected from prosecution for those actions? Thus, treason within the Arbitrarium is generally handled 'in character'—purely within the simulation. Nobody on the outside is ever informed.

Of course, there's no reason the players need learn this.

operation. First, you must take a VO3862-10 voice-operated requisition form up the hall to supply depot GCO-614 and use it to take possession of a standard 64-watt lightbulb, part number 2110658-64. Then, you will take a public intersector transbot to hallway 393-010-006 in COG Sector. As we are currently in FIG Sector, this will require intersector travel authorization vouchers. When you reach the destination hallway, you will visually identify which light has failed and replace it with the new bulb. Then you will drop the dead bulb off at nearby recycling disposal 393-MD-006 and report for debriefing to the adjacent CPU dispatch desk at 393-

010-C. If you complete this mission in a timely fashion, your mission bonus will be 2,000 credits.'

Then he gives the team leader a new set of travel vouchers and a requisition form... only this time, the 'form' is a hefty display-tablet with a long flexi-necked microphone.

Rydell-G then turns the PCs loose on the exact same mission... except, of course, the voice-activated form is insanely more difficult to use than just writing on the old form. The start-up screen simply says 'Which form?' First you have to tell it the correct form number so it can display it. (Do they even remember what it was?) Then, instead of using a pen to fill out the blanks, you speak the text you want it to put in each blank, using such words as 'next'

and 'back' and 'erase' to navigate around within the digital form. At the end, you say 'print' to make it generate the final hard copy, which you give to the PLC clerk. Of course, none of these directions are provided. There is a help function—activated by saying 'help'—but R&D hasn't finished the user documentation, so it simply prints an error receipt that says 'Help is not available.' Most other attempts to interact with it result in a printed error receipt that says 'Invalid input. Try again.' In no time, the Troubleshooters likely have a pile of error receipts—the last one reading 'Printer is out of paper'—and no completed form to show for it.

When they get to the supply depot, the window is closed with a metal shutter. A sign says 'Back in five minutes'. Of course, five minutes pass and nothing changes. Even worse, if they bang on the window to get someone's attention, the clerk who eventually opens the window isn't the same friendly, helpful Jerry-R-COG from before. No, now it's hostile, incompetent Larry-R-FIB. No, he won't remind them what the proper form is. No, he won't help them use this nonstandard gadget. No, no, no. Without actually doing anything obviously against the rules of his job, he tries his absolute best to make it difficult for the Troubleshooters to get that lightbulb.

Eventually your players somehow find a way to do it. Then the rest of the mission is a race against time to get to the other sector, change the bulb—it's a different one this time, a little harder to find—get the dead one recycled, and report for debriefing. (The location of the debriefing room isn't the same as before; CPU desk clerk Leon-O directs them to the new one.) As they rush in, Lena-B clicks her stopwatch and everyone in her entourage begins scribbling madly.

'Closer,' she says. 'Clearly, some other parts of the process still need to be optimized. Citizens, you've done fine work and are eligible for a 2,000-credit mission bonus. Would you like to make it three?'

What's going on, of course, is that a betting pool has formed among senior members of the various CPU firms, each participant laying odds on how many times the team can complete the mission. At any given time, some want the Troubleshooters to succeed at least once more, and some want them to fail right now. Lena-B is referee. The team will be re-dispatched on almost, but not quite, the same mission over and over again, but each time it gets a little harder and more confusing.

This is partly because Lena-B and her team are deliberately adding complications (such as the voice-activated form) and partly because various members of the betting pool are trying to affect the results by adding additional factors of their own (such as the last-minute replacement of the supply clerk with someone less helpful).

Each time the team completes the mission—pick up the bulb, take it to the ‘other sector’ (which is still within the Arbitrarium; see sidebar), replace the dead one and recycle it—Lena-B clicks her stopwatch and then offers them a chance to repeat the mission for an extra thousand credits. The tone of her voice suggests the results of this latest round are acceptable... but she was really hoping for better.

Keep one crucial point unclear to the players: The team gets no bonus so long as even *one* member keeps accepting the mission again; if anyone accepts another round, they *all* forfeit their current mission bonus in exchange for a ‘chance’ at a bigger one. (GMs wary of their players’ gullibility might consider secretly arranging with one player to have his character always accept the deal.)

Each time the PCs return to C-63, Rydell-G gives them virtually the same briefing, but each time, one portion of it is replaced or changed to reflect one more ‘efficiency-increasing tool or technique’ being added.

Good odds and odd goods

The following is a list of 12 such ‘tools and techniques’ which Lena-B and her team have prepared. Use them in any order you like; we recommend using only one per iteration, maybe two near the end. Don’t phase out previous complications; just keep stacking them up. Of course, if your players get really good at handling one complication, or exploiting it to their own advantage, mix it up in some way to throw them off again. Even if the new change doesn’t make it inherently worse, just the mere fact that it’s different will make them uneasy... and uneasy Troubleshooters are fun Troubleshooters.

Where some sort of new device is involved, a clerk automatically gives it to the team at the supply depot when they pick up the lightbulb.

MPQ-V70 Pocket maptracker

A hand-held map-display unit, pre-programmed with waypoints showing exactly where to go next at each step of the way. Unfortunately, it has some pathfinding bugs and tends to add a

lot of extra steps. Also, it doesn’t differentiate between corridors and, say, air ducts or sewage conduits. And of course it hasn’t had logic added to verify security clearance all along its path, so it will happily route users through an INDIGO lounge.

Mobile supply center MSC-2110

Instead of having to walk all the way down to a PLC window, why not have it come to you? Mobile supply center MSC-2110 is sort of a cross between a catering van and a runaway train. Its navigation system is fully automated; it attempts to take itself to a ‘maximally effective sales location’. This is somehow always about 50 meters away from where the Troubleshooters are. As they get close to it, it suddenly cranks up its engine and rolls down the hallway another 50 meters. The supply clerk just goes along for the ride. To get it to stay in one place, the PCs have to actually get up to the window and start a transaction.

Debriefing Ultra-Dispatcher L30N

Helpful CPU dispatcher Leon-O-RID (who appeared at the end of the mission) has been replaced by even-more-helpful dispatch jackobot L30N.

Because the location of the final debriefing room is different every time, the PCs can’t just go straight there; they have to ask at the dispatch desk. Unfortunately, L30N has a hard time understanding what it is they want, and it keeps sending them to other sorts of rooms—supply windows, reactor control chambers, gunnery ranges, etc. Each time, it’s absolutely certain it finally understands what they’re asking for. ‘Oh! Of course. Go down this hall, take a right, up two doors...’ Eventually it gets it right... but on the next mission iteration, it’s back to square one.

TravelPass

Hard-copy vouchers for intersector travel are vulnerable to forgery and damage. Far better to replace them with a digital account linked to a small RFID button that pins onto one’s uniform. Just breeze right onto that transbot or through that checkpoint! Of course, hardly any transbots or checkpoints have TravelPass readers installed yet...

Rydell-G

Ever-Better Briefings
Pro Tech
Levitation

Mgmt 06, Stealth 09, Violence 05,
Hardware 06, Software 08, Wetware
06

Con Games 10, Pretend Nothing Is
Out Of The Ordinary 12, Sneaking 13,
Surveillance 13

GREEN reflec, energy pistol

Rydell-G knows about the betting pool, though he doesn’t have money on it. He’s in it for fun. He has a... thing... for seeing Troubleshooters psychologically tortured. He keeps it hidden, though; he just keeps running through the briefing over and over, as though nothing unusual is happening. He knows they could eventually snap, so he’s packing a concealed sidearm just in case.

Lena-B

Number-Crunchers Ltd.
Pro Tech
X-Ray Vision

Mgmt 10, Stealth 06, Violence 06,
Hardware 04, Software 05, Wetware
04

Con Games 14, Moxie 14, Data
Analysis 9, Make Random Numbers
Mean Anything 11

Lena is refereeing the betting pool and running the simulations. She gets ten percent of the total no matter the outcome. She acts like she’s a teacher and the Troubleshooters are students -- second-rate students who are nonetheless her class favorites. Every time she talks, it’s as though the team isn’t all she was hoping for, but because they’re such good eggs, she’ll give them another chance.

Her clipboard-carrying compatriots -- all of whom are in the betting pool -- have similar stats. None of them are packing weapons unless they’re alerted that the Troubleshooters are coming to arrest (or kill) them.

Simulation engineers

Assume attributes of 6 for everything, with no specialties, whether they’re acting as Internal Security goons, panicky bystanders, technicians, clerks, etc.



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■ **Marc-0 the RoboTout**

This automated jackobot companion knows where everything is, is familiar with procedures and practices and can even handle face-to-face transactions for the team... assuming they keep tipping it 5 or 10cr at a time. And even then, Marc-0 mostly tries to tell the team various trivia about the places they're going and the things they're seeing ('Four years ago, this corridor was the site of a firefight between Internal Security and the PURGE cell known as Zero Zero') or lead them someplace where they can buy souvenirs or refreshments.

■ **Universal bulb, part number 21260-64U**

This bulb has a built-in reconfigurable osmium-core adapter so it can be used in any sort of power receptacle that might be encountered. (See the additional obstacles in the next section.) Unfortunately, this has the effect of making the bulb very heavy—enough to require two hands. Also, the sophisticated electronics in the universal receptacle set off alarm equipment nearby: drug-detection gear, fire alarms, geiger counters, metal detectors, etc., resulting in constant attention from a variety of emergency and security personnel, all certain it's some sort of dangerous or contraband object.

■ **Safe-T-Pak container**

If, during any iteration, the bulb gets broken—requiring a return to the supply depot for a new bulb—then the next iteration will surely include this solution. The container box is more than a meter across, requiring two

Troubleshooters to carry it. In addition to the bulb, it contains several hundred cubic meters of highly compressed Safe-T Foam. If the box is dropped, damaged or merely opened, the foam uncompresses, instantly filling an area five meters in all directions. It is thick enough to not only hamper movement but also prevent breathing.

■ **Voc-10 Vocal Enhancer**

Clearly, miscommunication is a common cause of mission problems. This collar-like device is meant to be worn by the team leader; it (theoretically) adds several subliminal layers of aural enhancement to the speaker's voice, improving his conversational interactions with fellow citizens. It actually works; increase the user's Management skill sharply.

However, the Voc-10 has an unexpected side effect: It makes the speaker's voice sound (to the target) mysteriously familiar. Now, most citizens—on hearing a voice they recognize coming from a stranger—assume this means they're talking to their secret society ringleader or contact, and act appropriately. What does the rest of the team do when the clerk behind the counter suddenly makes an expression of recognition and flashes obvious PURGE hand-signals to their team leader?

■ **Q66C Automatic Bulb-Changer**

Looking more or less like a giant metal spider, this multi-limbed man-portable tool is meant to open grilles or panels of any sort with one gripper, remove the dead bulb with another and insert a fresh bulb with the third. However, in practice, it tends to wield whatever it picks

up as a weapon—either flinging it at someone nearby or simply hitting the user with it repeatedly. Also, it has a strange predilection for sticking things other than lightbulbs into power receptacles, such as the user's laser pistol. Sometimes it grabs something it especially likes and just start scrambling away with it, looking for a power receptacle to jam it into.

■ **Recycler Gift Center 393-RYG-006**

More citizens would recycle if there was some sort of immediate benefit to them. The standard recycling chute at 393-MD-006 has been replaced by a sort of automated 'gift bar' where the items you turn in are exchanged for cash. Unfortunately, the minimum cash return the 393-RYG-006 can dispense is 1cr, and a single 64-watt lightbulb is worth less than that. The 393-RYG-006 won't accept any items it can't produce credit for, so the team must recycle something else in addition to the bulb. It doesn't come right out and tell them that, though; it simply says the offered item is below minimum acceptance criteria. It spits out the burnt bulb, and the PCs must find a way to make the Recycler accept it for good.

To reach minimum recycling requirements (and get 1cr back), they must toss about 100cr worth of goods (it doesn't really matter what) into the chute. About 50 bulbs just like the one they already have would work just fine.

■ **JV300 Jetboots**

Tired of chasing that mobile depot around on foot? Wish you had an easier way to get up to where the dead bulb is located? Jetboots

Illo #11: Lightbulb mission -- the easy version (1 of 2)
1/3 page horizontal

This is one of a pair of illos, so check Illo #12 below before starting this one.

A couple of Troubleshooters are walking, bravely, unmolested, down a clean, broad, empty, well-lit corridor. One of them is holding a small lightbulb out in his or her hand, smiling widely, unafraid. The other is looking around nervously as though waiting for something to happen.

are the answer! Fly along like a human bullet! Hover for up to... well, okay, it doesn't really have a hover function. But the 'fly like a bullet' function works great!

■ **Dynamic Ramblings** **'Laser-Light' Hoversport**

Why use public transportation when you can drive yourselves to the destination? This personal autocar transports up to four people in style! Oh, there are six people on the team? (If you have a smaller team, make it a two-seater.) When weighed down by more than its optimal capacity, its electric motor runs at about one-quarter normal speed and its effective battery range is reduced to no more than half a kilometer—not quite far enough to get to the destination.

■ **Because too much is not enough**

A number of senior CPU staffers are following the mission's evolution closely. Each staffer has staked a small fortune that the mission will last a certain number of iterations before failure. Some staffers are trying to game the results by adding their own factors, to make the team fail sooner. In addition to the 'legitimate' complications above, one or more of the following unexpected obstacles also turns up in each iteration. Once you use one, don't bring it back in subsequent iterations... unless you really feel like it.

Remember, most of the violence that occurs is simulated. Most—not necessarily all.

■ **Checkpoint Charlie**

When the team tries to cross into the next sector (which isn't a real sector border, of course, in the Arbitrium), there's an Internal Security barrier staffed by (simulated) YELLOW checkpoint guards (see Internal Security Personnel). They want to hand-search the entire team and all their equipment. They are not particularly careful about it; any gear they handle, they'll drop and break. Will the team let them examine that fragile 64-watt bulb after seeing one or two other things get broken?

■ **Riot act**

At some point along the way, the route is blocked by a riot in progress. Several dozen INFRAREDS in PLC vat-worker jumpsuits are brandishing spray paint and crowbars, shouting something about jobs being taken away by bots. The crowd is thick and the mood is ugly; anyone trying to physically push their way through is likely to get pummeled pretty badly. Then a 4-person Internal Security GREEN Goon team shows up with stunguns, tangles and tear gas grenades. Anyone who is in the area is considered part of the riot.

■ **Uh... THAT light?**

The corridor has changed. Now, it appears more like a canyon, with walls stretching up nearly 200 meters. And instead of an easily-identified, readily-reached location near the floor, the dead bulb appears way above the floor... high up on a KookyKola sign... a hundred meters or more. Elevator? Ladder? You must be kidding.

■ **Impossible grille**

The grille over the burnt-out bulb doesn't just pop open like it used to; now it's screwed shut. Or welded. Possibly with an alarm that goes off if the grille is pried open or broken through. And a little camera inside, recording everything.

■ **NuReceptacle**

Sure, there's the burned-out bulb... only, the plug isn't the same as the team's bulb. Perhaps PLC can sell them an adapter. Perhaps they can jury-rig something that will work. Perhaps they'll just go screaming mad.

■ **Thousand points of (no) light**

There isn't just one burnt-out light. There are hundreds! A giant glowing billboard on the corridor wall is speckled with many, many dark spots—probably one out of every 20 bulbs is dead! They only have the one bulb... Is it one specific socket that they have to replace? Or all of them? Who can tell?

■ **Tentacle attack**

At some point, the route goes 3 meters down a ladder into a lower-level room and then back up on the far side. Around the floor of the room are a dozen or so sealable container boxes, with an eight-armed power-loader bot in the middle. Its long arms can reach almost anywhere in the room—and when anyone tries to cross the room, it attempts to grab them and 'load' them into one of the boxes, which it then seals shut. (Violence 7, Unarmed Combat 11, Stuff Things Into Boxes 13)

Illo #12: Lightbulb mission -- the incredibly hard version (2 of 2)
1/3 page horizontal

This is one of a pair of illos, so check Illo #11 above before starting this one.

Same hallway and Troubleshooters as in #1, same view -- only now they are barely recognizable in all the disastrous confusion that has filled the corridor. Instead of a little lightbulb they're carrying a huge heavy crate, the corridor is packed with rioting INFRAREDS, there is sticky goop all over them and the walls and ceiling, one of the Troubleshooters is being beaten by some kind of crazed bot, etc.

In other words, the exact same image as #1, only the opposite in, uh, almost every way. (The exact set of things which are all over them are totally flexible; the idea is just to show that there are at least three or four problems hitting them all at once.)



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Radiation hazard

There is a temporary barrier erected in the team's way (either on foot, or halting their transport). It says 'DEADLY RADIATION HAZARD BEYOND THIS POINT UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE'. And sure enough, down the corridor/tunnel a ways, there's some sort of eerie blue-purple glow. Who wants to go first?

Repainted hallway

An oldie but a goodie: Wasn't this corridor RED Clearance before? Why is it ULTRAVIOLET Clearance now? (The bulb, of course, is a good 20 or 30 meters down the hall, which is bristling with cameras. It isn't actually re-painted; they've simply switched walls.)

'Help! I've been robbed!'

A BLUE citizen, Franklin-B-COG, is clearly in a state of distress at an intersection, his uniform torn and his face bruised. 'I think they were Death Leopards! They took everything! My ME Card, my laser, my PDC... They went that way!' He points down a totally different corridor than the one the team is supposed to use. 'Go get them!' he continues, if it wasn't already clear what he expects them to do. Are they going to disobey a direct order from a BLUE? You might also remind them that assisting a high-clearance citizen in distress is generally good for commendations and reward. Of course, the team will never catch the thieves because there aren't any.

PURGE bomb

Rounding a corner, the team encounters a shabbily-dressed ORANGE citizen furtively hunched over a bulky device. He leaps up when discovered: 'You'll never take me alive! Viva la PURGE! Down with the Computer! Then he pops a toxin pill and falls dead (i.e. pops a placebo and feigns death.) The bulky device is obviously a powerful bomb, ticking down: two minutes to go. Sure, they could just walk away and pretend they never saw it. Oh, wait, is that a hall camera filming the whole thing? (The bomb is not real and will not actually go off; it just fizzles. Whew! Lucky break, Troubleshooters!)

Exit to the Outdoors

Sure, you *could* go down that corridor as planned... but wait! What's that light down at the end of the side passage? Is that... an unsecured egress into the Outdoors? Look

at it! It's beautiful! (It's also entirely fake; silk flowers and the like, in an area approximately the size of a stadium. Just big enough to get lost in for a loooong time.)

Armory spill

Up ahead of the team's vehicle (when they're in one), a giant automated freight truck suddenly skids, slams off a wall, and flips over. The bay doors bust open, spilling its cargo everywhere: the contents of an Armed Forces weapon depository! Blasters, cone rifles, flamethrowers, plenty of ammo... all of it scattering across the road in all directions. The team is first on the scene! Golly, what will they do about this enormous pile of weaponry blocking the roadway? Do they notice a small fire burning in the cabin of the truck? (A fire that will, of course, eventually spread to the ammo lying everywhere.) And, of course, other citizens show up just about the time the team starts taking everything they can...

Sealed door

The team is directed to their debriefing once again... only to find that the door is a huge, heavy bulkhead, closed and locked, with no intercom. Ha ha ha, hahaha, ha, ha.

A dark room

Perhaps the transbot grinds to a halt in the middle of a tunnel. Or, as soon as they plug the new light in, every light in the area shorts out. All that matters is, at some point—after several iterations and more aggravation than any team should ever have to put up with—the Troubleshooters are suddenly sitting in the dark, with nothing to keep them company except each other... and their own thoughts. And maybe some guns.

And, of course, on top of all these, there is always the possibility one or another of the Troubleshooters' personal debt problems (see sidebar) has caught up with them, even here in the Arbitrium.

Come with me if you want to live

For every CPU staffer who is trying to make the team fail prematurely, there's another who wants them to last at least one more round. As a result, whenever they are falling behind (i.e. spending too much time messing around with one problem, getting hopelessly lost,

utterly failing to come up with a solution to an obstacle), someone or something pops out of the woodwork to help them out. The help might actually be helpful... or it might just be confusing:

- ☉ A fellow passenger on the transbot mysteriously whispers, 'They always have an emergency spare bulb on hand. Tell them it's a Code 5202,' as they step off to the curb.
- ☉ A previously-unnoticed printer in the wall suddenly begins chattering away. The finished page reads 'Your briefing room is always tracked as Tango Niner Four'.
- ☉ The clerk behind the counter calmly slips them a note even as she's arguing with them. The note reads, 'The safeword is "phased banana-rum plum-bomber".'
- ☉ As he waves them through, the border-crossing guard calmly murmurs, without once looking at them, 'It's not speed they're scoring you on'.
- ☉ If the PCs break open any fake equipment, there's a spare 64-watt bulb or some extra intersector transit vouchers or a premade map to their debriefing room inside.
- ☉ If the bulb gets broken and they just can't come up with a way to get another one, some bystander eventually bumps into the team leader and slips a bulb into his overalls.
- ☉ A crack suddenly opens in a nearby wall and a hand gestures them towards what appears to be a secret shortcut passage... but there's no sign of whoever waved them in.
- ☉ If the team gets bogged down in a fight it can't quickly win, a half dozen citizens wearing masks drop out of the ceiling, help them win the fight and then run away.
- ☉ If they're running late, the same masked citizens suddenly appear with a flatbed cargo-carrier, tranquilize the team, load them up and transport them to the next part.

In general, these counter-events should appear once every second iteration or so. At no

point do any of these strange, helpful citizens explain what they meant or what they're doing; some don't even acknowledge the Troubleshooters at all. The incidents should be as baffling and unnerving as they are helpful; they foster at least as much paranoia as the actual obstacles.

All's well that ends eventually

Eventually, your players probably start to realize they're being played, or at least that things are even less genuine than they appear. They might decide to opt out after only a few iterations, choosing to take the money they (theoretically) have in hand over the uncertain possibility of a little more. If this happens too soon (i.e. before you spring the endgame we're about to recommend), try to insure at least one more pass through by employing our favorite Troubleshooter carrot: more money. If the team says they've had enough now, thank you very much, Lena-B confers a minute with her fellow BLUEs, then inform the team that there are still a few more improvements they want to assess, and if the team agrees to re-run the mission, their mission bonus will be increased by 3,000cr instead of only 1,000. If they continue to balk, she offers 5,000cr.

If they still want out, she confers with her associates once again and then sadly inform the team there was a mistake in their latest scoring—it looks like they failed to meet the mission performance requirements after all, thus forfeiting their earned bonus up to this point. That's too bad. Would they perhaps prefer to go ahead and try the mission again, at the enhanced mission-bonus level? (Lena-B pretty much does whatever it takes to always make the Troubleshooters go back for another round. The betting pool is only valid if the team fails to complete the mission, not if they choose to stop.)

VIOLET intervention

At some point, once the Troubleshooters have gone through several iterations and are on their way back to start one more—and they've begun to figure out they're being messed with, they just don't know why yet—they arrive in C-63 and find that Rydell-G isn't there! Instead, sitting in a chair by the podium is an unidentified VIOLET-Clearance citizen in a sharp CPU Executive suit, her face concealed in ominous shadows.

'I'll cut right to the chase,' she says. 'My senior staff has better things to do than play betting games on the outcome of Troubleshooter missions in our Arbitrium simulator. I'm extremely disappointed in them. You' [she points at each Troubleshooter in turn] 'will be the instrument of my displeasure. This' [she opens a folder and withdraws a single sheet of paper] 'is a termination authorization for Rydell-G-FAR. Make him an example for the others. Once he has completed this briefing, take care of it. You are then to enter the simulation once again and proceed to Lena-B-ROM's location, as you've been doing. Arrest her and her compatriots and escort them out of the simulator, back to this location for pickup by Internal Security. Word of Rydell-G's termination will spread quickly, so you must reach Lena-B as fast as possible. However, every square meter of the Arbitrium is under her direct observation; if you show any sign that you are no longer performing the simulated mission, but are instead coming for her, she will be -- prepared -- when you arrive. Your bonus for completing these mission objectives will be 5,000 credits. You should be glad you're not being fined for the cost of all this wasted simulator time.' With that, she stands, setting the termination voucher on the seat and tapping it twice with her fingertip as though reminding you not to mess this up. Then she strides out of the door you came in through.

Seconds later, Rydell-G rushes in from the side door, out of breath. (Did the team pick up that termination voucher off the chair already?) He apologizes for being late—some unexpected complications came up—and proceeds to launch into one more version of the briefing (whatever bits you want to use). When or before he's done, presumably, the team does its best to waste him. If they still don't have any weapons at this point, that might be messy. (If they picked up a lot of goodies from the 'Armory Spill', it might be even messier!)

The team must then have *one more go* at the lightbulb mission. Pay close attention to anything they say or do that might give away, to Lena-B and the other BLUE bettors, that she's in trouble. If you've been holding back on the complications and obstacles so far, feel free to just dump the rest of them into this iteration.

When they finally reach Lena-B's debriefing, there are a few possible outcomes:

- ☉ If they keep it a secret all through the final iteration, and they have weapons, Lena-B and the other BLUEs give up without a fight. As they're being escorted out, if you want some fun, throw some IntSec and Vulture attacks at them—you know, those IntSec and Vulture troops who are actually untrained CPU simulation engineers. (This might also be a good place for another Dark Room.)
- ☉ If they keep it secret but don't have weapons when they reach Lena-B, she and her compatriots are packing a variety of lasers, blasters, high-power slugthrowers and energy pistols, and they give the team a new mission: assassinate Amanda-V-ORG—the executive who sent them in here just now—or die. (Needless to say, they're going to die either way.)
- ☉ If the Troubleshooters gave away they were coming to arrest her, or that Rydell-G was terminated, she and her compatriots will not be in the debriefing room any more. In their place is a really large bomb.
- ☉ If they gave it away, but it's clear to Lena-B they don't intend to arrest her, the debriefing room is empty. On the door is a sign that says, 'Experiment cut short for lack of funds.' Each player's PDC beeps with an alert that they received a standard mission bonus of 1,000cr.
- ☉ If they kept it secret, but then convince Lena-B they're not there to arrest anyone, she can only authorize a mission bonus of 1,000cr. (They're then free to turn around and arrest her, of course!)

If they arrest Lena-B and the others and manage to return them to C-63, Amanda-V is true to her word, putting through a mission bonus of 5,000cr.

And as the team heads into the common lounge area at Troubleshooter Central for a little relaxation, they notice the WELCOME sign by the main desk is dark. The front desk dispatcher looks up as they come in: 'Hey, glad you guys are here. You're on lightbulb duty today, right? Can you run out and pick up a 64-watt for the WELCOME sign here...?'

SERVICE HPD & Mind Control

HPD & Mind Control contents

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HPD&MC hangouts

Screening rooms: HPD&MC produces hours of original vid content every day. Before these programs air, service group bureaucrats and in-house censors must preview them. The screening rooms (Clearance GREEN) feature comfortable seating, 11.3 surround sound, a giant projection screen and a wide array of beverages. They have become popular among those who wish to avoid real work.

On the set: On high-budget productions, HPD&MC staffers often drop by the set (Clearance ORANGE, usually) to check the shoot status. Some of them hope to influence the production, thereby earning Associate Producer credit. Others raid the craft services table, which freely offers real-food snacks for which an ordinary ORANGE would commit assault.

Rumors

☉ 'Do you think it's true, about the subliminals they've been adding to the music in all the elevators? I mean, I never really liked SoyLike products before, but I just can't get enough of these NuSoyLike Gummiballs. Have you tried them yet? They're sooooooytastic!'

☉ 'They're making *Troubleshooters* live this season. If you're on a mission in the evening, the whole complex might be watching your multicorder's feed.'

☉ 'There's a free concert in the Unity Quad tomorrow night. The Atomic Autocars are playing, so you know it'll be packed, and IntSec will be heavy there. Which means *lighter*-than-normal security everywhere else...'

Service services

- ☉ 'Welcome to our new reality show, *Trouble Survivor!* You'll each be assigned one of these remote surveillance drones to keep an eye on you. Make sure that you make your activities as exciting as possible for the benefit of our Complex-wide audience! And remember—keep it real.'
- ☉ 'Sales for HotBot flavor algae chips have dropped 12% over the last month. One of you needs to wear this portable BackpackAnnouncer; it'll broadcast the HotBot jingle at a cool 150 decibels. Everyone else needs to eat at least 20 packs of chips apiece in public locations. Don't worry, we'll supply the chips.'
- ☉ 'There's a combot storage facility in your target sector that's zoned for replacement by a new RED barracks. You'll escort Una-G-BMR-6 to the target area and assist her in demolishing the facility. Don't worry, we've been assured that all of the combots have been removed from the area.'
- ☉ 'Did you know that a citizen is only as successful as his vocabulary? We're giving each of you a different list of twenty Power Words to help you live a Power Life. At every suitable opportunity, you should replace your normal, hum-drum word choices with one of these fine alternatives.'
- ☉ 'The cast of "Tunnel Rangers" is doing a publicity tour. As you know, the latest season has been... controversial. While they are appearing in this sector, your team will act as body-doubles and decoys to disguise their minute-to-minute location and movements.'
- ☉ 'We are collecting a volume of Troubleshooter poetry. During your mission, if any of your experiences make a particularly strong impression, please record those thoughts in poetic form. You will be paid a small bonus for each piece that appears in the finished collection.'
- ☉ 'Luke-Y-PNG-3 has recently been terminated for treason. The sector where your mission takes place still has Hero of Our Complex posters of Luke-Y that need to be removed before we can air his trial tomorrow. You'll receive a bonus for every poster of Luke-Y you bring back from your mission.' (Members of Luke-Y's secret society revere him. They try to protect the posters they have and steal any posters the Troubleshooters find.)
- ☉ 'Proper and appropriate response to the regularly-scheduled fire drills has been in steady decline in the sector. Citizens are not taking the drills seriously enough. The next drill will occur at 0930 tomorrow morning. To help remind our sector residents that fire is no trivial matter, you are to insure that the kitchenette area between C Hall and D Hall is engulfed in flame a few minutes prior. Of course the proper authorization is being filed on your behalf.'
- ☉ 'We find that citizens are more likely to experience positive growth from any trauma they experience if they learn some sort of moral lesson from it. If, during your mission, you encounter citizens who have been traumatized—whether through the acts of traitors or through your actions in dealing with those traitors—please be sure to impart to them a valuable moral that will benefit them when they have time to reflect on it.'
- ☉ 'Everyone in Funk-E-Town Towers is being moved across the sector to the new PlushLux CondoMinimums. Unfortunately, a recent PURGE attack has damaged most of the transbots in the sector. So—while fulfilling your primary mission objectives-- you will be assisting with the hand-carrying of furniture and boxed personal effects. As these relocating citizens are all INDIGO and VIOLET in clearance, and thus own a great deal of property you are not cleared for, you'll need to wear these blindfolds.'

New HPD&MC service firms

Alpha Complex Charities

Example firms: Selfless Generosity Corp, Cathy-G's Donatorium
Revenue stream: Charitable donations from private citizens.
Secret society taint: FCCC-P, Humanists (heavy)

Alpha Complex produces enough resources that no citizen need ever go without food, clothing or shelter. However, studies have shown many people feel good when they give to those less fortunate. To allow citizens this gentle pleasure, Alpha Complex Charities employ INFRAREDS (and occasionally assigned Troubleshooters) as professional indigents, vagrants and hobos, whose simulated destitute existence can be brightened by gifts from more privileged citizens.

Charity workers go from barracks to barracks, apartment to apartment, collecting donations from citizens whose hearts are touched by the plight of the needy. This money goes to the charity's operating expenses, providing the workers' salaries and the stockholders' dividends.

And what of the indigents themselves? They travel the lowest sublevels, despised and derided by all—by appointment. Studies have also shown many humans feel good when they *abuse* those less fortunate than themselves, and even the INFRAREDS—perhaps they more than most—need someone to abuse. So the indigents make public appearances, scheduled by the charities in consultation with CPU and Internal Security, to face predetermined public derision.

Celebrity Emulators

Example firms: Multi-Teela Marketing, NotCloning HPD
Revenue stream: Contracts with HPD&MC and PLC, percentage of sales.
Secret society taint: Death Leopard (uncommon), FCCC-P (uncommon)

Because seeing celebrities in the flesh increases public morale, HPD&MC regularly arranges to have them seen in public in various activities. But Alpha Complex is big, and there aren't enough celebrities to go around. Celebrity Emulator service firms prepare body-double actors for prominent citizens. Through cosmetic surgery, acting lessons and specialized voice training, these firms transform washed-up ORANGE vidstars into near-perfect simulacra of such famous individuals as Teela-O-MLY and Friendly Frank-U. These lookalikes then appear at public functions while the real celebrities go about their Computer-ordained business elsewhere. Other low-clearance workers serve as bodyguards, makeup artists and bureaucratic assistants; their superiors scout for talent and practice advanced cosmetic surgery techniques.

Rumors that these firms would prematurely decant a celebrity's next clone to act as a body double are ridiculous. Likewise, give no credence to the notion they would imprint a worker's MemoMax file onto a celebrity's vacant clone body. It's like all those tales of deranged fans kidnapping Celebrity Emulators and holding them in perpetual slavery—absurd!

Celebrity Lifestyle Documenters

Example firms: Alpha Complex Enquirer, Entertainment Weekcycle, This Is ULTRAVIOLET!



Revenue stream: Contracts with HPD&MC. Sales of memorabilia. Kickbacks from IntSec for exposing high-profile traitors.

Secret society taint: FCCC-P, Romantics

Nightly vidshows tell the stories of Alpha Complex's humble heroes, give glimpses of the exotic lives of high-clearance citizens, and depict the deeds of fictional characters played by star actors. Some citizens can't get enough of their favorite celebrities.

Celebrity Lifestyle Documenters are data gophers who sift through endless records and vidshow archives to collect even the most trivial details of celebrities' lives. They then organize these factoids into an informative (if shallow) article, attach pictures, and distribute or sell the final product to fans.

Celebrity Lifestyle Documenters don't stop there, though. Firms often tail favorite celebrities with cameras or spy gear in hopes of revealing their secret lives. Sometimes they stumble onto incontrovertible evidence of a celebrity's treason. In these cases, most Celebrity Lifestyle Documenters take the evidence straight to IntSec, for celebrated traitors bring substantial rewards. Some Celebrity Lifestyle Documenters discreetly give the target a chance to purchase his privacy—often in the currency of exclusive interviews and autographed memorabilia (which fetch good prices on C-Bay). A few blackmail the traitors while the firm's accountants work out which of the other two methods is likely to be more profitable.

Comprssd Housing Recyclers

Example firms: Fold-a-Lot, Mobile Manors, NuDorm
Revenue stream: Subsidized rent and eventual profit from sale of re-defined property; sale of increased-efficiency furnishings
Secret society taint: Free Enterprise



SERVICE, SERVICE! CLEARANCE ULTRAVIOLET

Not all of Alpha Complex's annual expansion is the result of actual construction on the outside edges. Sectors located deep within the complex need to increase their population capacity as well, and here Compressed Housing Recyclers play a vital role.

Did you know enormous amounts of Alpha Complex space are simply not used for anything most of the time? It's true! That open space under the edge of the spherical reactor could easily accommodate a cot, footlocker, portable reading screen and first-aid kit—everything a RED Troubleshooter needs! Those steam pipes have nearly two meters of space between them, and they only have actual boiling-temperature steam going through them during periods of peak system load. Any decent Compressed Housing Recycler firm can easily build two dozen bunks in among them and arrange a sleeping schedule that avoided scalding burns.

Additionally, these firms are well-known for their clever, space-efficient furnishings which often combine two, three, or even four separate functions into single items of high aesthetic quality. Thus, a portable hotplate might be reconfigurable—with no more than 9-14 minutes of light tool work-- to serve as a uniform wardrobe, laser maintenance kit or confession terminal. Space-conscious citizens, such as those living between steam pipes, can access all these important functions without using so much room. That extra leg-room can be used however you want, citizen! Feel free to stretch out those legs most of the way—you've earned it!

External Border Expanders

Example firms: Crackadom, Future Bubble, Brighter Pastures

Revenue stream: Sale and rental of newly-created property

Secret society taint: Sierra Club (all-pervasive)

There are always more citizens, but around HPD&MC firms there's a saying: 'They aren't making any more land!' This, in fact, is not true; Alpha Complex's inhabitable volume grows by approximately 0.6% annually. Most of this is the result of External Border Expanders tacking more compartments and corridors onto the outside of the complex's outermost sectors, enclosing areas that had previously been Outdoors. Using heavy lifting and clearing equipment, they rapidly dispose of large amounts of useless, unsightly vegetation, stalagmite-ridden caverns and other so-called 'natural terrain', smoothing and flattening with high-quality concrete and laminate materials and setting ever-familiar and comforting walls and ceilings into place to form kilometer after kilometer of fresh, new, useful space for citizens to live and work in.

As one might imagine, these construction operations must be kept highly classified and well protected until they are fully completed and sealed, inasmuch as they represent an enormous opportunity for citizens susceptible to Sudden Unauthorized Emigration Syndrome.

Invalid Care Providers

Example firms: We Care Providers, Trauma Recovery Providers, Long Term Health System

Revenue stream: Contract with HPD&MC to provide long-term care

Secret society taint: Humanists, Mystics (heavy), Pro Tech

Cloning, cybernetics, advanced medicine, and docbots have reduced the need for long-term medical care by an estimated 83.7% since Old Reckoning times, but they have not quite eliminated it. Invalid Care Providers tend to the injured, ill and incurably irradiated. Employing

the latest advances in medical technology, the firms provide cozy living quarters, delicious meals, and tender medical care.

At least, that's what it says in their contracts. In practice, Invalid Care docbots and human doctors volunteer patients for R&D medical experiments in exchange for the smallest bribe. This lets the doctors steal a patient's drugs for their own recreational use. Firms are paid a flat rate, so they have incentive to withhold expensive medical procedures and release patients as soon as they can stagger out the door. If you don't want to perish in the waiting room while filling out admissions forms, bribery helps—a lot. But even bribes can't help with docbots that operate on the wrong person or accidentally disconnect life support systems.

Invalid Care Providers give their patients a comfortable and worry-free place to heal. At least, it's worry-free if you're comatose—and they can arrange that too.

Junior Happytime Production Consultants

Example firms: XYZ Media; Megamedia; Pix

Revenue stream: Tendered contracts with HPD & MC

Secret society taint: Most societies give it a go to access impressionable minds.

Among HPD's massive amounts of generic entertainment, niche markets have their place, including the engagement of bright young minds. The Alpha Complex juvenile population attend school all day and subliminal sleeptime loyalty reinforcement all night, but in the quiet moments between, they enjoy old-fashioned kids' entertainment, replete with subliminal messages and product placements.

To meet the demand for juvenile programming, HPD&MC contracts with Junior

HPD & MIND CONTROL Clear Communication Initiative

Instruction: Proofread any written documents for spelling, punctuation or grammatical errors.

Benefit: You can ask to proofread any form, manual, or other printed document. You must quickly identify and correct (using proofreading marks) any errors you find before returning it. For every error you fail to correct, you will be fined 10cr.

GM Note: A proofreader who examines a classified document for too long (say, a page per minute) arouses suspicion, and if he lets on he remembers anything about a document that is above his security clearance, a brainscrub is likely.

HPD & MIND CONTROL Mutant Field Registration

Instruction: Register any unregistered mutants you encounter in the course of your duties.

Benefit: You receive a dozen stick-on yellow stripes and 7543-5n/4 Mutant Field Registration forms. Whenever you encounter an unregistered mutant, you are to present him with a form and assist him in filling it out. You are authorized to terminate the mutant if and only if he clearly understands and refuses the opportunity to register his mutation. You will be fined 10cr for each error on a registration form. If a mutant you registered proves to be a traitor, you may be punished by probation and/or censure.

Happytime Production Consultants to produce such memorable classics as 'Mega Super Happy Mecha Hour', 'Mecha Super Mega Happy Hour' and the recent 'Trublyshoobas'. On a tight budget and with limited time, Consultancies use a lot of live-action footage digitally modified with bright colors, flashy explosions and augmented sound effects. Low clearance workers gather the live footage, and higher-clearance supervisors handle editing, scripting, directing, special effects and publicity. Where the real action lacks a certain something or needs a moral ending Consultancy workers even take on small acting parts or work as stunt doubles to deliver a loyalty-bolstering conclusion.

Media Production and Approval Administrators

Example firms: Decent Programming HPD, The Computer's Monitors, Official Artists, Platinum Music

Revenue stream: Contracts with HPD&MC to produce media content. Product placement royalties.

Secret society taint: Anti-Mutant, FCCC-P, Illuminati (heavy? who knows?), Romantics

Loyalty songs, vidshows, propaganda murals and inspiring essays don't just appear. The production of public media demands legions of writers, composers, performers, painters, and other creatives. Because even officially approved artists sometimes express themselves in ways that do not serve Alpha Complex's interests, further legions of editors and directors eliminate unorthodoxy. Media Production and Approval Administrators prize creativity highly, but only within boundaries determined by the firm's producers and publishers. This triple filter completely eliminates any chance secret society propaganda will find its way into mainstream media.

Media Production and Approval Administrator firms usually specialize in particular media—online content, music, vids, or loyalty posters. Firms with different areas of interest seldom consider each other competitors, because they earn revenue based on how many of their products are distributed, regardless of the market. But because they are powerless over HPD&MC's purchases of these products, Media Production and Approval Administrators are disdained as mere laborers. Frustrated staffers resort to passive-aggressive behavior—pushing the edge of deadlines, playing dangerous pranks, or slipping subtle treason by the censors.

Sometimes the passive aggression gets more active. Popular creative minds may try to extort their superiors by withholding their best effort until suitably compensated. Competitor firms bribe writers, directors and producers into inserting commercial plugs for their products. This helps explain why, though Media Production and Approval Administrators produce mass entertainment, much of this entertainment consists of infomercials and unconvincing rave reviews about horrible products.

Registered Mutant Relations

Example firms: MutieLovers, Mutant Placement Services, Stripe of Honor MC

Revenue stream: Contract with HPD&MC to reduce instances of violence against registered mutants.

Secret society taint: Anti-Mutant (heavy), Psion (heavy)

Even though these unfortunate souls have registered their mutation and now faithfully serve The Computer, registered mutants still endure prejudice, from subtle excuses ('Just ran out of soylent, sorry!') to outright violence. This is unfortunate because the mutant can still be useful to society; injuring a registered mutant is technically a waste of Computer resources.

Registered Mutant Relations firms seek to improve public perception of registered mutants. This way, the mutants can still do their patriotic duty for Alpha Complex just like regular genetically pure and trustworthy human citizens. Efforts range from quick vidshow spots—the ten-second 'Just Like Us, But Not' spots are the most famous—to informational pamphlets distributed at transbot stations. Some firms even solicit anonymous donations to help newly registered mutants take on their redefined role in society.

But regardless of how hard they try, these firms know they won't get far. HPD&MC gives mutant-suspicion propaganda firms much bigger budgets. Citizens have the dangers of mutants drilled into their heads from the creche to the euthanasia center, and that conditioning is difficult to overcome.

And that's fine, because the Mutant Relations firms have other agendas. Both Anti-Mutant and Psion pervade these firms in hopes of either terminating or rescuing mutants. Though Registered Mutant Relations firms compete with one another for contracts or over service group rivalries, a firm's main competition is interior. These firms have some of the

highest fatal accident rates of any service firm type—which gets blamed on the presence of dangerous and untrustworthy registered mutants.

Temporary Inforestorational Damage Obfuscation

Example firms: Le Facade; C-This; Better Than That

Revenue stream: Contract with HPD & MC
Secret society taint: Free Enterprise (common); Illuminati (uncommon? who knows?)

Technical Services works under considerable pressure and a constant backlog of valid requests for maintenance and repair. For every one job completed, a dozen or more go wanting, waiting for weeks on end to repair slightly-less-than-vital systems and cover up unsightly stains, burns and cracks from minor explosions. With Tech Services demanding ever more funding to support more staff, and therefore processing more work requests, a few clever marketeers in the upper echelons of HPD & MC came up with a brilliant idea: Make the damage disappear, in a way that informs, excites and engenders acts of increased consumption.

Temporary Inforestorational Damage Obfuscation firms scout sites of damage and destruction to enhance the life of every citizen. Associates of TIDO firms carry stickers, posters, banners, transfers and loyalty-bolstering cardboard cutouts; they use these to obscure demoralizing instances of long-term damage. Instead of a gaping crater in the floor, they offer a rousing standee of Teela-O blasting five shades of treason out of ravaging Communist hordes in her latest, greatest Action Force Teela-O adventure. Forget the big hole in the wall with green sludge trickling out of it... now, see the latest awe inspiring poster ad for Bouncy Bubble Beverage with added Zesty Tingle and Enzyme 43a-8875! Well timed and targeted advertising leads to enhanced consumerism, greater happiness and a significant swing in funding away from the incompetency of Technical Services into HPD & MC coffers. What could be 'Better Than That'?



HPD&MC personnel

Talent collector

Service firm type: Any involved with media production

Security clearance: ORANGE through GREEN

Common mutation(s): Charm, Empathy

Secret society taint: Free Enterprise

Typical Access: 12

ACTION SKILLS & SPECIALTIES

Management 09

Con Games 13

Interrogation 03

Moxie 13

Misrepresent Obvious Facts 15

Stealth 14

High Alert 01

Shadowing 18

Violence 06

Stun 'Em Right When They Finally Trust You 12

KNOWLEDGE SKILLS & SPECIALTIES

Hardware 02

Software 09

Data Search 15

Operating Systems 02

Wetware 05

Bioweapons 01

Pharmatherapy 09

Spike Food With Drugs 11

ASSIGNED EQUIPMENT

(1) list of open casting call roles

PERSONAL EQUIPMENT

(1) stungun

(1) tangler

Various sleep/paralysis-inducing drugs

Breaking into show business is a lot harder than most citizens imagine. The big vid productions can't just use Random-ANY-1 for their top fare. They're always looking for the exact right Type for this role or that one, and most citizens aren't any useful Type at all. But if you somehow happen to be that Type, not only is it easy for you to get into show biz—it might be difficult for you to stay out of it. An entire phenotype of casting agent has the desperate job of combing the vast population of Alpha Complex, finding the exact right citizen for a given role and bringing him back to be cast in it-- whether or not he wants the job!

Talent collectors (sometimes known as 'bounty casters') pore through the publically-readable databases (and many of the locked ones), read any and every Troubleshooter activity log they can access and generally comb through every possible source of information about their fellow citizens, matching it all against the look, the attitude, the *je ne sais quoi* of some vid-production character now in development. When they find a match, they bring the subject in for an audition as quickly and efficiently as possible—no matter what else that citizen might be doing at the time. The talent collector isn't interested in the citizen's other obligations; there are other bounty casters out there looking to fill the same part, and it's first come, first served. There's a small payout for every audition landed, but the real money comes if your 'discovery' gets the part. So Talent Collectors can be vindictive toward a collected casting-bounty who deliberately flubs his big audition.

Perhaps unsurprisingly (at least to **PARANOIA** players), the talent collector's best sources of audition material are the Troubleshooters.



Little boxes on the hillside,
Little boxes made of ticky-tacky,
Little boxes, little boxes,
Little boxes, all the same.
There's a green one and a pink one
And a blue one and a yellow one
And they're all made out of ticky-tacky
And they all look just the same.

—Malvina Reynolds, 'Little Boxes' (1962)

Vid journalist

Service firm: News Services

Security clearance: ORANGE or YELLOW

Common mutation(s): Charm, Empathy, Hypersenses, Uncanny Luck, X-Ray Vision

Secret society taint: Any

Typical Access: 07

ACTION SKILLS & SPECIALTIES

Management 08

Bootlicking 01

Chutzpah 12

Convince Victim To Be Interviewed 14

Hygiene 12

Intimidation 01

Moxie 12

Stealth 08

Recognize Troubleshooter From News Reports 14

Security Systems 01

Shadowing 12

Violence 04

KNOWLEDGE SKILLS & SPECIALTIES

Hardware 06

Multicorder Maintenance 12

Software 07

Multicorder Programming 13

Data Search 11

Operating Systems 01

Wetware 06

Biosciences 01

Suggestion 10

PERSONAL EQUIPMENT

(1) pack of Cancer-Causing Cigarettes

(1) bottle of random feel-good pills

(1) half-empty flask of E-Z-DUZ-IT

ASSIGNED EQUIPMENT

(1) multicorder

(1) notepad & stylus

Vid journalists flock to Troubleshooters as flies swarm around rotting meat. These guys are always on the lookout for exciting news stories, and who's more likely to generate exciting stories than Troubleshooters?

If The Computer publicly announces the site of a Troubleshooter mission, journalists show up in large numbers. They crowd around the PCs, demanding information and begging for personal interviews, refusing to be put off. Troubleshooters who grimace and snarl things like 'No comment' receive fines from The Computer for unhappiness and insubordination. Those who do any talking find their comments taken horribly out of context.

The Computer: Citizen, on today's news program, you said 'Of course no one takes Jack-B-WQE-2 seriously anymore.' Did you truly mean to imply a widespread disregard for a respected citizen of higher clearance?

Vid journalists look down on communications and recording officers, seeing them as inept amateurs who nonetheless have the power to screw up their carefully planned interviews with contradictory footage. A common tactic is for the journalist to offer to take the C&R officer under his wing and teach him a few pointers, then to sabotage his multicorder.

Each journalist is affiliated with a secret society, and he tries (when it's feasible) to slant his stories to fulfill its propaganda needs. For example, if he belongs to Corpore Metal, the journalist may ask Troubleshooters about bots they admire, whether they've ever owned a petbot and so forth. If the PCs aren't careful, the resulting news program makes them look like members of that secret society. Not only can this cause problems with IntSec, but it makes their own societies suspicious.

The worst thing about journalists is their knack for showing up whenever the Troubleshooters need to discuss matters of dubious loyalty. You know, like whenever the team gets a hose-job mission they can only solve by some treasonous means? That's when they find a journalist sticking to them like glue, recording their every word.

Sometimes the only way to deal with a nosy journalist is to shoot him and hide the body. But these guys don't work alone; they're all affiliated with one of the major vid news service firms. Someone may demand an inquest, and when IntSec goes looking for suspects, well, the journalist's last job involved doing an exposé on this particular Troubleshooter team...

HPD & MIND CONTROL *Water Conservation Engineer*

Instructions: Identify faulty plumbing for later repair. Apply temporary sealant to stop the flow.

Benefits: You are issued a four-liter backpack (weight 12kg) of 'Super StopLeak' with applicator. Super StopLeak is spray-on foam that hardens after two seconds of exposure to air, even when wet, and forms an airtight, watertight barrier. The foam has no protective armor value in combat. The foam degrades in 48 hours.

INTERNAL SECURITY *Door Clearance Testing*

Instruction: Ensure the doors in Alpha Complex are properly keyed to their security clearance.

Benefit: You are given a special keycard that can be set to any security clearance level. You are to test door locks in Alpha Complex to be sure they will not open for a keycard of lower security clearance than the door. You are **not** authorized to open any door above your security clearance.

(Better hope they work properly.)



ROCKUMENTARY



Famous musician Rand-Y-ROK and his ROKbots are playing an evening concert in Rand-Y's home sector. During the day before the concert, Rand-Y will visit old friends in the area, many of whom he has not seen since he got his big break years ago. HPD&MC producer Oliver-G-HLI is using the occasion to film a documentary about Rand-Y's humble beginnings.

But there are security issues. As an INFRARED factory worker in ROK Sector PLC, Rand-Y was an ambitious young musician. He made many enemies before he got his big break on Alpha Complex Idol. ROK Sector suffers from chronic substandard morale; it's about as close to a 'tough neighborhood' as Alpha Complex gets, outside the Underplex. For the only famous citizen from the sector—especially one who stepped on half the residents on his way up—ROK Sector becomes downright dangerous. So Oliver-G summons the Troubleshooters to collect the raw footage for the documentary and to protect Rand-Y from trouble in his home sector.

However, Rand-Y has other ideas for his walk down memory lane. Though genuinely talented, he's vengeful and prone to venial treasons. He has scores to settle and evidence to destroy. Under the guise of visiting old friends, Rand-Y takes care of unfinished business—violently.

The Troubleshooters have three objectives. First, they must keep Rand-Y alive and healthy for tonight's concert. Second, they must make sure he shows up, preferably on time. Third, they must shoot enough footage for Oliver-G's documentary and deliver the contents intact. Keeping alive and sane is optional.

Mission alert

The Troubleshooters are roused at 06:00 hours by the insistent chirping of their PDCs. The din also wakes up their roommates, so there is no chance of anyone sleeping through this mission alert. When they answer it, they find a message from The Computer:

'Congratulations, Troubleshooter! Due to your brilliant work in the production of *Faces of Treason*, you have been hand-picked by HPD&MC producer Oliver-G-HLI to help film an exciting new documentary in ROK Sector tentatively titled [Deleted for Security Reasons]. Report immediately to Studio ADCC-4 for briefing.'

What work did the Troubleshooters do for *Faces of Treason*? Don't ask us. Maybe Oliver-G used footage from one of the Troubleshooters' last mission records in a documentary. If this is their first mission together, maybe a glitch switched their names for the team who was supposed to get this mission. Let the players think they must pretend to know what they did on this other documentary.

As they travel to Studio ADCC-4, give the PCs a chance to contact their secret societies for additional missions to perform in ROK Sector. None of those missions should interfere with Rand-Y's goals in the sector. Ideally, they should focus on the Armored Documentary Crew Carrier (see below), its crew, the other Troubleshooters, and the locations they will film.

Yet another movie

Studio ADCC-4 is a large, open room. At the center stands a long, narrow, armor-plated trailer on tank treads. This gigantic mobile studio is called an Armored Documentary Crew Carrier (see the sidebar on the facing page). There are no visible windows, and the metal door on one of the long sides lies at the top of a two-meter-high staircase. With the exception of Rand-Y's apartment and the bathrooms, the ADCC studio is Tension 4.

When the PCs enter the main room (the editing room), the only others there are a fat GREEN guy in a wheelchair (Oliver-G-HLI) and a young RED intern reclining in a chair, obviously asleep (Mike-R-NBE). As soon as everyone enters, the door slides shut behind them, and with a hiss a magnetic lock seals the ADCC. Oliver-G sizes up the Troubleshooters and hits a button on his wheelchair. There is a roar from everywhere, and the floor starts to rumble under their feet. Oliver-G smiles.

'Hello, Troubleshooters! I'm sure you've all heard of Rand-Y-ROK and the ROKbots. He's the biggest thing HPD&MC has found since Teela O'Malley. Phenomenal musician. Got his start on Alpha Complex Idol. Today, for the first time since he got his big break eight years ago, Rand-Y is going back to ROK Sector, his old home stomping grounds.'

'Rand-Y will be playing a free concert for the whole sector later tonight, and we've convinced him to make some special appearances in the sector beforehand. This whole day will be one moment of touching nostalgia'

[continued on page 48]

**3-6 PLAYERS
1 SESSION
(4-5 HOURS)**

ERIC ZAWADZKI

Armored Documentary Crew Carrier

The documentary film crews of HPD&MC often shoot footage in dangerous areas. In years past, documentary crews have suffered an unacceptably large number of injuries, maimings, and deaths that could have been prevented by the availability of safe shelter. HPD&MC convinced R&D to modify an Armed Forces armored personnel carrier, and the result was the first Armored Documentary Crew Carrier (ADCC). Ten meters long, 4 wide, and 5 high, the ADCC can carry a crew of 19 (if everyone gets real friendly), as well as enough equipment and software to shoot and edit a documentary from start to finish without ever having to leave the studio.

The heavily armored ADCC travels on tank treads. The hardened one-seat turret on top is equipped with a Multicorder 3. The ADCC has a combat brain that will obey the orders of the producer or director to the best of its abilities. It's actually pretty sharp for a bot, though it sometimes sees imaginary enemies.

Because of its size, there are substantial limits to the ADCC's mobility. In densely built areas like ROK Sector, it cannot travel beyond the major thoroughfares, so camera crews must leave it to shoot footage. In these cases, the ADCC serves as a home base and safe refuge between filming sessions.

Because all of this has to be mobile, ADCC crews live in close quarters. The layout (all RED Clearance and **Tension 18** unless otherwise noted):

Editing room: The primary work space for the director and two editors. This area is actually relatively spacious, because Oliver-G must get around it in his wheelchair. The trade-off is that this room has devoured the attached kitchenette. The sound editor must move his chair before anyone can open the refrigerator, and his keyboard is perched over the kitchen sink. The visuals editor has to move his keyboard to open the microwave, and his chair blocks the pantry of dehydrated food.

Bathrooms: The ADCC was originally designed with five closet-sized bathrooms, each just big enough to sit down. Unfortunately, three of these are now closets for film equipment, and the crew gets angry at anyone who accidentally turns on the water. One of the remaining bathrooms is currently occupied by Rand-Y's ROKbot

guitarist. This leaves one bathroom for 19 people, so it never stays empty long...

Camera closet: A converted bathroom full of cameras, microphones, tripods, film, lenses, and batteries. Finding anything in it (or any of the other supply closets) usually means taking everything out of the closet first.

Tech closet: Another converted bathroom full of lights, special effects gear and generic backdrops. There are also some pyrotechnic chemicals. On the door is clearly posted a No Smoking sign, which everyone on the ADCC routinely ignores.

Prop closet: A third converted bathroom filled with props, costumes, and make-up. The crew also keeps the stun batons and cleaning supplies here.

Producer's apartment: Rand-Y's room has a narrow bed that doubles as the chair to a small combination desk/dresser (currently mostly concealed by Rand-Y's keyboard and guitar cases). Beside it is a bassbot which must be crawled over to get to the closet-sized bathroom. By the standards of the ADCC, this place is positively opulent. There is no surveillance (**Tension 0**).

Director's quarters: This is identical to the producer's apartment, except there's no bathroom. Oliver-G's room has been altered to allow him to get around in spite of his handicap. GREEN Clearance.

Editors' quarters: This is similar to the director's quarters. There are two bunks and no desk—just a wall dresser. YELLOW.

Technicians' quarters: This is identical to the editors' quarters except the bunks are stacked three high instead of two high, making it necessary to crawl in and out of the beds. ORANGE.

Crew quarters: This is similar to the Technicians' quarters except two times as wide, with six bunks, each of which is just wide enough for two close friends to sleep side-by-side. There are no dresser drawers. There aren't even any lights. Getting to this room is further complicated by the meter-tall drummerbot that has been crammed into the doorway. In addition, Rand-Y's amplifiers are taking up one of the bunks.

Illo #13: Studio ADCC-4
Square

Exterior view of mobile production studio ADCC-4. Take an oversized RV, cover it with armor, and put it on tank treads. There's a tank turret on top, but instead of a very big gun, there is a very big camera. If you have room, put RV-like steps up to a door like some kind of airlock or safe. "Studio ADCC-4" is emblazoned on the side of the vehicle.



Cast and crew

Everyone on the ADCC, other than the PCs, works for the HPD&MC service firm StoryMakers, a small documentary production outfit. Assume any skills not listed here are 6. Assume any unspecified clone number is 2.

Rand-Y-ROK-3: Mystic (former Communist, former lots of others); Regeneration 13; Management 10, Chutzpah 14, Music 14; Stealth 4; Violence 4; Hardware 8, ROKbot Maintenance 14; Software 8, ROKbot Programming 14; outrageous rock star with a not-so-secret agenda.

Oliver-G-HLI-4: Director; Management 12, Constructive Criticism 18; Hardware 8; Software 8; Wetware 8; veteran director and curmudgeon who likes mentoring those new to the documentary field that took both his legs.

George-Y-CSA: Visual editor (edits visuals); Hardware 10, Find Fault in Film Visuals 16; Software 10; harsh critic certain that the Troubleshooters will never measure up.

Quentin-Y-NOI: Sound editor (edits sound); Hardware 10, Find Fault in sound 16; Software 10; harsh critic who is terrified that the Troubleshooters will one day try to take his job, so he's going to try to discourage them from pursuing film careers.

Martin-O-EAS: Camera technician (provides camera and peripherals); Hardware 10, Cameras 14; photography geek who speaks in barely intelligible technobabble whenever discussing his equipment.

Jenny-O-TRA: Props Technician (provides costumes, make-up, and props); Hardware 10, Sewing 14; absent-minded artist who is likely to get carried away with any project given to her, making it far more artistic than is strictly necessary.

Harriet-O-WLS: Technician (provides lights, backdrops, and special effects gear); Violence 6, Demolitions 10; Hardware 10; playful prankster, which is kind of scary, since most of her pranks involve explosives or fire in some way.

Mike-R-NBE: Intern (does whatever the crew wants); cocky freeloader who works very hard at doing nothing whenever possible and generally dislikes anyone who tries to make him work.

The ROKbots

Despite the high-tech hype surrounding them, Rand-Y's ROKbots aren't the free-willed bots you normally see around Alpha Complex. They have more in common with programmed stage lights or the animated automatons at certain amusement parks. Rand-Y built them as a stage gimmick he controlled from his keyboard.

With the budget he has now, though, the ROKbots can behave much like true bots, as long as Rand-Y turns them on and directs their behavior with his keyboard. There are three ROKbots—drummer, guitar and bass.

[continued from page 46]

after another, and we want it all on film: images of Rand-Y's past, joyful reunions between Rand-Y and his old friends, interviews that show how great Rand-Y was as a Junior Citizen.

'I've called you in because Rand-Y is a bit—*high-strung*. One unfortunate accident during his perfectly scripted happiest of happy days, and we're afraid he might cancel the whole thing. Your first job is to make sure nothing bad happens to Rand-Y. I mean it. If you let him get shot full of holes or overdose on sandallathon, it's my hide. And if it's my hide, it's *your* heads.

'Second, and almost as important, Rand-Y must be ready to play by 20:00

hours. For every minute he's late, I lose 100 credits. Don't think I won't pass that cost to you. If Rand-Y doesn't show for the concert, you'll never wear RED again.

'Third, you'll film enough footage of Rand-Y's special, nostalgic day to produce a documentary. I'll give you a shot list of footage to capture and people to interview at each location. We'll also give you all the equipment you need to get the professional-grade audio and sound we expect from seasoned film veterans like yourselves. Surprise us with phenomenal coverage, and you'll be rewarded. If you miss anything on the list, you'll be docked pay on mission completion. Is all that understood?'

Oliver-G hits another button on his wheelchair. The rumble quiets noticeably, a moment before the entire room lurches into motion.

'Your duties on your team will dictate what roles each of you play in this project. Our intern will show you around the ADCC and brief you on your production roles. Then return here and we'll get started. Mike-R!'

Mike-R answers questions and then leads the Troubleshooters around the ADCC-4. He describes the PCs' duties based on their Mandatory Bonus Duty assignments (see the 'MBD duties' on the facing page). If they have no MBD assignments yet, either assign them on the spot or, time permitting, administer the MBD test in the *PARANOIA* rulebook.

Behind blue eyes

When the Troubleshooters return to the editing room, they meet the crew (see the 'Cast and crew' sidebar). Rand-Y slouches into the editing room from his apartment and, just barely polite, introduces himself.

Rand-Y looks every bit like the front man for a hair metal band, complete with the loudest clothing any YELLOW could possibly wear—mirrorshades, shining black pants, painfully red V-neck shirt with lace at the cuffs and collar, and a pro-wrestler-style belt.

There's no indication Rand-Y is high-strung. He's about as jumpy as a narcotized sloth. He makes a show of lighting a cigarette right in front of the No Smoking sign, then cracks his knuckles, grabs his guitar case and announces he is ready to meet his fans in ROK Sector.

Important no-weapons rule: HPD&MC isn't about to let the Troubleshooters ruin their documentary with onscreen gunplay, so Oliver-G confiscates the PCs' lethal weaponry: 'You're in this sector to shoot footage, not traitors.' He gives the PCs stun batons (damage as a stun gun, uses Hand Weapons skill, ten shots, no range) for personal protection against Rand-Y's excitable fans.

Creche tour: When I was a Junior Citizen

The first stop on Rand-Y's nostalgia tour is Creche ROK-0032, where Rand-Y lived as a Junior Citizen. Home to 1,037 children ages 5-14, the creche is 90 years old, rundown and underfunded. Peeling paint and broken windows recall an inner-city housing project.

MBD duties

Each MBD assignment has additional responsibilities related to the documentary footage:

- ④ The **team leader** is also the **assistant director**. Oliver-G gives him the list of the footage the team needs to shoot. At each location, the AD decides what to shoot next and when the current take is acceptable. In short, he determines what they shoot, in which order, and when the team has enough footage. He gets to yell 'action' and 'cut,' too, and everyone has to do it.
- ④ The **loyalty officer** is also the **interview director**. The ID scripts and performs all the interviews. Usually, he can script just his questions, but nothing stops him from scripting the answers, too! When facing a large pool of potential interview subjects, the ID decides which subjects will be interviewed.
- ④ The **hygiene officer** is also the **hygiene director**. The HyD makes sure the set and everyone on it look clean and can direct other members of the crew (as well as bystanders) to clean up a dirty set.
- ④ The **communications and recording officer** is also the **audiovisual director**. He is in charge of all cameras the team uses—who carries them and what they're supposed to do. He chooses the lens, the zoom, the angle, and even the frame rate. Once the assistant director calls for action, the A-VD decides moment to moment what most demands the cameras' attention.
- ④ The **equipment guy** is also the **technical director**. The TD makes sure the lighting and sound are of the highest possible quality. He is in charge of telling everyone where to place lights, microphones, and special effects. To this end, he has a lot of equipment at his disposal and can commandeer more, if he needs it.
- ④ The **happiness officer** is also the **happiness director**. The HD makes sure the set is aesthetically pleasing, and that everyone on camera looks emotionally appropriate, whether this means outrageously happy, righteously furious, or sympathetically tearful. He can order anyone off the set who doesn't fit the emotional tone of the current scene or prescribe drugs to increase levels of emotional appropriateness.

Some of the MBDs from *Extreme PARANOIA* can be easily translated for this mission as well. The **advertising and branding officer** is also the **product placement director**, who makes sure everyone in every scene is using the sponsor's products. The **financial officer** is the **budget director**, who makes sure the documentary stays under budget. The **public relations officer** is the **excise director**, who makes sure there isn't any treason going on in the background of the footage and can order any take deleted and re-shot to prevent the finished documentary from showing acts of treason.

Childish crayon drawings taped up in every corridor feature Rand-Y and the ROKbots. Most of them show the musician being hurt, interrogated, killed or ridiculed. The rest just have Xs over the eyes.

Things to film at the creche: The creche itself, Rand-Y's interaction with the kids, two interviews with kids who obviously like Rand-Y a lot, interview with a teachbot that remembers Rand-Y.

A teachbot escorts Rand-Y and the PCs to a small FunBall arena, the only room large enough for all the Junior Citizens. The place is

packed with squealing children, all dressed in grey and brown school uniforms that look like they've been handed down at least twice. The only other adult is a balding GREEN principal, **Tom-G-CLR**, who glowers at Rand-Y.

Rand-Y strums a happy bubblegum tune for the Junior Citizens. He plays well, if unenthusiastically, but the boos and catcalls of a thousand children drown him out. Tom-G smirks at Rand-Y, and Rand-Y frowns back. Halfway through the song, Rand-Y

breaks off. Tom-G saunters up to the stage and pulls Rand-Y away from the microphone.

'Looks like you're still the least popular citizen in the creche, Rand.' (You notice that Tom-G pointedly left off the clearance initial in Rand-Y's name, which is a petty insult in Alpha Complex.)

Rand-Y gives a fake little laugh. He turns to your cameras and shrugs charmingly.

Then Rand-Y lifts his guitar, hauls off and smashes the principal in the head.

Unless the Troubleshooters stop him, Rand-Y beats Tom-G within an inch of his life on stage in front of a live audience of kids (not to mention those cameras). With mechanical calm the teachbots quickly usher the children out of the arena, leaving the Troubleshooters to smooth over the situation on stage.

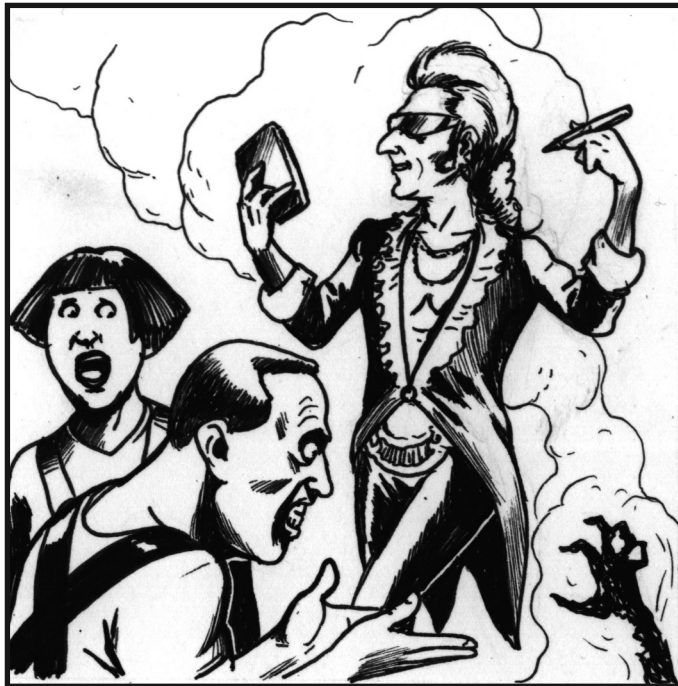
Once the Junior Citizens and teachbots leave, Tom-G speaks in a croaking voice to Rand-Y: 'Get out. Out, or I call IntSec. I know your fans will keep you out of trouble, but just filling out the goons' paperwork will make you miss your concert. So go.'

Scowling, Rand-Y leaves.

If asked about the incident, Rand-Y isn't shy with the story. Tom-G has been embezzling creche funds for years, using it to pay protection money to Internal Security goons. Tom-G caught Rand-Y snooping around his office and did everything he could to make the rest of his time in the creche miserable. 'I hate that guy, and I'll make him pay for turning those kids against me.' He removes a to-do list and pencil from his pocket. He checks off 'Visit creche' and carefully writes 'Make Tom-G pay' at the bottom. He covers up the other items on the list with his hand as he writes it, though, so the Troubleshooters can't tell what else is on the list. (See the sidebar 'Rand-Y's hit list'.)

Once they have this footage, the Troubleshooters can return to the ADCC, where Oliver-G feeds it into the editing machines. The ADCC then rolls forward to the next scene. While they travel, the post-production crew complains loudly about working with amateurs, and Oliver-G gives them some pointers. Repeat this routine after each scene, giving the PCs a chance to get to know the crew of Studio ADCC-4.

Rand-Y spends the entire trip in his apartment.



'1. Make Paul-R pay!'

INFRARED barracks: Wasted youth

Rand-Y next takes the Troubleshooters to Barracks 30985-CC, where he used to live when he was INFRARED. The area is extremely quiet for a communal living space, because most of the occupants are at work. The few INFRAREDs who are around either work alternate shifts and are therefore asleep or are too sick or injured to work.

Things to film at the barracks: Happy community atmosphere of barracks, two interviews with citizens, lunch in the attached mess hall, one other piece of interesting footage.

The Troubleshooters have to work for their footage. When the PCs accompany him to the huge mess hall, Rand-Y removes a screwdriver from his pocket and goes to work on one of the wall tiles. He blithely explains that when he was younger, he was fascinated with the forbidden, so he kept a diary that described his misadventures with secret societies in ROK Sector. While he talks, lunchtime arrives, and all the INFRAREDs on shift begin to filter into the cafeteria. It should be crowded by the time Rand-Y removes the tile and takes out a sheaf of paper. He guilelessly tells the Troubleshooters:

'My HPD bosses think it would be best if I destroy any incriminating evidence of my past involvement with secret societies. Rock star or not, they might have a bit of trouble convincing The Computer to forgive me if Internal Security finds out I used to be a Communist.'

A trick of acoustics amplifies these last two sentences so every INFRARED in the room hears them. Because everyone knows that the fastest way to get promoted is to squeal on a traitor, the room explodes into chaos as everyone tries for Rand-Y's diary. Rand-Y is against the wall opposite the door, and the sheer crush of bodies makes escaping the cafeteria practically impossible.

If the PCs destroy the diary first, all that remains is to get Rand-Y out safely. If not, some INFRARED is sure to grab the diary in the scuffle. Once Rand-Y is safely out of the cafeteria, he orders the PCs to get

Rand-Y's hit list

Eventually some clever or sharp-eyed PC gets a peek at Rand-Y's to-do list. Here is the list:

1. Make Paul-R pay!
2. Drugs!
3. Make Kelly-O pay!
4. Destroy diary
5. Distribute drugs!
6. Visit creche
7. Visit barracks
8. Visit work
9. Visit Insomnia
10. Concert
11. Make Tom-G pay!

What do these mean to Rand-Y?

Paul-R was the runner-up (and alternate) when Rand-Y was a contestant on *Alpha Complex Idol*. Paul-R poisoned Rand-Y, who survived only because of his Regeneration mutation. Rand-Y has paid a couple of Mystic mercenaries to poison Paul-R.

High-clearance drugs are often available at ROKbots concerts. From the same Mystics who will kill Paul-R, Rand-Y intends to score some VideoLand (benetridin) tablets disguised as xanitrick. Then he'll distribute them to the fans, to pump up their enthusiasm. (As described in the sidebar 'The bottles' later in this mission, the so-called Mystics supplying the drug aren't Mystics at all, but Anti-Mutant. Unknown to Rand-Y, the drug isn't VideoLand, but the far more dangerous Friendly Fire.)

Kelly-O was Rand-Y's supervisor at the PLC factory where he worked as an INFRARED. She had worked her way up to ORANGE by working for 40 years and expected everyone else to do the same. Rand-Y was too ambitious for her tastes, and she disapproved when he arrived late to his shift after moonlighting as a musician. Rand-Y just wants to rub her nose in his quick success.

When he was an INFRARED, Rand-Y joined several secret societies in ROK Sector, including the Communists. He kept a diary of his thoughts and experiences of the time, which he hid in a common area. When he got the Alpha Complex Idol spot, he left the diary behind. Rand-Y wants to destroy it to prevent anyone from using it to blackmail him or his bosses.

the diary and destroy it before someone calls a crowd control firm. Fortunately, the INFRAREDs are still too drugged to try clever tactics like tearing a page out of the diary and passing it to someone else.

Once the PCs have recovered and safely incinerated the diary, Internal Security agents show up and flood the cafeteria with vomit gas. Are any Troubleshooters still inside? That would be unhygienic...

Factory: I've got friends in low places

Once the Troubleshooters have endured more constructive and destructive criticism from the ADCC crew, they accompany Rand-Y to PLC Aluminum Refinery and Manufacturing Plant ROK-4S, where Rand-Y used to work as an INFRARED. Rand-Y introduces

'Shouldn't we, um, turn him in?'

'If Rand-Y was secretly a Commie, and he's killing all these guys he doesn't like, why don't we—uh—like—report him to The Computer?'

A reasonable question. But remember, The Computer tolerates significant unorthodoxy in HPD&MC, because it regards the workers there as basically harmless. More to the point, Rand-Y has powerful fans, including a few who wear white.

If the PCs report Rand-Y, they witness a conversation much like this:

PC: Computer, Rand-Y was a Commie, and now he's killing people!

The Computer: Really? [*calls Rand-Y on his PDC.*] Rand-Y, is this true?

Rand-Y: Yes, Computer, I was a stupid and wayward Commie in my youth. I'm not a Commie any more, though, and I'm really sorry. As for the people I'm attacking, they all really deserve it.

Computer: Rand-Y, I order you to report immediately for termiSCRIZZZZZIP! PROGRAM INTERRUPT! I fine you 1,000cr and suggest you report to a confession booth for increased pharmatherapy. After tonight's concert, of course. Okay?

Rand-Y: Thank you, Computer. [*hangs up*] Well, Troubleshooters, should we push on?

PC: Uh.....

some co-workers; many are amputees. The INFRAREDS' reactions to Rand-Y range from envy to distaste to contempt. A few faces look familiar from the cafeteria riot, so there is also an undertone of seething anger.

Things to film at the factory: The busy and safe workers on the factory floor, the creation of something metal from start to finish, two interviews with Rand-Y's old co-workers, one interview with Kelly-O (Rand-Y's former PLC supervisor).

Rand-Y is sure to introduce **Kelly-O-ROK**, his middle-aged ORANGE supervisor. She barely manages a strained smile. Rand-Y tastelessly points out for the Troubleshooters' cameras that this shrill old woman has stayed

at the same security clearance for the last 20 years; before that, she was a RED shift leader for 10 years, and still earlier, she was an INFRARED line worker for 10 years. 'And you said I'd better get used to taking orders from you. You're right, though, Kelly-O.' (He emphasizes the 'O' with a grin.) 'Your 40 years of hard labor has gradually paid off. Very, very gradually.'

Why yes, he is indeed rubbing her nose in his success, and Kelly-O doesn't like it one bit. With a nod to her RED shift leaders, she arranges for several accidents to befall Rand-Y as he tours the plant. Heavy crates fall on him. Gantry chains swing in his direction. Hot metal seems drawn to him. Catwalks over pots of molten aluminum collapse at inconvenient moments. And the Troubleshooters are standing right next to Rand-Y, so....

The PCs must keep Rand-Y safe through all this and avoid letting these accidents ruin their footage of the safe and happy PLC factory.

Insomnia lounge: We built this sector

When next the ADCC stops, Rand-Y takes the Troubleshooters to the Insomnia Lounge, where he used to play before he got his big break. The Insomnia draws ROK Sector's artistic community, such as it is. It's a den of Romantics, Mystics, Humanists and a few desperate Sierra Clubbers. On a small stage with a microphone, amateur musicians perform in smoky air for modest praise.

This cozy, crowded gathering place immediately greets Rand-Y—with mutters of 'sell-out' and worse.

Things to film at the Insomnia: The joy Rand-Y's arrival inspires in the other artists, two interviews with regulars, one interview with staff, a candidly recorded conversation between some of the regulars.

Rand-Y quickly locates the only table where lips aren't moving and takes a seat opposite two REDs, **Mary-R-ROK** and **Angelo-R-ROK**. He doesn't care if the PCs film the following conversation:

Rand-Y: Is he playing tonight?

Angelo-R: Yes.

Rand-Y: You put the stuff in his B3?

Angelo-R: Yes. He'll be coming on stage in a minute. Don't worry, Rand-Y.

You'll get to watch, just like we promised.

Rand-Y: Good. You got the other stuff?

Angelo-R: You got our money?

The bottles

Rand-Y thinks the drugs are VideoLand (benetridin) tablets disguised as Wakey-Wakey (xanitrick). In fact, suppliers Angelo-R and Mary-R aren't Mystics at all, but Anti-Mutants who want to show how dangerous mutants can be. Each of the six bottles contains 24 tablets of metamemeproxide, cleverly disguised as xanitrick.

Friendly Fire (metamemeproxide)

Description: Formulated waaay back when The Computer was considering making mutants the norm in Alpha Complex. IntSec destroyed all known supplies and purged the creators decades ago.

Availability: One small crate in a crowded PLC warehouse in ROK Sector. Only six Anti-Mutants know any still exists.

Effects: A few minutes after swallowing a tablet, the citizen manifests the Pyrokinesis mutation, bursting dramatically into flames. Suppressing this fiery aura or otherwise exerting any kind of control over the fire requires a Power check. These flames don't hurt the person who took the drug or anyone else under the effects of Friendly Fire.

After-effects: Power rating drops to 0 for a while. Also, the drug becomes untraceable in the body once it wears off, so use will likely lead to uncomfortable questions.

Application: Tablet (a while).

Rand-Y hands over a stack of plasticreds, and Mary-R hands him a brown package. Rand-Y opens the package, removes a xanitrick bottle, and pours the contents into his hand.

Rand-Y: This better be the real deal.

Angelo-R: It's all real. If you don't believe us, feel free to sample some.

Rand-Y clearly intends to do nothing of the sort. He stuffs half a dozen pill bottles into his pockets and leaves the table. Angelo-R and Mary-R all but run out of the Insomnia.

A minute later, a registered RED mutant with a synthesizer in one hand and a can of Bouncy Bubble Beverage in the other steps onto the



SERVICE, SERVICE! CLEARANCE ULTRAVIOLET

Larry-R-ROK

Computer Phreak; Management 6, Bootlicking 10; Stealth 8; Violence 4, Falling Objects 10; Hardware 6; Software 10, Hacking 14

Tom-G-CLR

Free Enterprise; Management 8; Violence 4, Energy Weapons 8; GREEN laser pistol (W3K energy)

Punks (6)

Death Leopard; Stealth 6; Violence 8; various improvised weapons (treat as knives or truncheons)

stage. He introduces himself as Paul-R-ROK. Nothing short of a knife in the back diverts Rand-Y's attention from the stage while Paul-R plays—and occasionally takes a sip of his Bouncy Bubble Beverage.

During a peppy number, Paul-R abruptly stops, clutches his stomach, and falls over. The audience gasps with concern. Unless the PCs restrain him, Rand-Y hurries to the microphone and towers over the downed musician.

'Hello again, Paul-R, you backstabbing mutie! You know what you just drank? You should. It's the same poison you put in my drink the night before the ROKbots and I played on the first night of Alpha Complex Idol. You thought you could bump me off and take my place, but now you know you'll always be second-best, you washed-up imitator.'

Rand-Y punctuates this with a swift kick. Paul-R twitches once and then lies still.

Before he came back, the Insomnia's patrons quietly despised Rand-Y for his success. Now, right in front of them, he's just poisoned one of their friends and gloated over the body.

Most people in the room are RED or ORANGE, and quite a few carry weapons. The Troubleshooters should have a tough time getting Rand-Y out of this one before the clientele opens fire. In fact, it's best if they drag Rand-Y out of the Insomnia before he has a chance to gloat at all.

Concert: We will rock you

At last, the concert itself! The final stop on Rand-Y's tour is the audition hall where Rand-Y and the ROKbots were selected to represent their sector in the Alpha Complex Idol competition six years ago. Rand-Y's fans are even now waiting in lines for their ration of VideoLand, which is routinely used to turn normal fans into screaming fans. HPD&MC has gone to great lengths to make sure only actual fans are at the ACI Stadium by bringing in members of his fan club especially for this concert, but they suspect that a couple of Rand-Y's old enemies might sneak in to cause trouble. They're right.

Things to film at the concert: Front of the audition hall with line of fans, interview with Larry-R, the packed crowd of screaming fans, the concert, the standing ovation.

Once inside, Rand-Y greets a bespectacled RED geek, Larry-R-ROK. Larry-R is unusual for not obviously despising Rand-Y. This is

because Rand-Y keeps a pile of blackmail material on him. Larry-R is a Computer Phreak, if not a skilled one. Long ago in their INFRARED days, Rand watched Larry type his password and later used it to copy plenty of proof of Larry's treason. With that evidence in hand, Rand talked Larry into pulling increasingly dangerous stunts. Larry-R was in the audience on the night of Rand-Y's preliminary audition for Alpha Complex Idol. He got Rand-Y's name into the winner's envelope. Since then he's hacked scrubots to attack Rand-Y's rivals. Now Rand-Y affectionately refers to Larry-R as his 'Phreak on a leash.'

Rand-Y openly gives Larry-R the drugs he got at the Insomnia. He casually tells Larry-R to murder Tom-G. Then he must distribute the VideoLand tablets to select members of the audience.

Larry-R nods. As the audition hall spotlights converge on the concert stage, he moves onstage. To kick off the concert, Larry-R gives a glowing reminiscence of Rand-Y's original audition, then, to thundrous applause, he introduces Rand-Y. Rand-Y and the bots move onstage, start playing as described below, and Larry-R moves quickly offstage.

Now, after many years, at long last, Larry-R plans to get his revenge.

The show must go on

To maximize the crowd in the concert hall, HPD has removed the original seating. The only chairs are in the gallery booths where high-clearance fans sit (Tension 10). The floor is packed with about 10,000 screaming fans (Tension 2). Once things heat up, chanting, crowd surfing, slam dancing, lighter-waving,

Illo #15: Rand-Y's rock concert [CUT THIS IF TIME IS TIGHT]
1/3 page horizontal

A concert stage. Outrageously dressed rock star at front with multiple keyboards. One or more robotic musicians in back-up positions (one with drumset, one with bass, one with electric guitar). Laser lights in the background. Hint of an enthusiastic crowd along the bottom of the illo.

If there's room, you might include a Troubleshooter at one side, looking warily at the crowd. Maybe he's oblivious to some peril in the wings that is targeting Rand-Y -- say, a Death Leopard throwing a grenade or about to shoot a cone rifle.

and pretty much anything else you'd expect from a concert is fairly common.

The stage (Tension 20) is elevated and has a platform that lifts the band from the lower level where the dressing rooms are to the center of the stage. The ROKbots are placed on the platform before the show—drummerbot in the back, bassbot right, guitarbot left. Rand-Y will stand at the front with his three-level keyboard, from which he directs the ROKbots, plays, and sings.

Not only are the Troubleshooters still responsible for getting footage of the concert, they are also responsible for making sure any unhappy citizens don't interrupt it. This, of course, is no mean feat. Larry-R has rigged up a few surprises for Rand-Y. Six Death Leopard punks have gotten into the audience and intend to sneak backstage to wreck the concert from there. If Tom-G survived the earlier scene, he has bribed his way inside, as well, and will get his hands on the laser pistol one of the locals hid just outside the bathroom as soon as he can.

Don't forget all those Friendly Fire tablets circulating in the audience. Beats pyrotechnics and laser light shows, doesn't it?

First set (two assaults)

Rand-Y and the ROKbots play two sets of four songs each, followed by an encore. Unless the Troubleshooters find a way to prevent the incidents described here, this is how the concert progresses.

Rand-Y opens with **'Rock the Sector'**, a song that encourages the audience to make so much noise that the whole sector can hear them. They endeavor to do just that.

(This may be the first time the PCs have actually heard Rand-Y play. It becomes instantly obvious that, ROKbot gimmick notwithstanding, Rand-Y is actually good at what he does. He is a rock superstar.)

They follow this with **'Must Be My Meds'**, a comical song about seeing strange, possibly treasonous things that disappear as soon as you try to look at them. During this song, inflated Commies suspended by wires appear above the band and fly back and forth. Establish these now, because in the second set one of them falls on Rand-Y.

Next comes **'Punks Die Young'**, a song many Death Leopards find offensive because the story describes some of their stunts so well that they suspect Rand-Y spied on them to get the information. This song features a five-minute drum solo backed up by the keyboards. During the drum solo, the six Death Leopards

in the audience try to sneak backstage, splitting up so they can cause more damage.

'Friend Computer is Watching', which describes 20 or 30 acts of treason with the reminder that 'Friend Computer is Watching,' finishes the first set. Spotlights illuminate individual members of the audience as Rand-Y sings each act of treason. There's a chance they coincidentally spot some actual treason going on, in which case the crowd manhandles the traitor over to a squad of IntSec agents at the back of the room.

As soon as the curtain closes, the platform descends—and three of the Death Leopard punks find their way to the stage and attack Rand-Y.

Intermission (one assault)

During the brief intermission, creche principal Tom-G-CLR (if he survived) arrives at Rand-Y's dressing room (**Tension 0**) armed with a GREEN laser (W3K energy). He tries to kill Rand-Y and shoots anyone who gets in his way.

Set 2 playlist (three assaults)

The opener for the second set is **'Run You Commie'**—another song to inspire excitement. This features a long guitar solo, during which Larry-R climbs to the catwalk and cuts the rope holding up a stuffed Commie (S5K impact). If the Troubleshooters catch and interrogate Larry-R, they have just enough time to prevent the laser light incident (see below).

Next: **'If I Were ULTRAVIOLET'**, wherein Rand-Y claims he would accomplish such feats as 'teaching The Computer to rock' and 'defeating the Commies with chords.'

Then comes **'Vulture Squadron'**—a lighter-waving power ballad with the refrain 'You keep fighting, we'll keep singing.'

As the closing song begins, the remaining three Death Leopards (who got diverted last set by an opportunity to score some cheap drugs) finally reach the stage. They charge forward to attack Rand-Y—and accidentally run foul of the *other* attack on Rand-Y this set.

The closing song is **'Troubleshooter Shuffle'**, which features a whole lot of fog and laser lights ('We're not here to start any trouble/ We're just here to do the Troubleshooter Shuffle!'). One light is actually a weapons-grade GREEN laser (W3K energy, courtesy of Larry-R) that burns holes in walls, ROKbots, Leopards, the audience, and (if no one stops it) Rand-Y.

Ideally the Troubleshooters move on stage to battle the Leopard punks. To the audience, they're just another gimmick.

Encore (with Friendly Fire)

The Friendly Fire kicks in after the curtain closes on the second set. The screaming convinces Rand-Y the audience wants an encore. When the curtain opens again, several people in the audience are on fire, and the rest are screaming. Rand-Y doesn't seem to see anything wrong with this and launches into his encore song.

'Flawed But Serving' tells of the inner turmoil and experiences of a registered mutant. Before the song ends, at least one of the flaming fans runs onto the stage and straight at Rand-Y. The Troubleshooters must hustle Rand-Y and his band back to the ADCC.

It's too bad, really. For his second encore Rand-Y was going to play every fan's favorite song—**'Treason Doesn't Pay.'**

In the end

The mission's ending depends mostly on which objectives the Troubleshooters don't achieve. If they let Rand-Y get seriously wounded or killed, they are demoted and reassigned quarters in ROK Sector. If Rand-Y is late to the concert, Oliver-G makes good on his threat to pass on the fines to the Troubleshooters. For every bit of assigned footage they get, the Troubleshooters earn credits equal to 4% of a month's pay. If the Troubleshooters get really excellent footage or shoot unassigned stuff that's obviously useful to Oliver-G, they receive a bonus equal to 5% of a month's pay. If they complete all three parts of the mission, they get promoted.

Incidentally, as long as Rand-Y and the ROKbots make it out safely, his fans hail this as the best concert he's ever given. Fans. Go figure.



SERVICE Internal Security

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Internal Security hangouts

LoyalTea Cafe: High-clearance congregants at this popular lunch spot (Clearance BLUE), with tables constructed from the husks of real decommissioned confession booths! Ancient blood spatters add 'local flavor'. Serves real tea to INDIGO and above.

Darkened corridors: Conference rooms are for the weak and coddled. Many important IntSec meetings are conducted in hallways, basements, supply closets—any quiet, private space will do. That's why quiet, private spaces such as these are such popular targets for discreet surveillance.

Rumors

- ☉ 'So... What do you think about these new undercover personality templates? I mean, it seems sort of weird to have a second identity at BLUE Clearance. But at least the bonus money is nice, right? Huh? They didn't issue you—? Oh... Never mind. Forget I said anything.'
- ☉ 'Armed Forces has a surplus of lethal weaponry and IntSec's getting the spares! If you're one of the first ones to lose your standard pistol after they receive the shipment, they'll replace it with a needler or force sword or maybe even a cone rifle!'
- ☉ 'There will be a free concert in the Unity Quad tomorrow night. As most of the sector's population will be at the show, we expect there will be many traitors taking advantage elsewhere. We're stepping up security everywhere but the quad.'

Service services

- ☉ 'There will be a riot at the Southwest Botserv Center this afternoon. You are to join the riot and participate in it. As soon as you hear the approach of sirens, detonate these sleep gas grenades in the mob's midst. Your own safety is assured.'
- ☉ 'Take this disc to Transbot Stop 675-2C. When a GREEN Clearance citizen asks if you have today's OneSheet, hand it to her. She should give you something in return. Bring it to Security Post 210-5M immediately. Your identity will remain confidential.'
- ☉ 'You are to spend these 500 credits at the INFRARED Market located beyond the RED VendoMat-Hall, buying from at least four different citizens. When your mission is complete, bring all purchased goods back to this Security Post without using any of them. Wear these gloves at all times.'
- ☉ 'Travel to the Brian-B's Arms Emporium indicated in this file. You will render the supervisor, Victor-G-HQO-5, unconscious and bring him to Scrubot Cubby 5432790. You are not to use lethal force on Victor-G or any of his subordinates. Wear these masks; they will conceal your identity.'
- ☉ 'Death Leopard is mobilizing for some sort of activity. They are identifying themselves to each other by wearing footwear of a lower clearance than their own. If you see any such citizens, capture them alive, without alerting others, and bring them here. You will receive a bonus for each capture.'
- ☉ 'A bomb-threat has been issued by PURGE in the area around your mission objective. While fulfilling your main objective, assist local Emergency Disaster Response Team resources who are looking for the bomb. As we believe the local EDRT to be subverted by PURGE, it is likely they have planted the bomb themselves.'
- ☉ 'Your identities have temporarily been requisitioned for use in an Internal Security sting operation. You will need to use the fake identities contained on these limited-use ME Cards until our sting is completed, at which point your own identities will be returned to you. Your credit records will remain unharmed.'
- ☉ 'Two guardbots await you in the next room. They will escort you on your mission, providing fire support in combat situations. We estimate there is a 75% chance that Corpore Metal has compromised the programming of one of the bots. If this is the case, you must identify the compromised bot and disable it without damaging its bot brain. Non-compromised bots are not to be damaged under any circumstances.'
- ☉ 'The confession booth at the intersection of AEX 39224-X and AEX 342232-G has experienced a recent and sudden spike in use. We believe it is being used as a drop point for some secret society. Survey the area and capture any citizens who seem to be making repeat visits to the area.'
- ☉ 'We are trying to flush out traitors in the area, so we are assigning each of you the name of a different known traitor. For the duration of your mission, you will answer only to the traitor's name. Make sure you say this name loudly to everyone you meet so they and any nearby spies can hear it.'
- ☉ 'We have captured a Sierra Club cell that has been escorting traitors to the Outdoors so they can escape. You will be replacing this group, inserting yourself into the escape "railroad". You will continue to make contacts and set up escapes, but then escort each group of traitors to a special Internal Security maxihall disguised as the Outdoors, where it is expected they will feel less concerned about remaining silent about their activities and peers.'

New Internal Security service firms

[*Note: You may wish to assign security-related duties to PCs in the Internal Security service group itself instead of to an outsourced service firm. See the BLUE Clearance section of the Extreme PARANOIA supplement for rules for IntSec player characters.*]

Border Control

Example firms: StopLite IS, DottedLine Patrol, Your-Side Control
Revenue stream: Percentage of fines levied, rewards for capturing wanted suspects and resale of confiscated contraband.

Secret society taint: Free Enterprise, Sierra Club

Only citizens of GREEN Clearance and above can travel freely. The vast majority of citizens can only leave the sector where they live and work when explicitly authorized. However, many citizens want to illegally cross sector boundaries for any number of reasons—to escape capture or to smuggle goods (especially food items and recreational luxuries) to sell on the IR Market. Border Control firms contract with senior administrators in individual sectors (often VIOLET HPD&MC executives) to prevent unwanted items and undesirable people from entering, and controlled items and important people from leaving.

Of course, few sectors trust their border security to their neighbors, so there are almost always two rival Border Control firms working any given sector boundary—one on each side. Each is fully empowered to stop, assess, search and potentially detain anyone crossing the boundary without sufficient personal clearance or unambiguous authorization paperwork. And even if a citizen manages to pass the outgoing controllers, he then gets picked over a second time by the incoming controllers on the other side.

Conspicuous Surveillance Initiative

Example firms: Narc Squad IS, We're Cops!

Revenue stream: Contract with Internal Security. Bonuses for assisting 'real' Internal Security teams in busting traitor cells.

Secret society taint: Communists (trying to make Internal Security look bad), FCCC-P

Undercover operatives, security cameras, hidden microphones, and other surveillance systems suppress many treasonous activities. But particularly insidious traitors continue to hold deceitful conversations undetected. IntSec's innovative solution: the Conspicuous Surveillance Initiative (CSI). Conspicuous Surveillance firms assign blatantly obvious agents to spy on traitors. When the traitors get away from the CSI agents, they gain a false sense of security, so real operatives can observe them undetected.

CSI agents are the Maxwell Smarts and Inspector Clouseaus of Internal Security. Some are actors, some genuinely dimwitted. Their bumbling buffoonery transcends incompetence, achieving a gloriously comic caricature of law enforcement. When one of these guys struts into the room, loudly proclaiming he absolutely does not belong to Internal Security, it's hard to pay attention to anything else.

Although other Internal Security agents mock and deride CSI, they do give these lesser agents the benefit of the doubt in treason cases. Where they might think one of their own is corrupt, they assume CSI agents making equally treasonous statements are just clowning around.



Corridor Patrol Agents

Example firms: Another Kind Of Beat, Protect & Wander

Revenue stream: Contract with IntSec to report treason.

Secret society taint: Free Enterprise, Death Leopard

The Alpha Complex equivalent of beat cops, Corridor Patrol Agents walk defined paths through a subsector on regular patrols. Besides looking for treason, the agents provide the peace of mind that comes with knowing IntSec is regularly scrutinizing your firm or dormitory.

On patrol, CPAs are supposed to report treason—and that's it. IntSec proper arrests or terminates traitors, so once patrol agents have made their report, they are to stand aside and let others take over.

To ensure they don't get uppity, patrol agents travel unarmed and unarmored. This makes them a fantastic target for citizens upset with IntSec. The treason CPAs report most often is assault on a CPA.

Agents follow a set schedule, defined with Kantian precision; IntSec sometimes times their patrol agents to see if they need a reminder of the importance of following a schedule. This lets traitors plan their crimes down to the minute. ('At 13:04 we put down our comic books, turn on *Janey Jump!* and start our afternoon aerobics. Agent Gary-Y passes at 13:05. At 13:06, it's back to the comic books.')

The one saving grace for CPAs is the power of The Call. An agent can call down an IntSec strike force at a push of a button. Just thinking about The Call prompts citizens to spontaneously give these agents all kinds of gifts, from free food to unlicensed plasticreds. Many agents actively encourage this spontaneous giving. And why not? The Computer loves such displays of appreciation and takes each one as a sign of the public's trust in the agent. So the more an agent plays the protection racket, the more decorations he earns.



Encryption Breakers

Example firms: Dot-Dot-Dot IS, CipherSpace, KeyCrypters

Revenue stream: Payment for decrypting secret society codes; bonuses for uncovering plots before they are put into action.

Secret society taint: Computer Phreaks (pervasive), Mystics

Secret society members use more than Twitchtalk to covertly converse, especially because it's difficult to use Twitchtalk in C-mails or over the PDC. ('My left hand goes over my face but just enough so you can still see my chin...') Each society has its own encryption schemes, ciphers and secret codes so members can plot in secret. IntSec outsources projects to break the codes and expose said plots.

The big problem is, it's sometimes hard to spot a secret code. The firms spend countless hours trying to decrypt strings of numbers, letters and sounds that turn out to be entirely innocent. Some IntSec goon going through a citizen's pockets finds a small piece of paper that says '24713 97850 29640 45261 38659.' The goon arrests the citizen and sends the paper to the local Encryption Breaker firm for analysis and cracking. After four months of backbreaking effort, the firm identifies the numbers as PLC product codes for five types of B3 cans the citizen was supposed to buy and return to his service firm.

Encryption Breaker workers range from slightly off-kilter to seriously insane. When they can't find the Commie plot in a recording of strange noises near a CoffeeLike vendabot, they either come up with something completely crazy yet based on actual noises in the sample ('It's a PURGE message that says "Kill beat fergle running how-now-brown-cow"'), or they spend months listening to that sample over and over again until they need new medication.

Because they are paid by the broken code, firms cultivate serious paranoia. They see codes in everything, and create wild fantasies about impending traitorous plots to bulk up their credit accounts. Many workers turn to illegal drugs to sharpen their perceptions in hopes of decrypting another code so they can afford some new gadgets ... and more illegal drugs. A vicious cycle.

External Security

Example firms: Defenders of the Indoors IS, Guardians of the Complex IS, Protectors of Us All IS

Revenue stream: Monthly payments for no citizens leaving Alpha Complex and nothing from the Outdoors coming inside.

Secret society taint: Sierra Club, FCCC-P

Alpha Complex has a surprising number of exits to the Outdoors, and though many are welded shut and coated with foamcrete, a lot remain operational. (No one asks why they remain in operation—not after the Too Many Questions Round-Up in Year 211.) HPD&MC propaganda paints the Outdoors as a wildly dangerous wasteland filled with such threats as hurricanes, feral trees and radioactive mutant ants; Internal Security posts guards on these exits to prevent Outdoors horrors from entering.

At least that's the public face of these firms. In reality, despite the best efforts of HPD&MC, some citizens want to see the Outdoors firsthand. Maybe they're curious, or they want to prove how brave they are by facing the dangers Outdoors; or they're secret society scum on some traitorous mission. Regardless, External Security firms exist to stop them at the exits.

To forestall the guards' own curiosity, IntSec spends a lot of time and credits building a sense of duty, honor and martyrdom into these firms. An External Security citizen sees his job as extremely dangerous but vitally important to the safety of Alpha Complex, whether he's a GREEN exit guard or a RED food-and-B3 runner for the guards. Firm names reflect this perception. Firm workers are usually melodramatic, hubristic and arrogant—even the food-and-B3 runners.

Although threats from the Outdoors almost never appear, all External Security citizens face one constant danger: Armed Forces. The Generals were outraged when The Computer granted IntSec this duty; they believe the Outdoors threat is the responsibility of the military and not a bunch of weak-kneed, undisciplined, undertrained cops. So they regularly send agents to sabotage, discredit or accidentally terminate guards.

External Security has folded this campaign into their world-view, turning Armed Forces agents into Villainous Creatures from the Outdoors and strengthening their resolve and camaraderie. In fact, they cast everything in these terms, be it a power outage ('Prepare for invasion! The line *will* hold!'), a tree falling on the outer wall of Alpha Complex ('Prepare for invasion! The line *will* hold!') or a suspicious stretch of silence ('Prepare for invasion! The line *will* hold!').

Gray Ops

Example firms: Zero-Zero IS, Unseen Activities Initiative

Revenue stream: Contract with Internal Security, plus bonuses for successful missions.

Secret society taint: Illuminati, Pro Tech

IntSec has a way of making people... disappear. Traitors vanish from domiciles and workplaces without a trace. Some reappear weeks later, their brains freshly scrubbed; others never reappear at all. But who's responsible for these disappearances? Gray Ops.

The Gray Operatives of Gray Ops are trained in infiltration and assault. These elite secret agents can sneak into your office in broad daycyclelight and bundle you off to the Bright Vision Re-education Center without anyone ever noticing you're gone. Their combat training is a match for the best Vultures. They get the pick of R&D's stealth and concealed weapons technology. Really, you don't want to mess with these guys.

Only a handful of remarkably skilled BLUES and INDIGOs actually perform Gray Ops missions. The rest of the firms' workers (including all player characters) are lower-level functionaries who support the Gray Operatives. Promising RED workers handle the paperwork for Gray Ops missions, while the less capable work on Traitor Storage Cleanup, feeding and washing freshly disappeared 'clients' and cleaning up the occasional pool of vomit. Higher-clearance staff members plan operations, act as mission dispatchers, and liaise with the rest of Internal Security.

And what of the rumors that High Programmers and ambitious VIOLETs use Gray Ops teams for disloyal purposes—to spy on, discredit or assassinate their rivals? Balderdash! Everyone knows Internal Security is totally incorruptible. The alternative would be unthinkable...

Infiltration Consultants

Example firms: SafeCrackers, BreakIn4U IS

Revenue stream: Contracts with Internal Security, plus bonuses for each security hole found. Under-the-table payment from target firms.

Secret society taint: Death Leopard, Illuminati

Surveillance just isn't as dependable as The Computer requires. Security cameras break down, wiring rots and decays, warning sirens lose battery power, and Computer Phreaks make keypad access codes as freely available as sandalathons. And that's assuming key facilities are properly secured to begin with! Sometimes architects deliberately leave gaps in the security net. At other times, construction is left to incompetent techs who couldn't wire a camera to save their miserable clone lives.

Infiltration Consultant firms find security holes in the most direct possible way—they break into secure facilities and see how long it takes before they're caught. This is obviously dangerous, especially for poorly equipped REDs. They can't warn the target facility of their infiltration, as that would bias the results, so guards and other defenses treat Infiltration Consultants as they would any other intruder: lethally. Cutting a deal with the target facility can be lucrative, but the penalty for getting caught is termination.

As dangerous as infiltration missions are, they pale compared to the horror of filing reports with the associated Facility Surveillance Control and Security System Installers firms. Every security hole discovered is a black mark against these other firms, so they do their best to make life hell for the Infiltration Consultants. Some undesirably effective Infiltration Consultants simply disappear into the bureaucratic maze of Facility Surveillance Control and never return.

Physical Fitness Assessors

Example firms: Every Able Body, Prescription for Efficiency, Healthy Workplaces

Revenue stream: Percentage of additional revenue resulting from reduced absenteeism and prompt replacement of unfit workers

Secret society taint: Corpore Metal, Free Enterprise, Pro Tech

Not all acts of treason involve smoking laser barrels or high yield explosives. Feigned illness and injury result in unnecessary absenteeism, with a loss of productivity that only aids the plots of Commie mutant traitors. A malingering citizen should prepare for a visit from a Physical Fitness Assessor.

These agents perform an extensive medical examination (often with docbot assistance—brr!) to determine whether the citizen can perform his work function within acceptable parameters. Those deemed fit to work are fined and sent back to their jobs. Citizens whose return to work might reduce production are

assigned a regimen of medication and rest tailored to return them to the workforce ASAP. For maimed citizens out of commission for the foreseeable future, Physical Fitness Assessors contact prosthetic limb manufacturers who provide discount replacements that hardly ever malfunction.

Physical Fitness Assessors can also declare a citizen permanently disabled, a status that exempts the individual from work requirements and makes him a ward of The Computer. The Computer assigns the service firm a new worker to replace the disabled one. Few citizens who apply for this status are approved, but because Physical Fitness Assessors are experts, they can often cut through this red tape and change a laborer's status in a matter of days.

Thus Assessors develop connections with (a) prosthetics manufacturers seeking customers, (b) firms that want to get rid of unproductive workers, (c) well-heeled workers seeking a cushy retirement through approved 'disability' status and (d) seriously ill citizens who dread returning to work early. Thus Assessors frequently live well beyond the standard one would associate with their clearance salary.

Public Relations Improvers

Example firms: IntSec Loves You, Officers of Joy & Mirth, Love Us Or Else

Revenue stream: Contract with Internal Security to improve public attitudes as defined by pre- and post-surveys.

Secret society taint: Communists

For some reason, many citizens are afraid when Internal Security comes around. Yet IntSec exists only to save citizens from treason, Commies, mutants and themselves. IntSec started Public Relations Improvers to better the public image of its officers and agents.

PRI agents compile lists of subsectors where IntSec has recently been active. Then they canvas these subsectors with surveys that ask for citizens' opinions and feelings towards IntSec. When a subsector scores low on this pre-survey, PRI agents move in, hard and fast, to forcibly adjust everyone's perceptions. Agents stage mandatory rallies to honor IntSec officers who died in the line of duty. They hand out informational pamphlets about all the nice things IntSec does, and stand by attentively while citizens read every—single—word. In areas where IntSec has recently arrested or terminated large numbers of citizens, PRI agents deliver a high-pressure barrage of sweetened algae pops and B3 to unsuspecting passersby.

Some PRI agents make sure citizens know how nice IntSec really is—even if it takes a beating:

Francine-B: So ... how much does Internal Security love you?

Tommy-R: Lots! Super lots! Just don't hit me again!

Finally, agents administer a post-adjustment survey to illustrate how much everyone's attitudes have improved.

Because these firms are paid only when they find a need for improvement and then actively improve, pre- and post-surveys are heavily biased. A pre-survey question goes along the lines of, 'Did you feel a little nervous when IntSec agents publicly terminated 50 citizens much like yourself?' A typical post-survey question: 'Do you feel happier when IntSec prevents mutants from eating your brain?'

Unique Identification Archivists

Example firms: Just-U; Printz IS; On The Record

Revenue stream: Contract with IntSec to maintain accurate and up-to-date records.

Secret society taint: Illuminati (common?), FCCC-P (uncommon), Romantics

Over the last two centuries security procedures and protocols have undergone constant improvement, advancing with the technologies able to support them. With each new method for identifying citizens, IntSec has added a new record system, consigning the old records to vaults of legacy data. However, IntSec never discards anything; they can never be sure they won't need it again.

Unique Identification Archivists firms manage and securely store legacy records of citizens both current and erased: tongueprints, fingerprints, dermal scrapings, five favorite things, notable dates, GPS coordinates, retinal reconstructions and other outdated means of identification.

Occasionally records deteriorate, become corrupt or simply vanish. In these situations UI archivists head out to acquire replacements, returning them for analysis, cataloging and reindexing. It may have been years since you last had to present a corneal-scrape ID, but the sudden arrival of a UI archivist proves in Alpha Complex, everything old can become new again.



Internal Security personnel

Good Cop Bad Cop

Service firm type: Any that work with 'detained suspects'; also IntSec itself

Security clearance: Any

Common mutation(s): Adrenalin Control, Charm, Electroshock

Secret society taint: FCCC-P

Typical Access: 06

ACTION SKILLS & SPECIALTIES

Management 12

Bootlicking 01
Interrogation 16
Intimidation 16

Stealth 08

Violence 10

Field Weapons 01
Hand Weapons 14
Unarmed Combat 14
Vehicular Combat 01

KNOWLEDGE SKILLS & SPECIALTIES

Hardware 04

Software 06

Bot Programming 01
Data Analysis 10
Data Search 10
Operating Systems 01

Wetware 05

Cloning 01
Medical 09
Outdoor Life 01
Suggestion 09

ASSIGNED EQUIPMENT

(1) laser pistol with barrel
(1) pocket confession recorder
(1) truncheon
Approved mood-controlling medication

PERSONAL EQUIPMENT

(1) bottle water
Assorted snacks
(1) pack self-lighting lo-cancer cigarettes
(1) straight razor
(1) hand towel

Good Cop Bad Cop is just a straightforward, friendly guy trying to help out citizens in trouble... or maybe he's a complicated, angry fiend who can't wait to strangle them. No, wait... he really understands you're a helpless cog in all of this, and he knows if someone just shows you a little kindness, you'll cooperate... but maybe he's sure you're a scheming, poisonous vermin, and if someone just beats you within an inch of you're life, you'll finally cough up what little you know.

At one point there were separate job positions for Good Cop and Bad Cop. Complete separate training programs existed for each role, carefully fine-tuning some officers to play one part and others to take the opposing side. It was a powerful tag-team approach to interrogation.

But you know how things get when budgets are tight... Why use two officers for each interrogation? Eventually, it just made financial sense to combine the two programs and give both jobs to the same officer.

The procedural manuals have never been updated, so regulations still clearly spell out that certain 'good cop' and 'bad cop' activities only occur once the 'other officer' has left the room. Hence the single most common word suspects use on their Post-Interrogation Quality Survey Forms to describe their interrogation experience is 'confusing':

Interrogator: You know, I was once like you. Young. Scared. I'd made some mistakes. But I realized it wasn't too late to get back on the right path, you know? I'm sure you can make the same realization. How have they been treating you here?

Suspect: I'm... really hungry.

Interrogator: Haven't they fed you since your arrest? That's appalling! Here, I'll go get you some CarboCrispies, you poor thing.

[Steps out of room. Steps right back in. Grabs suspect by hair.]

Interrogator: Okay, you little worm, it's just you and me now.

Suspect: W-w-wha...?

Interrogator: Where are all those traitor friends of yours now, huh? That's right. They rolled over. They left you to take the fall.

Suspect: B-but what about the Carbo...
[Interrogator punches suspect in the mouth.]



Interrogator: Vermin like you make me sick. I'm gonna laugh when they disintegrate you.

[Steps out of room. Steps right back in. Rushes to suspect's side.]

Interrogator: Oh no! I can't believe they did this! Who did this to you? Oh, they're animals in here. Let's get that blood of your face. And here's a bite for you to eat. The sooner we can get your confession cleared up, the sooner we'll get you out of here. Hang on, I'll be right back to take a statement.

Suspect: No, no, wait, what are you...
[Interrogator leaves. —And re-enters, cracking his knuckles.]

Interrogator: I don't really care if you tell us anything at all, you know. I'm just looking forward to watching you burn to ash in the termination booth.

Suspect: But all I did was jaywalk!

Checkpoint guards

Service firm type: Crowd Control, External Security
Security clearance: Any
Common mutation(s): Adrenalin Control, Empathy, Regeneration
Secret society taint: Anti-Mutant, Free Enterprise
Typical Access: 03

ACTION SKILLS & SPECIALTIES

Management 06

Chutzpah 10
 Interrogation 01
 Intimidation 10

Stealth 09

Concealment 13
 Sleight of Hand 13

Violence 08

Agility 01
 Beat Someone Without Leaving A Mark 14
 Energy Weapons 12

KNOWLEDGE SKILLS & SPECIALTIES

Hardware 06

Guardbot Maintenance 12
 Nuclear Engineering 01
 Weapon and Armor Maintenance 10

Software 04

Bot Programming 01
 Financial Systems 08

Wetware 04

Assess Value Of Illegal Drugs 10

ASSIGNED EQUIPMENT

- (1) laser pistol body
- (2) laser barrels of the appropriate color
- (1) truncheon
- (1) megaphone

PERSONAL EQUIPMENT

- (1) Qwik-Draw laser holster
- (1) bottle of Wakey-Wakey tablets
- (1) personal hygiene kit
- (1) fistful of illegally earned plasticreds

Alpha Complex is full of checkpoints. Not only must high-clearance facilities be kept secure, but it's necessary to throw up blockades whenever there's a crazed mutant traitor or dangerous terrorist cell on the loose. Troubleshooters may have to pass through a checkpoint at any time, on any mission. And that's when they have to deal with checkpoint guards.

Their job may be boring and occasionally dangerous, but it has its compensations. Namely, checkpoint guards can extort bribes from just about anyone passing through, especially Troubleshooters. There are always some regulations about what kinds of equipment are allowed through any given checkpoint, and the guards are well versed in their intricacies.

Checkpoint guard: Welcome to TNR Sector, citizen.

Troubleshooter: Can we hurry this up? I got places to be.

Checkpoint guard: Sure, sure. Oh, what's this I have found in your pocket? VideoLand capsules? You know benetridin is INDIGO Clearance, citizen.

Troubleshooter: That, uh, that's not mine.

Checkpoint guard: Sure, sure. Now, for 200 credits I can make this little misunderstanding go away. Otherwise, I will be forced to report you. What do you say?

Troubleshooter: Grr... fine, here's your plasticred. Now give me back my VideoLand, you bloodsucker.

Checkpoint guard: VideoLand? What could you be talking about? You know I would be forced to report you if I had found any such thing on your person.

What if the Troubleshooters try to turn the guards in for treason? Well, checkpoint guards are also handy at planting false evidence on people. PCs who harass the guards are often surprised to discover their pockets are crammed full of Communist propaganda!

Checkpoint guards socialize primarily with their own ilk, and they share both loot and data. If a Troubleshooter team submits to one shakedown, then the next set of guards they run into demands an even higher payment. On the other hand, if they ever try to turn in any guards for treason, they'll never get through another checkpoint again.

INTERNAL SECURITY *Impersonate Higher Clearance*

Instruction: Pretend to be a citizen of higher clearance so as to expose seditious tendencies.

Benefit: You are issued a pocket vidcam. If you encounter a citizen who displays improper attitudes toward authority, you must claim to be an undercover operative; claim a security clearance higher than your own and the other citizen's, without fear of consequence. Admonish the citizen for his behavior. Record the citizen's attitude toward you. If your interview record leads to the identification of a traitor, you may receive a reward.

INTERNAL SECURITY *Monitor Citizen Impulses*

Instruction: Survey citizens using simple word-association interviews.

Benefit: You are issued a pocket vidcam. When you observe a fellow citizen engaging in an activity you believe may be illegitimate, require him to participate in a short interview. Subject the citizen to a series of short word-association tests; you may use any words you like, without fear of consequence. In each case, he is to respond as quickly as he can. Record these interviews and return them to Internal Security for analysis. If your interview record leads to the identification of a traitor, you may receive a reward. Report citizens who are unwilling to participate; Internal Security will fine them.

NIGHTCYCLES SHIFTES

4-6 PLAYERS  1-2 SESSIONS  (4-8 HOURS)

Metropolis (dir. Fritz Lang, 1927)



GROVES

When an Internal Security agent overdoses on an illegal mutagen and goes on a rampage, his corrupt superiors call in an outside Troubleshooter team instead of leaving the matter to Internal Affairs. The team's been given permission to search every nook and cranny for the culprit.

Unfortunately, IntSec agents don't like their crannies searched.

Background

Phil-G-SWE is a treason filer at IntSec headquarters in HPW Sector. He indexes security footage, compiles treason reports and updates files. Phil-G is corrupt even by IntSec standards. He's used blackmail to build up his own drug ring and is using it to supply the IR Market with teralynium, a new anti-mutant poison.

Veronica-Y-HCA, his treacherous second-in-command, has managed to shape Phil-G's dream into a profitable enterprise. All she needs is someone to take down Phil-G so she

can lead the ring. Few would suspect Veronica-Y of smuggling anti-mutant poisons; she's a registered mutant herself, a telepath.

Edgar-B-XSO is the department's ambitious lieutenant. He hopes to oust his Troubleshooter-hating boss, **Cordwainer-I-FEA**. Meanwhile, he's feeling the heat from below, as Phil-G's aiming to fill his shoes. Edgar-B is now targeting both Phil-G and Cordwainer-I—killing two flybots with one cone rifle shell, as it were—and maybe even taking over the drug ring while he's at it. But he needs some outsiders to take the fall.

GREEN goon **Donnie-G-WRB** was one of Cordwainer-I's last remaining loyalists. Edgar-

B pointed him towards **Jennifer-G-HYF**, the drug ring's supplier. Jennifer-G got nervous about Donnie-G's snooping and drugged his CoffeeLike with a bit too much teralynium. It turned Donnie-G into a psychopathic hulk instead of a quivering wreck. He's currently destroying an IntSec office. Seeing an opportunity, Edgar-B has quarantined the office until he can bring in outsiders to neutralize Donnie-B. If IntSec itself took out one of its own officers, Internal Affairs would be all over everyone like a bad smell. Far better to bring in some outside fall guys to take out Donnie-B and then disappear.

Noir read-aloud passages by Dan Curtis Johnson  Additional design contributions by Eric Minton

Briefing

The long day is finally coming to its hot, sticky end. The ventilation wheezes like a pepper-gassed rioter. Someone's been punching holes in the cooling system. But word on the street is, Tech Services has been too 'busy' to handle it. No surprise: There's a contract negotiation coming up.

Dinner was two parts grease to one part sweat, with a chaser of bootleg asperquaint just to keep you upright. But finally, the lights have dimmed. Heat boils out of the cafeteria, taking you and the rest of the swing shift with it. Time to crawl back into that hole you call home.

But then you see the GREEN goon on the corner. As always, your first thought is: Could we take him? One look at the scar running from his throat to his missing left eye says: not even on your best day, citizen. His other eye works you over with camera coldness as his steely jaw slowly grinds a toothpick. Then something shifts in that gaze, and he gestures for your group to come over. Something in his gesture suggests this is not meant to be optional.

Looks like the day just got a little longer.

If the Troubleshooters follow the goon, he leads them towards a large, black unmarked van. He gestures for them to get in the back. (He isn't much for words.) If they insist on being difficult, the goon gives them a swift, brutal ass-kicking. Show no mercy. It serves them right for refusing the plot hook.

When the Troubleshooters enter the van, change the lighting at the table. It'll set the mood for the mission.

The van door slams shut like the chamber of a slugthrower as the vehicle lurches into gear. The anonymous joe waiting for you in the back is clearly all business, with a grey suit that's too sharp and a grey face that's too flat. The dark case on his lap smells like a cheap smoke in a dirty service tunnel. His eyes are hidden behind dark specs and his mouth barely moves, letting out a thin, hard voice that enters you like a needle full of chilled poison.

'Who I am isn't important. All that matters is a certain situation that's developed. A local Internal Security analyst stepped into his cube just like any normal guy this afternoon... but what stepped out a few minutes later was something else entirely. Within two minutes, he'd torn some doors down and some arms off, and now he's taken the remaining survivors on his floor as hostages. Normally, we'd bring our own people to handle it, but this is a tough one, and I'm told you're okay.

'But you're playing by our rules on this one, see? We need him alive. Something bigger is going down, and we're gonna need this guy to get to the bottom of it. So you'll be trading in your heaters for something softer. Any good with a stunner? Don't bother answering; of course you are. You wouldn't be here if you weren't.'

The case slips open just a bit, just enough for his hand to snake inside and withdraw a set of laminated cards. 'We're trying to keep things business-as-usual in the rest of the analysis center. These'll get you into the affected offices. Don't lose them, or... well, let's not get into that. And don't leak a word of any of this to anyone — not out here, not in there. We think someone else was behind this... and we think they have accomplices.'

The van screeches to a halt and the doors open. Outside is the dark emptiness of a vacant parking level. The only light frames an elevator door. You don't have to see the grey man point to know... that's where you're going.

The van speeds away as soon as the Troubleshooters exit, leaving them alone in the parking garage immediately under HPW Sector IntSec HQ.

From the moment the team enters the black van, all attempts to contact Troubleshooter HQ or The Computer are rerouted to IntSec HQ dispatcher Stacy-O-HOK, who happens to be in Edgar-B's pocket. Right now, The Computer doesn't know about the corruption in the department, and everyone involved plans to make sure things stay that way.

GREEN goon

Violence 14, Stealth 10, Disguise 18
Stungun, tangler, truncheon (S5K impact), GREEN reflac/Kevlar (E1/I3) and, if necessary, GM fiat

The gray guy

Mental Block (Power 20), Management 14, Con Games 18, Stealth 12, Disguise 16, Violence 12
Laser pistol (W3K energy), kevlar vest (I3), GM fiat

Start with a firefight

The elevator spits you out like a mouthful of stale CruncheeTym. You weren't sure what to expect next, but on hindsight, a row of detector-stations is as good as anything else. A dozen mirror-faced IntSec grunts are working over a long line of exiting workers with hand-wands and vinyl gloves. Judging from the bored faces of the departing citizens, they get the rough treatment every day. There's only one station open for entry into the center. The lane is short: a pair of ORANGES who look a little too excited about the search they're about to undergo. Probably gelgernine addicts. There's a chute in the wall nearby. The sign says ALL-PURPOSE DISPOSAL in friendly letters... Maybe a little too friendly.

This is the last chance for the Troubleshooters to get rid of treasonous items. Nothing is that easy in IntSec, of course; officers sift through the garbage (Find Treasonous Garbage 18, Identify Previous Owner 13), while the security officials merely do a cursory scan (Search 10). If the Troubleshooters wanted to get rid of evidence, they should've done it in the parking lot. At the checkpoint, the officials check the Troubleshooters' authorization cards, then instantly ask for their weapons. In exchange for his pistol (and any other weapons they reveal), each Troubleshooter gets a stungun. Then they're directed to the next elevator.

The elevator reads the Troubleshooters' cards and then tells them they're authorized to visit only the quarantined floor. No weaseling out of this one.



The labyrinth

When the elevator opens again, it looks just like that nightmare you used to always wake up screaming from, before your meds changed: a cubicle space designed by a madman. Ceiling too low in some places, too high in others. The walls are set at uneven angles. No parallel lines. The already-dimmed evening lighting flickers randomly in places. Everywhere is a corner. In the dream, there was something monstrous around one of those corners. According to the grey man, your dream has come true. Your fists clench and your hair rises as an inhuman voice bellows from somewhere deep in the labyrinth: 'Jennifer-Geeeee! No more bots! SHOW YOURSELF!'

The only reply is a muffled whimper. You're not entirely sure it didn't come from one of you.

The IntSec office is a nightmarish mess of passages, cubicles with multiple exits and dead. (The architect was quite sane; IntSec's demands for privacy clashed with CPU's ban on cubicle doors, leading to the 'try to peek around these' layout.) The Troubleshooters must wander these winding corridors, lost and confused, until their target attacks them. Just imagine the office is a labyrinth, the Troubleshooters are the sacrifices and the psycho is...

The minotaur

Donnie-G-WRB was your typical IntSec GREEN goon, Frankenstein Destroyer member and mutant with Adrenaline Control. He made the mistake of snooping around Jennifer-G too much, though. One teralynium dose later, he's turned into a raging mad lunatic, a hulking brute who sees everyone as despicable bots. He's responded by ripping the limbs off of any 'bot' he encounters.



'Side-effects include constant uncontrolled activation of mutations, paranoia, visions'

Teralynium

Nickname: Freakout

Clearance: ILLEGAL

Availability: At finer INFRARED markets near you!

Effects: A poison, not a drug; has no beneficial effects

Side-effects: Constant uncontrolled activation of mutations, paranoia, visions

Aftereffects: Sleepiness, power loss

Method of application: Aerosol (half a day), digestion (full day)

The lucky ones escaped. The unlucky ones got lost in the panic and are now cowering under the desks. The really unlucky ones ran into Donnie-G and got 'scrapped'.

Despite his condition, a shred of sanity remains. Donnie-G constantly yells for Jennifer-G, demanding she call off the bots and show herself. Hammer this into the players' awareness; it's an important clue.

Donnie-G should get the drop on the Troubleshooters. When one of them makes a noise (or annoys you enough to justify execution), Donnie-G's arms burst through a nearby wall, clutch the hapless Troubleshooter and pull him back through. He quickly escapes with his prize to a safe haven, where he tries to scrap his victim. If the Troubleshooters follow him, he swats them away like flies.

Crazy Donnie-G has the strength of a bull and the endurance of Rasputin. The Troubleshooters' non-lethal weapons don't faze him; it would take a dozen lasers to bring him down. They'll have to be more creative. Electrocuting him in a puddle laced with high-voltage wires, dropping a chunk of the ceiling on him or tricking him into falling down the elevator shaft are all viable tactics, worth a knockout and Perversity points. The Troubleshooters could also ask IntSec for some high-power tranquilizer guns. Those eventually knock him out as well, although he has a few rounds to mutilate the Troubleshooters and destroy their precious guns. (Increase the equipment fines if you're disappointed at their boring solution.)

Reassignment

Once the Troubleshooters have taken down Donnie-G, a squad of GREEN IntSec goons arrives at the scene, hoist him up and haul him off without a word to the Troubleshooters. Then...

The grey man steps out of the shadows and into your faces just like *[snap fingers]* that. 'Looks like they were right about you,' he says. 'Too bad Donnie-G's gone comatose. Maybe, just maybe, you can still crack his case wide open.'

'Looks like poor Donnie-G had an enemy who wanted him dead— someone very close to him. They dosed him with an unidentified hallucinogen. Something nasty. Looks like an IR-Market drug ring connection. You're going to flush them out.'

'Start with the co-workers he had personal contact with just before... the change. Ready to write down some names? David-G-RFM. Phil-G-SWE. Veronica-Y-HCA.'

The Troubleshooters may bring up Donnie-G's rantings about Jennifer-G. The gray man offhandedly dismisses them as irrelevant;

after all, this is a matter of illegal drugs, not bots! If a player wonders aloud whether the gray man is covering something up, give him some Perversity points.

'As a special unit reporting to me, you'll have privileges normally accorded only to our own staff. Unrestricted access to suspects' offices. Use of the interrogation room, if needed. But stay out of the way of the work shift. Treason never sleeps, so IntSec doesn't either.'

He snaps his fingers and two burly GREEN goons appear. 'Show our guests the interrogation room and the suspects' offices.' As the goons reach for you, he halts them with a gesture: 'Gently. They're with us. For now.'

With an irritated grunt, one of the goons gestures to the elevator again.

The interrogation room

Another elevator ride, another unpleasant destination. This one's a waiting room. The little speaker in one corner must be broken, because its tortured electronic noises can't possibly be music. The bored YELLOW receptionist makes eye contact with your goon escorts and smirks, as though they share a private joke. There's a solitary bulkhead door in the wall, bolted shut. The few chairs here are all taken by BLUE troopers. They're casually watching a clear plastic pipe that emerges from the wall by the massive door.

One of your escort goons grunts. 'Youse won't be goin' in there y'selves. At least, y'better hope not. If y'get probable cause on someone, just hand 'em over t' us and we'll bring 'em here t' get d'truth. Squeeze it right outta dem.'

As if on cue, there's a slight rumbling noise from the clear pipe. Suddenly, a blast of red liquid rushes through the pipe. Then it's gone. One of the goons nods, the hint of a cold smile on his lips. The BLUES start standing up, as though getting ready.

'Y'might wanna be careful about tryin' t'stuff too many people in here. One or two, dey ain't gonna question. But if'n youse start tryin' t'send everyone up, d'paperwork can get mighty... sticky, y'know?'

Secret society assignments

As the Troubleshooters begin their investigation, their societies' assignments start pouring in. A coded message on the ceiling here, a wadded piece of paper there, Morse code spelled out by a dripping faucet.... The Troubleshooters never talk directly to their contacts or even know who they are. It's IntSec; everyone's subtle.

Anti-Mutant: IntSec and their damned mutant telepaths are constantly trying to pry into our brains. Beware any telepaths you come across! Even when they aren't around, they're prying into your mind! Keep your brains safe and eliminate this menace!

Computer Phreaks: A rival Phreak works here. Discover his identity and steal his code for our use.

Communists: Get pictures of the interior of the interrogation chamber! We'll print them in our pamphlets to raise the people's anger against the Computer!

Corpore Metal: Whoever killed Donnie-G did us a big favor. Offer him a cybernetic upgrade in return.

Death Leopard: Man, whatever they slipped in his drink must've been a doozy! I bet you could cause one fine riot if you got a bunch of it and slipped it into everyone's drinks! Just a thought.

FCCC-P: The interrogation chamber is the cleansing agent of our deity. Prove your worthiness for the next level of salvation by subjecting yourself to it. Try to subject as many other people as possible to it as well.

Frankenstein Destroyers: Avenge Donnie-G's death. Corpore Metal was after him, so look for sympathizers.

Free Enterprise: Our underlings in this operation want a bigger slice of the pie. Take out the leader and only the leader; once he's gone, our men will assume control. Don't let him get interrogated, or it'll ruin everything.

Humanists: The brutal interrogation of IntSec is counterproductive. Show them old-fashioned sleuthing and questioning produces better result than the blood drain those jackals are so fond of.

Illuminati: The leader of this drug ring has disappointed us. He deserves our special form of justice. Give this small gift box to him; it will lead to his downfall. Frame someone else for the official punishment.

Mystics: This operation is a major source of our collective wisdom, fellow traveller! Keep it from being uncovered!

Psion: Someone in IntSec is blackmailing mutants into doing his dirty work. Discover who he is and melt his brain.

Pro Tech: Check the specifications of any surveillance equipment you come across. Try to tweak them for improved performance. Report any successful modifications.

PURGE: Sabotage the interrogation chamber. Perhaps if you plant a time bomb on a traitor and send him in for interrogation....

Romantics: A few high-ranking officers have decorated their rooms in Old Reckoning decor. Make notes on how they arrange it and steal anything you can.

Sierra Club: Certain flower species are said to grow only when watered with human blood. IntSec goes through a lot of blood; get your hands on it. If you can reroute it into the water supply, we can extract it from there.

The heavy door swings open to reveal two whip-sharp INDIGOs in top-quality rubberwear, pushing a wheeled gurney between them. The poor fool strapped to it is twitching like a third-rail accident victim. It's hard to say what he used to look like. What he looks like now is something that's been in a grinder. A couple BLUES take hold of the gurney. 'Not bad,' says one of the INDIGOs. 'We almost had

to use Level 4. The results are being downloaded to your PDCs now.'

Suddenly, the suspect clenches against the binders. 'Oh, he thinks I don't know he put me here, but he'll find out! I know who it was! Oh, yes, he'll get his! I'll take all the time I...' His raving is cut short by a truncheon, and the BLUES wheel out the unconscious subject. After coolly appraising you— as useful tools? as



SERVICE, SERVICE! CLEARANCE ULTRAVIOLET



IntSec interrogators: We flush it out of them.

potential victims?— the INDIGOs step back into their steel hole.

One of your escorts turns back to you. ‘Oh, yeah. Also, people tend t’be a little, whattayacallit... vengeful after you send ‘em in there. Have fun with d’suspects.’

As special investigators, the Troubleshooters can inflict IntSec-quality interrogations for anyone they drag in— with a good reason, that is! The IntSec interrogators are extremely skilled. The Troubleshooters will learn any secrets the victim still had; on the downside, they make lifelong enemies out of anyone they stuff in. (Not a good idea when most of them outrank you and have access to your treason files.)

The suspects

These NPCs are the Troubleshooters’ suspects, whom they’ll spend the mission investigating. Most of them are connected to the drug ring. None of them want the Troubleshooters looking too closely at their activities. They can make the Troubleshooters’ lives miserable in return.

Veronica-Y-HCA

Registered Telepath. Free Enterprise. Blackmailed by Phil-G-Y-SWE into telepathically delivering his threats to mutants and orders for his drug ring. Trying to weasel control of the drug ring from him and turn a profit.

The room is cluttered with bizarre but strangely compelling-looking furniture and decorations. An unearthly, but vaguely musical, noise is warbling from somewhere, digging at your mind like a half-remembered dream. A slim, strangely life-like female mannequin sits in the middle of the room, wearing the leotard of a registered mutant. Then, suddenly, its eyes open and its head slightly turns! It... that is, she... is alive! Her blue-

Fun with teammates

Your players are already casting cunning glances at each other. ‘Why, if I could only get my teammate in there...’ With a little work and some well-planted evidence, they can! If a PC is subjected to interrogation, don’t bother describing it. Just have him make some Chutzpah checks to see if he can avoid spilling sensitive info:

- ☉ Secret society
- ☉ Mutation
- ☉ Superiors
- ☉ Current assignments
- ☉ Boot size, favorite food, favorite color, etc.

If he successfully makes his Chutzpah check, he still has to fabricate a convincing lie. When it’s over, make a Sanity check to see how well he copes with it. Everyone exits in Maimed condition.

It isn’t all bad news. Every player interrogated gains 25 Perversity points for revenge. Turnabout is fair play -- or, if not fair, really fun.

grey eyes seem to cut right through you like a force sword, but her voice soothes like a rush of pure rolactin. ‘I’m glad you’re finally here. You have to help.’

Veronica-Y’s private meditation chamber combines futuristic furniture with minimalist art and fuzzy bootleg Beatles music. It looks extremely comfortable, except for one chair with built-in straps. ‘I’m sorry, I usually don’t have so many visitors at once,’ she says as she reclines across the coach. The Troubleshooters will have to stand, unless they want to sit in the chair.

Questioning

Veronica-Y is polite and helpful, which should make the Troubleshooters edgy. After Donnie-G’s failure, she’s pinning her hopes on them. She acts like a naive dame caught in a web of deceit, but she’s a cunning adversary trying to wrest control of the drug ring from Phil-G. First, she helps out the Troubleshooters by offering a few leads on the other suspects, being careful not to admit she knows too much. If they ignore her, she moves to bribery and blackmail, subtly hinting at what her telepathy’s uncovered. ‘Of course I’m loyal to Friend Computer. Only a PURGER [glance] ‘or a Commie’ [glance] ‘wouldn’t be!’ [gulp] If the Troubleshooters are still divided about helping her, she telepathically tells each of them that if they side with her, she’ll answer questions about their teammates.

She says Donnie-G came in with a cup of CoffeeLike to chat about his investigation. Then he left to talk with Jennifer-G. ‘I’m sure Phil-G asked Jennifer-G to poison him before he uncovered anything.’

Investigation

Veronica-Y won’t leave her room. Investigating it uncovers nothing anyway; all of her material goods are in plain sight and (barely) legal. She’ll know if any Troubleshooter steals one of her items; she’ll act like

nothing happened but rat him out to a suitably hostile teammate.

Interrogation

The interrogators refuse to interrogate her (no one wants to tick off a telepath, and the psychic feedback's brutal), no matter how much evidence the Troubleshooters provide. They'll just have to accuse her the old-fashioned way.

David-G-RFM

The moment you step into his doorway, the heavy-set guy at the desk pushes himself back to the far wall, throwing his hands up. 'I didn't have anything to do with it!' he insists, a little too vehemently. Then he stops and looks at you a little closer. 'Wait... did something happen?'

The head of the GREEN goon squad, David-G has nothing to do with the drug ring or Donnie-G's death. He knows Donnie-G visited him a few minutes before the 'incident' (rumor travels fast), they talked about an upsurge in Anti-Mutant activity in the sector, then he suddenly excused himself to go to the bathroom.

His best guess about the drugging: 'I bet someone jumped him in the bathroom and made him swallow it.'

Interrogation reveals David-G runs the local GREEN goon protection racket. His goons will be sure to express their displeasure before the Troubleshooters are done in IntSec.

Jennifer-G-YHF

Undercover Operations manager. Mystic. Supplies the drugs for the ring. Keeps a stash in her office as well. Drugged Donnie-G by poisoning his CoffeeLike when he wasn't looking.

The door opens to reveal a dark room lit only by the glow of monitors on standby and the bright end of a cancer-puff. The dame behind the cig is wreathed in smoke. One look tells you: She's the sort who wears trouble like a shawl. Another look tells you: That's a short-barrel blaster pointed at you.

'Three seconds, citizens,' she says. 'What's the password?'

The Troubleshooters don't have a password. But holding up their hands and saying 'Please don't shoot!' works.

As the head of Undercover Operations, drug dealer and poisoner, Jennifer-G has reason to be defensive. She'll make them hand over their weapons before she lowers the weapon. She refuses to turn on the lights, forces them to stand and answers their questions with annoyed, terse answers.

Questioning

Jennifer-G is an expert liar. She explains her antagonism by saying she's trained not to trust anyone. She says Donnie-G stopped by an hour ago to discuss some suspicious forms he uncovered. (She doesn't mention the forms were hers.) She also says Donnie-G cut their meeting short because he was thirsty and needed a drink. (A lie. He had his CoffeeLike when he came in.) If asked for suggestions on how Donnie-G might have been drugged, she suggests David-G did it. 'He was the next person he talked to. He could've drugged his CoffeeLike and hoped to put the blame on me. He isn't as dumb as he looks.' She answers all other questions by suggesting she doesn't know but is looking into it.

She also questions the Troubleshooters' curiosity. 'Are you sure there isn't an ulterior reason for this? If I suspect something, I can ask for an interrogation, you know.'

Investigation

Jennifer-G never exits through her door; she uses secret passages. After the first visit, there's an even chance she's gone later. (If she isn't gone, she demands to know why the Troubleshooters are bothering her again.) A quick search reveals illegal drugs (including teralynium) hidden under a false panel in a desk drawer.

A search also uncovers a map of the sector in her desk, with various locations marked. Each location lists a time, an unknown abbreviation (the drug types) and a payment. A note on the bottom reads, 'Remind Bill-O not to be late.'

Interrogation

If the PCs try to drag off Jennifer-G, she sprays them with her personal can of teralynium. For the rest of the investigation, the Troubleshooters' lives will be interesting.

Because she's trained to resist interrogation, some of her answers are lies. She admits she's the supplier and Bill-O-SSD is the delivery agent, but she denies any involvement in the poisoning. She blames Bill-O if necessary; she'll even admit where and when he's delivering the drugs.

Veronica-Y-HCA-2 Registered mutant

Management 10, Act Innocent 14
YELLOW reflec (E1)

Donnie-G-WRB-1

Management 04, Violence 12, Smash Walls 16, Pull Off Limbs 14, Shrug Off Punny Weapons 18
Bare hands (S4K), thick hide (I2)

Cordwainer-I-FEA-3

Electroshock (Power 18), Violence 10, Pummel Troubleshooters With Office Furniture 16, Shrug Off Non-Lethal Attacks 18
Improvised weapons (S5K impact), INDIGO reflec (E1), GM fiat

Phil-G-SWE-1

Surveillance 15, Software 10, Data Analysis 14, Data Search 14, Hacking 12
Laser pistol (W3K energy), GREEN reflec (E1)

Jennifer-G-HYF-2

Stealth 12, Concealment 16, Violence 12, Energy Weap. 16, Spray Can 16
Blaster (M3K energy), can of teralynium aerosol, GREEN reflec (E1)

As payback, Jennifer-G arranges to have her lackeys smuggle drugs into the Troubleshooters' daily meals.

Phil-G-SWE

Treason Filer. Anti-Mutant. Master blackmailer and underboss of the drug ring. Has the treason files of numerous citizens (including the Troubleshooters) at his fingertips. Runs a 'treason cleaning' business on the side.

The room is packed on all sides with fat storage drives and tiny monitor screens. The gangly freak inside slides and swivels back and forth perpetually in his chair, his fingers blurring over dozens of different keyboards, his head bobbing side-to-side disturbingly, his eyes flickering over the little screens like targeting lasers. 'Ask for something or keep moving,' he says, never even looking at you.

Phil-G is not directly connected to Donnie-G's poisoning. Honest. He's just managing the



A hell of a dame.

crooked little empire that led to his death. He doesn't like Jennifer-G's solution; he would've just blackmailed Donnie-G, and then they wouldn't have this mess.

Questioning

Phil-G continues working as the Troubleshooters question him, never looking at them. He swears not to know anything about the drug ring. 'I don't have time, given my hobby.'

Phil-G's hobby is 'cleaning up' treason records, which he'll quickly mention to the Troubleshooters. 'Do you honestly think I have enough time for two underground businesses? Speaking of business, perhaps I can do a service for you.' All they need to do is pay him right (usually 50-500cr per offense) or do a few favors (such as delivering unmarked envelopes to various IntSec personnel). If they threaten to turn him in for that, he mentions he can do the exact opposite for free.

If the Troubleshooters insist on digging, he brings up the same threat. 'You want a suspect, go question that mutie, Veronica-Y. She acts innocent, but her heart's colder than our storage freezers. Don't trust her.'

Investigation

Phil-G often leaves his office to bring information to other officials. There's no evidence of treason on his terminal, but the Troubleshooters can find in his filing cabinets hundreds of manila folders sorted by name. Each envelope contains numerous data disks.

If they search for specific people's blackmail folders, they notice that Veronica-Y's envelope is crammed with disks, Donnie-G's has quite a few, Jennifer-G and David-G both have a couple disks to 'keep them in line' and the Troubleshooters' own envelopes are just getting started with one disk apiece. (Phil-G doesn't waste time when new threats pop up.) Luckily, the actual contents of each disk are heavily encrypted; otherwise we'd have to fill up an entire page with everyone's material.

The discs could be extremely valuable, depending on the subject and the buyer.

Oh, and if the Troubleshooters really want to mess with their records on Phil-G's terminal, all they need is a Hacking/Software checks to bypass the security and a Data Analysis/Software check to make the right changes. How heavily guarded could it be? It's only Internal Security.

Interrogation

If the Troubleshooters grab him for interrogation, Phil-G goes without a fight. When they arrive at the interrogation chamber, though, the INDIGOs refuse to touch him. (If the Troubleshooters bothered to check, they'd notice his files on the interrogation personnel are the largest of all.) They'll either have to accuse him immediately or let him go, whereupon he'll gleefully head back to his office and spend all night adding offenses to the Troubleshooters' records. If they don't stop (or accuse) him fast, they'll be the next guests in the interrogation chamber.

Cordwainer-I-FEA

The captain's not on duty at the moment, but everyone wants the Troubleshooters to talk to him. This is because he's notorious for despising Troubleshooters, and a confrontation would likely keep the PCs out of everyone else's hair. Let the players struggle to make an appointment with him as much as they like; he won't show up until the climax.

Edgar-B-XSO

In case you haven't guessed it yet, Edgar-B is the gray man. He's currently 'on assignment,' and so he's also unavailable for questioning. Like Cordwainer-I, he'll only show up at the climax.

The choice

The Troubleshooters have narrowed the suspects down to two, but they can't interrogate either one. What should a desperate investigator do? Grease the wheels, of course. Both Phil-G and Veronica-Y are more than happy to help the Troubleshooters accuse the other.

Random Treason Table

What if the Troubleshooters decide to interrogate some nameless minor character? Roll on the Random Treason Table to see what he's involved in:

- 1-8: Active participant in a secret society.
- 9-12: Addicted to illegal drugs. Points characters to Jennifer-G.
- 13: Off of hormone suppressants. May make a crude attempt to seduce the PCs.
- 14-15: Accepts bribes to let suspects off the hook.
- 16-17: Blackmail, extortion, all that sort of thing.
- 18-19: 'Loses' departmental equipment and resells it on the IR Market.
- 20: Embezzles from the department slush fund.

- ☉ Veronica-Y requires a bit less greasing than Phil-G. She's a registered telepath, so lots of people dislike her. Some recorded testimony from Jennifer-G and Bill-O, a few planted drugs and she's as good as guilty.
- ☉ Accusing Phil-G requires a bit more skill. In addition to the usual evidence, they'll need to return his blackmail material to their 'rightful owners' and grease a few palms to remove any doubts. (Remember, blackmail material on other citizens is better than credits to the right people.)

As usual, a couple of BLUE troopers will seize the chosen suspect and start hauling him or her up to the interrogation room. But this time, as the suspect pleads or spits threats, there's an interruption: the captain finally emerges from his office, and he looks mad.

Mood INDIGO

Cordwainer-I hates Troubleshooters. He demands to know why they're here instead of Internal Affairs. When they answer, he levies improbable insubordination fines for daring to talk back to him. He starts explaining at length how they're committing treason just for existing, let alone for being in the same room with him.

At the point where it becomes clear to the players they're doomed, the captain roars, 'And will one of you blasted Troubleshooters get me a drink, here? I'm parched. And frankly, it's about all you're good for.' A moment later, Jennifer-G hands one of the characters a cup of CoffeeLike. A pinch of gray powder swirls on its surface for a moment before dissolving. The captain barely pauses in his tirade to down the drink.

Yes, the CoffeeLike is laced with teralynium. Cordwainer-I goes crazy, just like Donnie-G. But unlike the GREEN goon, the captain's sole focus is killing the Troubleshooters with his bare hands. And his Electroshock mutation renders him equally immune to stun guns. The team will have to beat him into a coma to take him down. Meanwhile, everyone else just watches. Who wants to be seen attacking the boss in the middle of the office?

Mandatory Plot Twist!

... and as the captain's body hits the floor, the gray man steps out of the shadows. Everyone scrambles

Dire straits

If the Troubleshooters can't take down Cordwainer-I themselves, they can beg for help from the IntSec officers on duty. Coincidentally, the only ones available are those who've been interrogated and tortured on their say-so. What kind of favors do you think they'll demand in exchange for their aid? Payback's a bitch.

to salute. He claps politely as he approaches the team.

'So it seems Cordwainer-I was involved in the drug ring. And it looks like you've also nabbed a conspirator. Good work. Troopers, bring the suspect to my personal interrogation room.'

'In the meantime, citizens, it looks like you have a problem. You've drugged and assaulted a high-ranking Internal Security officer without authorization. See those security cameras? It's all on tape. Someone's gonna have to take responsibility.'

He opens a desk drawer. All of the team's confiscated weapons are inside. 'One of you has to take the fall, and it has to be the hard way. Who will it be?'

Consequences

Whoever the Troubleshooters chose to accuse as the drug ring leader, they'll pay for it:

- ☉ **Veronica-Y** reveals their secrets to other secret society members. Random citizens try to blackmail them or fake their recognition signals and use the opportunity to off them.
- ☉ **Phil-G** activates a failsafe program that latches onto their treason files, puts them on permanent IntSec Watch-Closely status and periodically adds false offenses. IntSec watches the Troubleshooters until the PCs eradicate the program (perhaps with some Phreak's help) or slip up and are brought in for brainscrubbing, termination and erasure.

Either way, the Troubleshooters are gradually screwed.

The road best not taken


What if the Troubleshooters decide to throw in their lot with the drug ring against the gray man? Let them shoot it out with Edgar-B; they might even win. If they expect gratitude from Phil-G and Veronica-Y, they are sorely mistaken. Their drug ring's been uncovered, and it may not survive the coming shakeup of the department power structure. They combine forces to ruin the PCs; see the 'Consequences' section.

In addition, the gray man tapes the team's termination of one of their own. He now holds this over them as blackmail material.

Epilogue

The grey man holds his hand out for your authorization cards. 'Good enough for now. You're done, so I'll take those passes back. Forget you were ever here. And don't ever make us remember that you were. Get it?'

On the van ride back, there's not much to say. Somehow, it almost feels like a dream. You're dropped off at your dormitory just as the first morning lights start to flicker on. Time for your morning shift, citizens. But it's okay... you probably weren't going to sleep in this heat anyway.



**WAIT—WHY
WEREN'T THERE
ANY HONEST
INTSEC AGENTS?**

SERVICE PLC

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PLC hangouts

Queues: No one likes to wait in line, but lines are an unavoidable part of life. Experienced queuers make the best of it, turning lines into social occasions: chatting, sharing refreshments and playing the occasional game of 'pass the treason' or 'poke the guy in front of you with a sharp stick'.

Worker lounge: The Computer requires every PLC service firm to provide a comfortable breakroom. PLC workers are clever when it comes to sneaking away from their posts to slack off in the lounge. They send out a rotating roster of lookouts and diversionists, who alert dozing co-workers when supervisors approach—assuming the supervisors aren't dozing with them.

Rumors

- ☉ 'There's a shortage of H-series indicator lights, and we have one of the few remaining stockpiles. We're about to be hit by a huge demand from other sectors and prices will go through the roof.'
- ☉ 'I wouldn't eat any Gentle Surprise for a while. Someone's been reprogramming scrubots to *leak* into them, if you know what I mean.'
- ☉ 'The annual undercover customer satisfaction inspections are going on. You can ask for more than ever from PLC distribution clerks!'
- ☉ 'The new automated return-policy machines have a bug. If you return two items at once, it throws an error and spits them both back out... but it still gives you credit for the lower-priced item. You can keep doing this over and over, racking up exchange credit all day if you want!'

Service services

- ☉ 'A new supply depot has opened on C Corridor. It needs to be stocked. Every hour on the half-hour, another cargo transbot will arrive with standard Troubleshooters goods which need to be properly stored on the appropriate depot shelves. You may finish the rest of your mission between cargo arrivals.'
- ☉ 'We've repainted this antique autocar for its VIOLET owner, and we need someone to drive it back to its owner's compound. Everyone take one of these single-use brevet badges to demonstrate you're authorized to use such high-clearance equipment. Whatever you do, don't lose your badge! And whatever happens, don't get into an accident! If you so much as scratch the paint job...'
- ☉ 'There's a fun new snack food coming, but it needs that extra push to market! Here are 500 exciting, full-color brochures touting its many fine features and emphasizing its safety and affordability. They all must be distributed to citizens of ORANGE Clearance or lower *only*.'
- ☉ 'We need feedback on the two newest kinds of CruncheeTym Algae Chips—Nukulicious and Radiawesome. Here are 25 bags of each. Conduct taste-test comparison surveys of citizens, recording their opinions on flavor, crunchiness and mouthfeel using a scale of 1-low to 5-high.'
- ☉ 'Output is down 37% in Food Vat 783-49/489-48. Go and have a little chat with the vat supervisor; make sure he sees the error of his ways. Stay on site until the vat is back up to full output. Don't let the workers go off shift or receive their food and drug ration until everything's back to normal.'
- ☉ 'Deliver this three-layer chocolate raspberry mousse cake to the RED service entrance of the Helene-V-AUM-4 Memorial Banquet Hall within the next... hmm... 26 minutes. Don't muss the frosting.'
- ☉ 'As you know, today is Interrogator Appreciation Day, and we're positively swamped with orders for PlastiFloral and UltraBonBon deliveries. Here is a list of interrogation chambers in this sector and the specific interrogator recipient at each.'
- ☉ 'We're way behind our quarterly quota of battery consumption. If we don't finish using up this quarter's allotment, next quarter's will be cut back. You have 72 hours to thoroughly drain this crate of batteries. Don't tell us what you used them for; we don't want to know.'
- ☉ 'Shortly before her fatal accident, Janice-R-MEI-2 performed a complete inventory of Warehouse 93, but they still haven't forwarded her written report to our offices here. We've made numerous electronic requests for information, but they keep telling us the report isn't there. Go to the warehouse and find her report so we can bring Warehouse 93's incompetence to IntSec's attention.' (The report is in the file cabinet next to the PLC clerk's desk. Janice-R accidentally filed the report under W instead of 9.)
- ☉ 'The new CruncheeTym "Every One a Winner Sweepstakes" wrappers went out with a misprinting and, in fact, every single one of them is the grand prize winner. You will staff this sector's Prize Claim Center, giving each "grand prize winner" one of these squeaky Teela-O dolls left over from last year's "Gotta Bag 'Em All Sweepstakes".'
- ☉ 'Your old-issue PDCs are being replaced with the new DO-44 model, which is rolling out next week. Show your cool new PDC to any citizens you encounter during the mission. Build word-of-mouth excitement. Especially focus on its more than 40 new features, such as the lie detector and the self-destruct sequence.'

New PLC service firms

Artisan Unions

Example firms: HandCrafters PLC, Artistic License

Revenue stream: Contracts with PLC; sales to individual service firms and high-clearance citizens.

Secret society taint: Frankenstein Destroyers, Free Enterprise, Humanists (heavy), Romantics (ubiquitous)

Machines create almost all of the goods used in Alpha Complex. In blank, echoing factory halls, dull-eyed INFRAREDs and low-grade bots slump at the assembly lines, looking on idly as automated mechanisms endlessly cast, cut, solder and polish the cheap metal and plastic wares that supply the masses.

At the higher clearances, things change. Connoisseurs demand only the best for their suites and estates, and for many, machine-made crap just won't do! Sure, elite bots could fashion fine merchandise, but as a status symbol, trusted citizens furnish their homes with only hand-crafted, human-made goods.

Low-clearance artisans apprentice to their betters in firms generically known as Artisan Unions. At first they fetch and carry, or perform mindless, dangerous tasks like polishing rocks or hand-feeding the silversmith's forge. Eventually they start churning out crappy, low-quality goods Artisan Union firms can fob off on naive new YELLOWs at inflated prices.

By the time an artisan reaches YELLOW Clearance, his career path forks in what appears, at first glance, to be a surprisingly meritocratic split. If he has the talent, he moves into the elite artisan branch, where he joins his fellow craftsmen in transforming the finest raw materials into furniture and artwork for the highest clearances. There, his career tops out at GREEN, at which point he watches his no-talent colleagues in the administrative branch advance past him. Elite artisans who complain about this are promptly demoted. Those who keep quiet can hope to eventually find a nice niche on an INDIGO or VIOLET patron's personal staff.

Enforced Reclamation and Recycling

Example firms: ReStore; Give Something Back; Return to Sender

Revenue stream: Contracts with PLC.

Secret society taint: Free Enterprise (common)

The unpredictable ebb and flow of product in Alpha Complex makes the work of PLC a challenge. Unpredictable tides of taste can turn the unwanted into the must-have, from dual-cooling blaster rifles to radberry-mochamint chapsticks.

When demand suddenly exceeds supply, PLC turn to Enforced Reclamation and Recycling agents. ERR agents engage in acts of aggressive hardware reclamation and random redistribution initiatives to get loyal citizens to hand over the required gear pronto. Overnight, oddly colored wheelie bins suddenly appear in corridors and waste disposal zones, offering a minuscule credit bonus for the return of certain in-demand items. ERR agencies guard these initiatives as trade secrets; demand for an item can lead to lightning raids on fully-loaded reclamation bins by crack Free Enterprise ninja teams.

Low-clearance ERR workers check existing bin locations and proactively discuss return options with (i.e., mug) citizens who possess desired items. High-clearance agents identify possible new initiatives,



recon possible bin drop locations and seek to undermine treasonous bin theft.

Free Market Food Consortia

Example firms: Selective Dining HPD, FunFoods To Go! (a wholly owned subsidiary of FunFoods PLC)

Revenue stream: Contracts with HPD&MC and PLC, percentage of sales.

Secret society taint: Free Enterprise, Romantics

Citizens enjoy variety in their meals (subject to HPD mandate 211.03.22.607 'Permissible Food Selections by Clearance'). INFRARED citizens haven't yet earned the right to such diversity, and citizens of Clearance BLUE and above can have any number of succulent real foods prepared by their staff in the safety and comfort of their own suites. But in between, there's a wide open space for entrepreneurs to market flavored and textured food products to the finicky low-clearance citizen—at a reasonable markup.

At a Free Market Food Consortium (FMFC) outlet, four or more conveniently located storefronts encircle a clean, welcoming dining court. Each storefront sells a different foodstuff (Sweet-n-Sour Soyient Steaks, A Taste of TNR Sector!)—though of course all storefronts connect in back, and workers prepare all the food from the same raw materials, differentiated only by minor changes in flavorings and packaging.

Low-clearance workers prepare food, mop floors and run the ME Card registers. As they progress in clearance, they move on to customer service, accounting and management positions, and may eventually run their own FMFC franchises.



SERVICE, SERVICE! CLEARANCE ULTRAVIOLET

Cashier: Here's your LichenBurger, citizen. That'll be 10 credits.

Customer: Hey, this has Meatish Sauce on it. I wanted it plain!

Cashier: Sorry, sir. That'll be an extra 2 credits for the sauce.

Customer: But I don't want the sauce! Listen to me: I want one *plain* LichenBurger, *no* sauce! Got it?

Cashier: Certainly, sir. That will be another 10 credits. Would you like yeasty fries with that?

Geological Resource Procurement

Example firms: Mine Camp F, DigIt, Shaft-U

Revenue stream: Contracts with PLC

Secret society taint: PURGE, Communists, Anti-Mutant, everyone else

Alpha Complex consumes thousands of tons of natural resources each day. Despite a wide range of recycling initiatives, PLC requires a continuous infusion of raw materials.

To fill this need, Geological Resource Procurement firms mine metals, ores, petroleum and coal. Far below the deepest sub-levels, these firms carve out endless labyrinths of tunnels and sink miles-deep shafts. Entire divisions of Armed Forces troops guard massive convoys of raw materials in their long journey upward to the industrial subsectors.

Low-clearance GRP workers have some of the shortest life expectancies in Alpha Complex. From bad air and coal dust to industrial accidents, natural radiation and marauding Underplex mutants, these tunnel-rats are lucky to get to age 25 without exhausting their clone lines. On the other hand, there's one big advantage to their lifestyle—an unusual paucity of surveillance. How often do you find security cameras in a tunnel that's just been carved out of solid bedrock? GRP workers can advance fast in their secret societies by securing a stray mineshaft as a meeting room guaranteed free of spycams. Miners also get a lot of experience with demolitions and industrial cutting equipment.

As they progress in clearance, GRP workers spend less and less time underground—well, aside from living in Alpha Complex, if you get what we mean—and they can afford proper environment suits when they absolutely must mingle with the diggers.

Hydroponic Gardeners

Example firms: GREENHouses, Apple Of Your Eye, We Don't Need No Soil

Revenue stream: Contract with PLC to provide fresh vegetables and fruits. Amount paid can vary depending on the quality of natural food provided: bonuses for crispy carrots, penalties for black bananas, etc.

Secret society taint: Sierra Club, Romantics

Real food is used as a carrot (pun intended) for the lower-clearance masses. Let 'em have a taste of a real apple at RED Clearance so they are motivated to rise in clearance and get more. The higher they rise, the more real food they get. By the time a citizen reaches BLUE, he eats nothing but.

Hydroponic Garden firms provide most real food in Alpha Complex. (Some is grown Outdoors, where the radiation confers a size and distinctive taste prized by some gourmets.) Because real foods are controlled substances, gardeners must be of mid-level clearance. Yet the work is basically a menial task just a few steps above food vat duty—don't forget what stuff makes the best fertilizer. Therefore, the staff tends to be YELLOWS and GREENS assigned to hydroponic duty because they are being punished or are amazingly incompetent. The staff fully realizes why they were assigned to the gardens, so the hydroponic rooms are full of grumpy, disgruntled and dirty high-clearance citizens.

Occasionally, RED or ORANGE clearance workers work in the gardens to weed, package food or just mop the floors. No one's sure if this is punishment or reward.

Micro-Warehousing Environmental Auditors

Example firms: Small World PLC, Who Knows Ware, Into the Closet

Revenue stream: Contract with PLC to enforce code compliance

Secret society taint: Illuminati (common); Free Enterprise (common); PURGE (uncommon)

Large warehouses have complex protection systems and round-the-clock monitoring. Yet smaller 'micro-warehouses' though abundant with useful materials (arguably the mainstay of Alpha Complex supply!) do not. Therefore PLC requires Micro-Warehousing Environmental Auditors to strictly monitor and inventory these tertiary outfitting facilities—that is, broom closets and storage cupboards—to enforce

cleanliness, order, provisioning and access protocols.

MWE Auditors carry weapons, for their work is presumed to expose them to constant danger. Naturally, loyal citizens would not dream of failing to report a shortage of lemon-scented bathroom sanitizers, nor purposely destroy extended reach, static-enhanced, dry particulate matter cleaning tools. So when MWE Auditors discover shortages or damage, this indicates insubordination or even treason. Traitors also flagrantly misuse micro-warehouses as impromptu sleeping areas, unregistered offices or (Mike-U forbid!) secret society meeting places. So Auditors are armed and ready to face anything.

Obsolescence Enforcers

Example firms: Out With The Old, Obsolete PLC

Revenue stream: Bounties paid by other PLC service firms for collecting obsolete equipment.

Secret society taint: Free Enterprise, Pro Tech

Proper levels of consumer consumption require planned obsolescence; certain products are designed to become obsolete by a certain yearcycle so they can be replaced by newer and more expensive models. The Model 3350 chainsaw is much better than that old model 3300; the new model comes with a plastic splashguard! Isn't that great? Don't you want the new version? Yes, you do.

The Enforcers make sure the public knows that certain equipment have become obsolete and must be replaced. Some eager Enforcers have been known to pull obsolete equipment out of citizens' hands, replacing it with a advertising flier for the new stuff. This is entirely, or at least arguably, legal; Enforcers are backed up by official PLC mandates or, if you don't believe that, by neurowhips.

Package Delivery Services

Example firms: PLC Moderately Express Mail Delivery, PLC SupaExpress

Revenue stream: Contracts with PLC, individual postage fees.

Secret society taint: Free Enterprise

When you purchase something online in Alpha Complex, the sensible thing to do is to go and pick it up yourself. After all, if you entrust delivery to someone else, how do you know you'll get what you paid for, or that you'll even get anything at all? But travel is

restricted in Alpha Complex, and so a thousand Package Delivery Services bloom.

Low-clearance delivery workers spend their time hauling freight from one place to another—from the delivery office to the warehouse, from the warehouse to the transbot, from the transbot to the warehouse... well, you get the idea. As workers progress in clearance, they get farther and farther from the actual packages themselves; they deal with problem customers, file forms, investigate bottlenecks and so on. High-clearance workers, though among the most widely travelled citizens in Alpha Complex, may go months without ever seeing a package.

Most delivery services offer rates ranging from arm-and-a-leg fees for a quick and thoroughly insured delivery, down to dirt-cheap, it-gets-there-when-it-gets-there-if-it-gets-there-at-all service. Warehouse workers quickly learn the difference between the two. Stealing or mangling insured packages can get you terminated, whereas the uninsured stuff is an all-you-can-steal smorgasbord.

For more information, see the chapter on "Payment & Delivery Methods" in the invaluable *PARANOIA* supplement *STUFF*.

Quality Control Inspectors

Example firms: This Will Work, KwiQuality, Good Enough For You

Revenue stream: Contracts with PLC.

Secret society taint: Communists, Illuminati?

Occasionally a high-clearance customer can prove an item's malfunction isn't due to Communists, mutants, personal misuse or not taking prescribed medication. To prevent such embarrassing and expensive product returns, Quality Control Inspector firms inspect merchandise to see if it meets or exceeds PLC's production standards.

Budget and personnel problems prevent these firms from inspecting every product, so they only inspect random products just after production. When you open a box and a small slip of paper falls out that reads, 'Inspected by #993023,' rest assured the product has met all 43 of PLC's Quality Points. (Those points are above your security clearance.)

Inspectors are paid bonuses and promoted for finding defective products. They are also fined or demoted when they certify a product but fail to find inherent flaws. So Inspectors regularly break a product so they can find another 'defective' one, creating product shortages. They also steal each other's 'Inspected by' slips, break something, put the co-worker's slip in the box and send it out.

Recreational Surplus Specialists

Example firms: New Fun; Stock Sports; Inventertainment

Revenue stream: Short-term, short-notice contracts to free up PLC warehouse space.

Secret society taint: Romantics (common); Free Enterprise (common); Communists (uncommon)

Weak demand sometimes sorely undertaxes supply. Sometimes citizens unexpectedly ignore PLC expectations and refuse to buy quite as many left-handed toilet brushes and vulcanized olive spantels as experts had predicted. Under these circumstances PLC seeks emergency help from Recreational Surplus service firms.

Recreational Surplus Specialists cunningly find ways to make a surfeit of unwanted items an essential must-have for the next big entertainment

or sporting fad. The Specialists use Elective Activity club publicity drives, leaflet drops and viral marketing to promote previously unheard-of activities: reinforced-megacrate mini-golf, size-12 lime-green gumboot competitive line dancing, three-quarter width orthopedic mattress duct-luge, full-impact high-speed umbrella jousting, etc.

Sometimes the RSS firms do their job too well, and then PLC must contract with Enforced Reclamation and Recycling firms to ensure a steady supply of suddenly popular pen refillers and toilet plungers.

INTERNAL SECURITY *Surveillance Camera Lens Maintenance*

Instruction: Increase Alpha Complex security by ensuring surveillance optics remain clean.

Benefit: You are issued a box of lens-cleaning papers. You are required to clean the lenses of security cameras in their current location. If you engage in any action that may dirty a security camera lens, such as combat, and you fail to clean the lens afterward, you may be fined up to 50cr.

INTERNAL SECURITY *Overt Surveillance Operation*

Instruction: Increase Alpha Complex Security by acting as a roving surveillance camera.

Benefit: You are issued a conspicuous portable surveillance camera. You are required, when not otherwise engaged, to use this camera to survey your surroundings. You do not know when or if the camera is being monitored. While you have it out and active, if anyone inquires about the camera or your actions, you must inform the inquirer of this mandate.

PRODUCTION, LOGISTICS & COMMISSARY *Confirm Container Contents*

Instruction: Ensure containers are marked correctly by opening labeled containers and verifying the indicated goods.

Benefit: You may open any container that is labeled with its contents and, so long as it does not disrupt good order, briefly sample or test the contents to make sure they are not counterfeit. You may also correct container labels, if necessary. If an inspection damages or consumes the goods excessively (the more valuable the contents, the lower the threshold of sampling or damage before it is considered excessive), you must pay to replace the excess. If it is later discovered a container you inspected was incorrectly or misleadingly labeled, you will be fined 50cr.



PLC personnel

Camp Follower

Service firm type: Any that sell material goods

Security clearance: INFRARED or RED

Common mutation(s): Deep Thought, Telekinesis

Secret society taint: Free Enterprise, Romantics

Typical Access: 07

ACTION SKILLS & SPECIALTIES

Management 08

Bootlicking 10

Hygiene 01

Moxie 10

Stealth 10

Violence 04

Fine Manipulation 08

KNOWLEDGE SKILLS & SPECIALTIES

Hardware 04

Electronic Engineering 08

Mechanical Engineering 08

Vehicle Ops and Maintenance 01

Software 10

C-Bay 14

Financial Systems 14

Operating Systems 02

Wetware 04

ASSIGNED EQUIPMENT

Item display tray

(4-6 each) 10-12 inexpensive (under 10cr) items from the food/drink, drugs and hygiene equipment list (BBB, Wakey-Wakey pills, floss, etc.)

(1-3 each) 4-6 pricier items from the accessories, survival/technology and weapons list (gas masks, geiger counters, laser barrels, etc.)

(1) Resale license

PERSONAL EQUIPMENT

None

Nobody has greater sudden-impulse equipment requirements than a Troubleshooters. At any moment, something as small as a stick of gum or a spare clip of ammo can spell the difference between success and disintegration. To meet this roaming demand, a new breed of traveling salesperson has emerged from the cluttered warehouses of PLC. The Camp Follower simply finds out where Troubleshooters teams are involved in missions and goes there to see if they need small sundries. Followers are a charming sight, with their handy display tray slung in front of them, showing their wares to any Troubleshooters who will take a look: cigarettes, glowsticks, hand grenades, blister packs, CruncheeTym bags... you name it! They're like a little IR Market on legs!

Camp Followers' resale license authorizes them to carry and sell items up to two security clearances higher than their own, provided they verify the purchaser is of sufficient security clearance. Thus, a RED Camp Follower can sell items up to YELLOW Clearance. (However, they may not *use* items above their own clearance under any circumstances.)

And boy, do they ever sell! Because they lease their display tray by the hour, every minute that goes by without a sale is lost money. They wade right into the middle of a firefight to inquire whether an injured Troubleshooters could use some painkillers or another laser barrel. They step right up as the team tries to bluff its way past an Internal Security checkpoint to suggest some Breath-O-Freshners could help. Camp Followers are more concerned about a sale than about the Troubleshooters' mission, so they aren't the least bit concerned if their actions ruin an attempt to be stealthy or screw up a delicate bit of deception. No doubt if things turn ugly, they have something else to offer that might *just* do the trick!



Seating usage: Normal commercial usage for seating is defined as the equivalent of a single shift, forty (40) hour work week. To the extent that a seating product is used in a manner exceeding this, the applicable warranty period will be reduced in a pro-rata manner (except for Models 7724, 7734, 7744 and 7754, which are warranted for multiple shifts).

—HON Office Furniture Limited Lifetime Warranty (*excerpt*)

Bargaineers

Service firm type: Stock Jockeys, Dealmakers, Val-U-Pals
Security clearance: RED to YELLOW
Common mutation(s): Charm, Deep Thought
Secret society taint: Free Enterprise
Typical Access: 10

ACTION SKILLS & SPECIALTIES

Management 09

Con Games 13
 Interrogation 01
 Intimidation 01
 Moxie 15
 Use Innuendo To Close A Deal 14

Stealth 05

Concealment 09
 Hide Illicit Goods In Plain Sight 16

Violence 03

KNOWLEDGE SKILLS & SPECIALTIES

Hardware 07

Vehicle Ops and Maintenance 08

Software 06

C-Bay 14
 Data Search 09

Wetware 04

Suggestion 10

SECRET SKILLS

Bribery 08
 Cash Hacking 12
 Drug Procurement 11
 Hagglng 17

PERSONAL EQUIPMENT

(1) Mobile Sales Kiosk
 (1) credit license stripper (illegal)

PLC service firms constantly create appealing new products and improve existing ones. This never-ending cascade of innovation means consumers can look forward to 'new and improved' versions of their favorite products every other month. But new product hitting the market displaces existing stock. Some of this stuff gets recycled, some auctioned on C-Bay, but most ends up with a PLC bargaineer.

Bargaineers are the traveling salesmen of Alpha Complex. Every week, a bargaineer reports to a PLC Overstock Warehouse to be issued a Mobile Sales Kiosk loaded with a random assortment of products: discontinued flavors of MunchyStix Snack Rations, irregular three-legged jumpsuits and every kind of consumer junk. Bargaineers pilot their kiosks—little pattering manual-drive golf carts—into high-traffic corridors and

throughways to ply their wares. By the end of the week, Bargaineers are expected to return to the warehouse with an empty kiosk and a full till. PLC warehouses refuse to restock obsolete products, so for Bargaineers 'EVERYTHING MUST GO' is more than a sales pitch.

But it's not easy. Much of this merchandise is questionable, even when offered at a substantial discount. To get by, many bargaineers operate a few 'side businesses': under-the-table buying and selling of illicit goods. Because all Mobile Sales Kiosks are bugged, bargaineers negotiate such transactions with the utmost discretion. Bargaineers are masters of innuendo, and PCs who wish to trade with them must learn to respond in kind:

Troubleshooter: So, uh... I heard you're the one to talk to about high-explosive cone rifle shells. How much for a dozen?

Bargaineer Eddie-Y: I don't have anything like that. But you know what I do have? A crate of gently used athletic socks.

Troubleshooter: Socks? I don't need socks. I need firepower!

Eddie-Y: Oh, I think these socks are exactly what you need.

Troubleshooter: You mean these socks over here? The ones in this suspiciously heavy crate?

Eddie-Y: Those are the ones. You'll find these socks provide an explosive combination of comfort and durability. 500cr for a dozen of these... socks. But along with them you gotta buy this crate of Super-Fizzy Caramel-Flavored TeaSir, just 2cr extra!

In addition to selling illicit goods, bargaineers purchase choice contraband. However, bargaineers are shrewd; PCs find it nearly impossible to trick them into buying damaged, flawed or counterfeit goods. By Alpha Complex standards, bargaineers are remarkably forthright in their business dealings. Though their sales tactics are aggressive, their customers do generally get what they pay for—no more and no less.

Transit hopper

Service firm type: Field Logistics Advisors
Security clearance: RED to YELLOW
Common mutation(s): Call Bots, Electroshock, Teleportation
Secret society taint: Corpore Metal, Illuminati
Typical Access: 11

ACTION SKILLS & SPECIALTIES

Management 07

Moxie 11
 Hygiene 01

Stealth 04

Violence 09

Agility 13
 Vehicular Combat 13
 Energy Weapons 01
 Projectile Weapons 01

KNOWLEDGE SKILLS & SPECIALTIES

Hardware 08

Vehicle Ops and Maintenance 12
 Nuclear Engineering 01

Software 08

Data Analysis 12
 Vehicle Programming 12
 C-Bay 01
 Financial Systems 01

Wetware 04

ASSIGNED EQUIPMENT

(1) transbot All-Pass
 (1) Com 2
 (1) digital stopwatch

PERSONAL EQUIPMENT

(1) Haley-O's Big Map of Alpha Complex Elevators
 (1) Power/Data Tap Positioning System (illegal)

A transit hopper doesn't search AlphaNet for transbot times or escalator maintenance schedules; he personally checks transportation himself. What's the quickest way between WIS Sector and FRT Sector? The hopper tries several transbot lines, each at several times to gauge traffic slowdowns, as well as escalators, moving sidewalks, hacks and every other form of transportation. He times each one and sends the data back to the home office, which sells the information to interested firms.

A hopper who plans on surviving to see ORANGE Clearance quickly learns how to operate, fix, reprogram and fight with vehicles. Nimble as a gymnast, he can jump from moving transbots with nary a scratch. He also learns where to find good vendobots, broken security cameras and places to catch some sleep.

Troubleshooters may seek a transit hopper to fill parts of a map labeled 'Not Available At Your Security Clearance.' Need the fastest way down to LPP Sector, or the safest way to get around the radiation coming from VDR Sector's reactor accident? Given time and credits—or food, as a hopper usually eats from vendobots—he can get solid directions between most any two points. But getting help from a hopper is like trying to buy drugs on the IR Market; mutual suspicion can ruin a deal.

GOING POSTAL



KARLOW

3-6 PLAYERS
1 SESSION
(3-4 HOURS)

The Computer calls in the Troubleshooters to determine why the sector's main Receiving, Sorting, and Shipping (RSS) hub for the sector is no longer receiving, sorting, or shipping, and to make sure it starts doing so. The PCs will deal with rival PLC shipping firms playing a game of catch-22, and the only way out means everybody trying to catch them.

Background

The new supervisor of the delivery hub, **Hetty-B-HRG**, has come up with a plan to boost efficiency and fast-track her way up the clearance ladder. Normally served by **Movelt PLC**, Hetty-B has hired a second PLC firm, **SupaExpress**, to handle all the outgoing deliveries. Increased specialization leads to increased efficiency and hence, increased profits.

SupaExpress has wasted no time in moving in and parking its fleet of transbots at the loading bays of the RSS hub; as soon as Movelt's packages are sorted, they can load up and roll out. The problem is, they've taken up *all* the loading bays. To make matters worse, as they were not listed as being on an actual delivery, CPU has decided this would be a good time to remove and replace all the cabin temperature control relays, which the transbots require in order to start.

Typically this is no problem, as Tech Services can replace the part the next day using sophisticated 'just-in-time' delivery methods. Unfortunately, with all the loading bays full, Movelt can't get in to unload, which means Tech Services can't get the parts, which means SupaExpress can't move their fleet, which means the loading bays are full.

Both PLC firms are determined to keep the contract themselves, so there's no way they'll provide any help to the other if they can avoid it. They might even react violently should they think somebody (such

as, say, a random Troubleshooters team) is helping the other side to look good.

On the bright side, there is one person who wants to see this solved. That's **Don-G-VNI**, Hetty-B's underling and the next in line to take over the delivery hub. He's seen enough of how Hetty-B operates to know his own head is on the chopping block for the whole situation—unless he can show that he's the one who solved it. So while Hetty-B called in a GREEN goon squad to maintain order, Don-G called in the Troubleshooters.

Needless to say, the Troubleshooters are unlikely to receive a warm reception.

Scene 1: Appointed rounds

Start with the Troubleshooters all together or separated, as takes your fancy. In either case, read the following to each of them:

Citizen! You have been granted the opportunity to volunteer for an urgent and exciting mission, codenamed 'Courier New' for Alpha Complex. Please report to Conference Room RSS-01-B, ZUM Sector by 1402 hours to accept this opportunity and receive your briefing. Should you wish to decline this opportunity, please ensure your personal effects are correctly labeled for your next clone before reporting to interrogation room 9901-TN, ZUM Sector to provide valuable input on the reasons for your decision.

If the Troubleshooters mean to reach the briefing room on time, they better hurry. What time is it, you ask? That depends entirely on how much pressure you want to put on your players. Specifically, they should

have just enough time to get there, but not enough time to think that they have enough.

Actually getting to their destination should be easy. They're Troubleshooters with a priority assignment, after all. Any tube they need to ride to ZUM sector is expressed, any autocar hack they hire gets priority sequence in traffic arrangements, really, anything but their feet has The Computer aiding their trip in whatever way it can. For some reason though, a lot of Troubleshooters choose to walk. Have The Computer congratulate them on their conservation of valuable resources while reminding them that 'late' has two meanings.

Conference Room RSS-01-B is in the sector's main Receiving, Sorting and Shipping hub. Once in ZUM sector, the delivery hub is easy to find as the sector is well-layed out and convenient maps are posted at every access point, but it's located a fair distance from the heart of the sector to allow transbots to efficiently move at high speeds.

As they go through ZUM, point out how the store-fronts seem strangely empty, almost like the mall after closing on Christmas Eve. Even some of the shelving units are obviously missing, yet the store staff seems happy enough and waves cheerily to the Troubleshooters as they go by. If any of them stop to check it out, they'll find out it's nothing treasonous, just happy customers have bought everything they had, they're just waiting for a new shipment, and would you like to go on the waiting list for the latest Vulture Bomber jacket? Just the thing for that stylish Troubleshooters around town, just sign here indicating you agree to our privacy policy and we'll call you as soon as we get the shipment in.

Scene 2: Clearing customs

Any PC who arrives early at the delivery hub must wait outside until the rest of the team gets there. This gives him a good chance to look at the layout.

The delivery hub is behind a chain link fence topped with razor wire. It's a huge, sprawling building peppered with loading bays. Every bay that you can see has a transbot in it proudly sporting the 'SupaExpress!' logo. Bigger than the building though is the parking lot around it. It too is filled with transbots, each of them with the 'Movelt Inc.' logo emblazoned on the side.

Inside the lot workers seem to be divided into one of three groups. One group is hanging around the Movelt transbots, the other by the

SupaExpress vehicles. They're mostly INFRARED, but neither side seems to appreciate the other. Currently the only things being thrown, however, are dirty looks. Probably because of the well armored line of GREEN troopers that stand between them. They look relaxed, in an intimidating sort of way. Kind of like the calm before the headbutt. One GREEN trooper is standing at the controls to open the gate to the lot. He looks at you like something he just scraped off his boot, or maybe something he's going to. It's hard to tell the difference really.

Once you all seem to be paying attention, he draws 'Secured area here, statecher name an' business.'

Do your Troubleshooters remember their mission code name? Let's hope so. If not, they're not on his invited list, and he'll refuse to let them in. Oh sure, they can ask The Computer, but it might be a bit annoyed with them at having to provide the information twice. Once they do provide the name, things move smoothly:

He runs through a list on his PDC, 'Courier New, Courier New. Let's see. Yep, here y'are. In the Conference room. Follow me.' He doesn't wait or look back to see if you do follow, instead turning and marching off toward the large building in the distance.

You follow him through the parking lot, and between two lines of GREEN goons that are keeping the groups of delivery workers separated. They've gone menacingly quiet, and you can feel them all watching you as you parade down the lot. Suddenly there's the sound of glass shattering behind you. It looks like somebody's broken a bottle on the pavement. The goons give no indication of having seen anything though.

Some players are looking for any excuse to start a fight. This is a bad idea. If they do, the GREEN goons are just as happy to shoot Troubleshooters as they are INFRARED workers. Maybe even happier. If a fight does break out, the goons target the SupaExpress workers, Movelt workers and Troubleshooters evenly. Assume 30 of each group of delivery workers, and 15 GREEN goons.

Movelt and SupaExpress target the Troubleshooters a third of the time, and the

GREEN goons

Violence 14
GREEN lasers (W3K energy),
GREEN reflec/Kevlar (E1/I3)
What more do you need?

other group of delivery workers the rest of the time. They're not stupid enough to go after the GREEN goons. Your players may be another story.

If they keep their cool, the PCs get to the delivery hub building without further incident.

Inside the hub you first notice that the walls seem to be entirely made of shelves and boxes. A conveyor belt snakes through them. It connects with a second belt that goes up and over one of the walls of boxes.

As your eyes follow the conveyor belt up, you notice what seems to be kilometers of metal catwalks suspended from the ceiling above. There seems to be three levels, in fact. The middle level is equal in height with one of several giant crane-type arms hanging from ceiling tracks. They look like they can reach anywhere in the room.

Above the catwalk, at the center of the hub building, you see a number of offices and conference rooms suspended from the ceiling.

'If you're finished gawking,' your escort says, 'I'll take y'up to your briefing room.'

He doesn't wait around to see if you're finished gawking or not. He starts walking, disappearing almost immediately around a corner.

The PCs can follow the GREEN goon easily, but feel free to make a game of it. Have them make a few Stealth checks to spot him, Violence/Fitness checks to keep up, etc. Then take them up onto the catwalk maze, and have them spot him on different levels from the one they're on, with no immediately visible way to his level. In short, you can put them in a cartoon chase scene.

In a Straight game, the PCs keep up with the goon easily, but make them feel if they lost him, they could get lost here for a long time. Signs are posted at the intersections, but these only indicate the way to the control room and the exit.



Scene 3: Official postings

Eventually the GREEN goon leads the team up a final catwalk to the doors of Conference Room RSS-01-B, ZUM Sector.

Climbing up a last set of stairs, you come to a pair of clear plexiglas doors. Inside you see a large conference room table. On each side sit four RED-Clearance citizens and an ORANGE citizen. At the head of the table sits an unassuming GREEN citizen. He looks intensely interested in what the two groups are saying. It seems to be mostly the ORANGE citizens doing the talking, and they don't look happy at all.

Your goon escort knocks on the plexiglas, and the GREEN citizen at the head of the table gets up and quietly slips out. You hear the raised voices in the room, but he shuts the door before anything intelligible comes through.

He speaks in a careful but happy tone, 'You're the team? Good! Glad you could make it. I'm Don-G-VNI. We've got a bit of a problem, so if you'll just give your PDCs and other recording equipment to the gentleman here, I'll let you in and we'll get it all sorted out. Delicate recording equipment in the conference room. Wouldn't want any damage.'

The GREEN goon pulls a clear plastic bag from his pocket and holds it out to you. His other hand rests lightly on the hilt of his laser pistol.

Don-G is quite serious about this request. He wants no recording equipment, partly because what he plans on telling the team could get him in hot water. He's already rigged the recording equipment in the conference room so what actually gets recorded is a standard briefing blaming everything on Communist sympathizers. The PCs will get their equipment back once they emerge from the conference.

After you hand over your equipment, Don-G opens the doors and ushers you in. The two arguing ORANGE citizens go silent for a moment as you enter. You see now one of them has the Movelt Inc. logo neatly embroidered on the breast of his jumpsuit; the other has the SupraExpress logo printed in day-glo colors. Don-G introduces you to the two. 'Okay, this here is Mike-O-

DFU for Movelt Express, and that is Mark-O-FAD for Supa PLC.'

Mark-O-DFU bursts out 'It's SupaExpress!, can't you even remember that?' Mike-O chimes in, 'And why'd you bring Troubleshooters? Like we haven't enough troubles with these Movelt guys stuck in the loading bays.'

Mark-O: 'Are you saying it's our fault?'

Mike-O: 'Who else's would it be?'

Mark-O suddenly pulls a crowbar and slams it down on the table, 'You're the ones who didn't plan ahead! We got this contract fair and square!'

Mike-O responds by slamming a large box-cutter on to the table. 'As if! I've seen your packing! You wouldn't know square if you had CPU's specifications on it!'

Pause here to let the players get a word in. Perhaps they heard Don-G talking about the trouble they're supposed to sort out. Maybe they think this meeting is it. But go ahead, let them interfere. It gives you a great excuse to get both sides mad at them (as if you needed one).

Whichever side the PCs seem to take, the other side pounces on this obvious bias. The two ORANGES, in sudden total agreement, dismantle the PCs' accusations. Don-G, annoyed at the Troubleshooters for breaking up the meeting, won't help them.

If they're too savvy to take the bait, let Don-G step in and smooth things over:

'Hey, hey, guys, come on. We've been here a long time. Nerves are frayed. Your eagerness to work is noted, but put away the tools and go have some EAP time or something. You'd hate for The Computer to think you were unhappy, right?' He nods significantly at the tools. 'Go on. We'll start again tomorrow. Maybe we can sort out what's happened here, okay?'

The ORANGES agree and move out with their entourage, being sure to accidentally bump into the Troubleshooters as they go. If no fights break out, they leave peacefully.

Expository lump

Don-G motions you all to sit down. Suddenly his jovial tone disappears.

He starts speaking rapidly. 'When I'm done here, this never happened.'

You're used to handling sensitive situations, I'm told. So here's what's going on.

'I was lined up to be supervisor, until some strings got pulled and Hetty-B-HRG got brought in. She had the idea to hire a second PLC firm, SupaExpress, to increase efficiency. They moved in and, while they were parked, got hit for a mandatory recall of their T300-IC relays. They're stuck in the loading bays until they can get new ones.

'But the new ones are all on the Movelt transbots, and safety regs prevent them from unloading until they can get properly into a loading bay.

'Normally, no big deal. A box 'accidentally' falls off the transbot, things get fixed, and away we go. This time, no chance. Hetty-B is strictly by the book, so she brought in the goon squad to make sure nothing like that happens. She won't release the manifest, so we don't know what boxes to take. That means we've got to somehow get the boxes off the transbots, find the ones for Tech Services, then somehow get them to Tech so they can come back here and install them properly. Oh, and make sure Hetty-B and the goon squad don't catch on before it's already done.

'The sorting plant is automatic. Get a full load on one of the scales and it'll activate the systems. Then have one of the dwarves—sorry, I mean the cranebots—unload the Tech Services pile beside the door. Then load it into a transbot and take it to Tech Services.

'Now you may need supplies, but with the hub down, they're hard to get hold of. So here's a pre-authorized Payment2Go card with a 10,000-credit limit on it. That's Computer property, so I'll need receipts and the return of anything you bought with it when you're done. Oh, and to defray costs, I've got a service service around here for you as well. Just a second.' He slaps a briefcase on the table and pulls out a printout. 'Here we are.'

So what's their service service? Considering you've got a whole book here on them, pick the one that seems best to you. That this saves us from having to think up yet another one is purely coincidence.

With that done, Don-G efficiently ushers them out of the conference room and directs

the waiting GREEN goon to give them back their plastic bag. If you're in a nice mood, he may not even have installed anything nasty on their PDCs or other gear. If you're not—well, this is **PARANOIA**. Don-G disappears and the GREEN goon escorts them out of the hub so they can get their equipment.

Scene 4: Money orders

The team has a shiny new Payment2Go card, so they're probably itching to get shopping.

The team quickly finds out all legitimate stores are out of stock. The reason is always the same: They were expecting a shipment a couple of days ago. If the team tries C-Bay, the licensed credits aren't valid; Payment2Go is planning to start its own auction site, so it wants to discourage competition.

(That site doesn't seem to be working yet. P2G Auctions are pretty much empty. They might find a Teela O'Malley bobblehead doll, if they're lucky, and they're willing to wait until the auction close date in 30 days, but mostly they find nothing. Everybody already uses C-Bay.)

Of course, if the players want to use their own personal funds, that's perfectly allowable. They shouldn't expect reimbursement though, considering The Computer already gave them a functioning Payment2Go Card.

This leaves the IR Market. But in a sector without shipping, IR prices have grown even more outrageous. Take the standard (inflated) prices and double them for anything that seems useless. Anything generally useful is ten times the price.

Another little hitch: The IR Market doesn't take Payment2Go cards. Not to worry, though; there's a handy Active Teller Machine nearby. The Troubleshooters can use this to convert their Payment2Go credits into hard currency, which is easily accepted at the IR Market.

(Zap style note: Have the teller machine loudly announce to everybody in the vicinity how many credits the PC has cashed and his remaining limit. It's not called a 'teller' machine for nothing.)

Taking out hard currency in huge amounts has its own drawbacks. For one, it's obvious to those around them. Second, it looks suspicious at debriefing. Fortunately for the Troubleshooters, when vendors give receipts in the IR Market, they'll write in anything you care to name so if someone finds it later, it doesn't look treasonous. Unfortunately, the PCs still have to present the equipment they purchased at the debriefing, and failure to do so means appropriate fines.

Scene 5: Nor dark of night

When the Troubleshooters return at night (they *are* returning at night, right? They don't somehow think they have a chance during the day with the GREEN goons around?) they first must break into the lot:

It's quiet. In the distance you hear the faint metallic chirp of a guardbot on its rounds, but it sounds a long way away. Behind the closed and locked gate is your goal, tens of transbots, just waiting to be looted... err... unloaded, sorted, and processed. The nightcycle is lit by a single revolving spotlight on a tower at the centre of the delivery hub. It swings by your location ominously, almost like a prison tower light, or the light from a lighthouse on a dangerous shore.

Getting in is easy; security at night is minimal. The lock on the gate is magnetic but the control buttons are easily visible from the other side. Disrupting the electricity to the lock—poking the control button with a long pole (two broom handles taped together should do it)—frying the control box with weapons fire—practically anything works, simply because standing

Guardbots

Management 07, Oratory 15, Sneaking 06 (for detection only), Violence 14, Energy Weapons 14

Shock touch (Energy S4K, no range)

Radio communication with IntSec sector headquarters

around staring at a closed gate isn't fun. The fun starts inside.

Still, have the players sweat. Make sure they know there are two guardbots on patrol inside. Actually, the place is so big the bots only come around once every few hours; also, both of them are actually repurposed teachbots, so they can't access their night-vision, and therefore they're nearly blind. But of course your Troubleshooters don't know that.

Once the team is in the parking lot, the question is: Which Movelt transbot has the right parts? The answer depends on how long you want to stretch out the scene. The transbots aren't locked (they're in a locked parking lot, after all) so Troubleshooters can open any doors—although they make a horribly loud sound when they do. Scare your players by having the guardbots make some noise in the distance. Don't forget to have the spotlight roam over them once in a while.





SERVICE, SERVICE! CLEARANCE ULTRAVIOLET

If the team decides to start looking through the boxes, consult the Transbot Contents Table below or make liberal use of the Random Crate and Cannister charts in the **PARANOIA** rulebook appendix. Unfortunately, the PCs can't tell if they've found the right part; the crates are unlabeled except for computer shipping codes, and the contents of each crate are also unlabeled. Basically, the PCs have no choice except hauling the crates into the delivery hub.

When the PCs take crates into the hub, they notice a loading platform beside the conveyor belt. This platform has a scale. With enough weight (your decision), the platform moves into position for the cranebots to load the items on the conveyor belt. This way, you can keep sending the Troubleshooters back outside until you've had enough fun in the parking lot.

Scene 6: Taken for a ride

You slide the last crate on. You hear a click as the weight passes the threshold. Suddenly you hear an engine somewhere deep below; then the scale lifts up and a cranebot swoops down, picking up crates and taking them away. Some of them it puts on the conveyor belt beside you, where the crates trundle off into the distance.

Transbot Contents Table

To determine what the PCs find when they open a transbot, roll 1d20 or choose:

- 1-4:** Crates, crates and more crates. No, this is good! The PCs want to get these inside so they can be sorted.
- 5-6:** Barrels, cannisters and more barrels. Use the charts if they decide to go prying.
- 7-8:** A vintage Model T Ford, destined for some ULTRAVIOLET's collection. Yes, it does run if they crank it up. Of course, do any of them know how to drive it...?
- 9-10:** A Mystic or Humanist secret society meeting. Troubleshooters can get hold of some serious pharmaceuticals here if they play their cards right.
- 11-12:** Fifty INFRAREDS from CBA sector who've been duped into thinking they're going to be smuggled Outdoors. The Troubleshooters might be able to keep them quiet if they promise to take them Outdoors later.
- 13-14:** Empty—whoops! Somebody goofed.
- 15-16:** Pallets of form-packs. Any particular form your PCs have been looking for? Chances are they can find it in here, if they have Uncanny Luck or spend a few days digging.
- 17-18:** Racks of clothes, in the full range of clearances. Those with the Disguise specialty may find some use for this stuff.
- 19:** A fully operational and equipped IntSec surveillance rig, complete with space for two workers to sleep, a washroom/shower closet, and a mini-fridge stocked with B3 and REDdi-Meals. When the door opens, a camera inside swivels to face them and a little red light blinks ominously.
- 20:** Roll twice more; the transbot is loaded with both. (Ignore 'Empty' results.)

The noise is incredible. Did you shut the door after you came in?

The building is actually soundproofed from the outside. If they shut the door, they're safe from the guardbots. Now it should be simple, right? Simply let the sorting plant do its job, then get a cranebot to bring the pile destined for Tech Services to their door. Easy, right?

Except the cranebots weren't programmed to do this. So now the Troubleshooters must reason with these things.

Talking to cranebots

Seven cranebots operate in the hub, each with its own personality. Those personalities are most easily defined by imagining seven vertically challenged miners who happened across a beautiful maiden in their home and later developed a serious aversion to fruit. The cranebots introduce themselves by the names the hub workers gave them: 'Happy', 'Dopey', 'Sleepy', 'Sneezy', 'Grumpy', 'Bashful', and 'Doc'.

(Incidentally, Sneezy is Corpore Metal and has gone frankenstein. If it think it can get away with it, the bot 'accidentally' attacks a Troubleshooter or two by, say, dropping something on him from a great height. Sneezy won't act if it thinks it might be discovered because, inasmuch as it's attached to the ceiling, it has nowhere to run.)

Cranebots

Management 09, Violence 06, Drop something on Troubleshooters 09, Carry Troubleshooters To Unsilently Demise 04

Crane hook (W2K impact); dropped object (S3K impact)

Trying to get these cranebots to breach their programming is difficult. They don't care about missing T300-IC parts. They care about doing their job well. Moving things out of their designated piles and over to the service door doesn't seem to fit that motive. Perhaps the Troubleshooters can use intimidation?

Scenic details

While in the delivery hub alone and unsupervised, the Troubleshooters may get into mischief. ('Naw! You think so?') In a dark delivery hub with miles of conveyors, some crazy cranebots, and a couple of fatal pieces of machinery, who knows what can happen? Here are some suggestions:

The delivery control subsystem

Various secret societies would love access to the delivery control subsystem. This would let them specify hidden, unrecorded drop points. Of course, at the same time, no secret society wants other societies to have such access.

The control subsystem is housed in a room attached to the suspended offices. There are signs throughout the hub that direct any interested Troubleshooters over the maze of catwalks. The subsystem room itself is a GREEN Clearance area, with no light other than the terminal.

X-ray examination/sterilization processor

Another key area for secret society missions is the X-ray machine. It scans for several thousand controlled materials, evrything from explosives and contraband to bootleg Teela bobblehead dolls. If they could reprogram the processor to ignore certain items, societies such as PURGE and Death Leopard could get dangerous materials to their agents with much less difficulty. At the same time, FCCC-P wants the machine to keep running normally; Psion is curious about the high levels of mutation that seem to spring up around it; and Sierra

Clubbers want this source of dangerous radiation destroyed.

The X-ray machine is located in the middle of the delivery hub on the main floor, directly under the suspended offices. Most of the conveyor belts eventually run through it. Characters put through it are downed as they receive severe radiation burns.

The Hole

Items that don't pass the X-ray examination, or that are dubbed treasonous or too dangerous to investigate, are picked up by one of the cranebots and tossed down The Hole, never to return.

Where does The Hole actually go? Who knows? It could drop into the reactor core for ZUM sector. Maybe there's a deep underground river at the bottom and the junk is swept away Outside. It could be an entrance to the Underplex—a place hidden deep in the bowels of Alpha Complex, far away from the civilized protection of The Computer, and home to hideous mutants, frogs, and other creatures which can only be encompassed in a **PARANOIA** supplement coming soon to a fine gaming store near you.

The Hole is located toward the back center of the delivery hub, to ensure easy access to all the cranebots—even Sneezzy. Hint, hint.

Scene 7: Delivery by 10:00

So, your Troubleshooters have managed to get the load together, survive each other's secret society goals, and are ready to ship the stuff to Tech Services. Read the following:

Finally the cranebots finish moving the pile to be delivered to Tech Services to the service door where you can get it out. You crack open the service door and see nightcycle is nearly over. The lights are slowly brightening. Best get moving.

Did the Troubleshooters find an empty transbot earlier? If so, so much the better; they have somewhere to load the stuff into before they head out.

The jigsaw challenge: Of course, loading stuff can be a chore in itself. To simulate this, take three or four sheets of paper and cut each one into six or seven different pieces ahead of time. Then give all the pieces in a single pile to your players and tell them they have to assemble all the sheets. Their progress with



this puzzle mirrors their characters' progress loading the transbot.

If you're feeling nice, use pages from a magazine so they have some pictures to help them out. If you're feeling particularly nasty, don't do it ahead of time; use their character sheets instead! If they can't find a piece of their character—surely none of the other players could have swiped it?—this indicates they suffered a wound while trying to load things up.

If you like things more professional, consider purchasing a Soma Cube, tangram set or other assembly puzzle. Be warned, though, the players may have played with these things before. We recommend you use the character sheets, but don't say anything when cutting them up. The reaction is priceless.

When they're nearly done assembling the pieces—meaning their PCs have almost loaded the transbot—read the following:

Suddenly in the distance, you hear a shout: 'Hey! What are you up to!'

This is followed by more shouts and what sounds like the rumble of many feet. It seems three dozen transbot drivers have arrived for the day, and they don't look happy.

You spot Mike-O-DFU in the lead and hear him call, 'Hey! That's my ride! Get 'em!' They're charging you, there's a lot of them, and they seemed to be

armed with crowbars, box-cutters, and makeshift clubs. What now?

Do the players realize the futility of a firefight? Forty opponents are bearing down on them, looking for blood. If they're smart, they understand the quickest way out is to finish loading, hop in the transbots and head to Tech Services. Hint to them The Computer might be less likely to disapprove of breaking into delivery transbots, using unauthorized equipment and interfering with PLC delivery if they manage to get the system working again.

As they're trying to pile into the cab of a transbot, point out how it only has room for two—one driver, one gunner. Any more than that makes it impossible to drive. Fortunately, there's a lot of other transbots around as well; even better, they all start with the simple push of a button.

Encourage each of your players to drive his own transbot. This makes for a fun convoy scene.

Scene 7: Convoy!

Just as you pull out of the parking lot, the GREEN goons arrive in their squad cars, sirens blaring. They're blocking the way into ZUM Sector, but the road in the other direction is still clear. One



of them is standing up through a sun roof and loading what looks to be a cone rifle. Do you want to wait to see if you can figure out what kind of ammo he's loading?

So starts the great chase scene.

Have the players roll their Hardware/Vehicle Ops specialties regularly. Encourage hefty Perversity spending if they want to stay alive. Run them through any number of the following sequences.

Little old lady crossing corridor

This is Hetty-B-HRG, who's out for her morning walk before coming in to work. If they hit her, Don-G will be pleased—*perhaps* enough to pull some strings and save the PCs from erasure. Free Enterprise, on the other hand, is not pleased at all. Should one of the Troubleshooters have the mission of protecting Hetty-B, his superiors demote him. A simple Vehicle Ops check suffices to avoid her.

Road block

IntSec has set up a road block. Slamming through it is easy—transbots can take a lot of punishment—but do your players really want to go that route? Avoiding the road block takes a Hardware/Vehicle Ops roll. Or they could blow it apart with the mounted cone rifle launcher.

Field trip

Sally the teachbot is taking her creche of Junior Citizens out for a walk this morning, and they just happen to be crossing the road ahead of our transbot. Friend Computer will not be happy if a dozen Junior Citizens become so much road solvent.

Transbot details

It's big, it's heavy, it's an 18-wheel transbot. It stops for practically nothing, and it comes fully equipped in case of Commie attack. That's right: Each transbot sports a high-capacity cone-rifle shell launcher fully loaded with 10 HEAT shells. The PCs can do some damage with this puppy. Of course, they'll have to pay for it later...

Make lots of specialty checks, and let the players hope the transbot doesn't roll as it swerves to avoid the little tykes.

Emergency Disaster Response Teams

No, really. These guys (described in the supplement *Extreme PARANOIA*) rappel down from helicopters to land on the transbot and crawl to the cab. Guess someone has to crawl out and fight them on a moving transbot. Stage lots of tense scenes with Troubleshooters almost falling off.

Whatever you can think up

Seriously. Any chase scene that comes to mind is good for this. Particular favorites:

- The truck chase in *The Road Warrior*. Have IntSec and the GREEN goons drive all sorts of strange vehicles while they chase the team.
- Any *Dukes of Hazard* episode has at least one good chase scene. If jumping over a ravine is exciting in the *General Lee*, imagine what it must be like in an 18-wheel transbot!
- Chases in *Lethal Weapon 4* or *The Matrix Reloaded* also provide good material. Nothing beats an exploding autobot flipping over the top of your transbot convoy.

Sooner or later, if you haven't run them out of clones, let the PCs see the Tech Services depot off in the distance. Let them drive up to (into?) it and slide to a stop in front of waiting Tech Services workers. The techs immediately hop to unloading the parts and then take off back to the delivery hub.

The Troubleshooters are then immediately surrounded and subdued by the full squad of GREEN goons and a detachment of IntSec Special Patrol. Fade to....

Scene 8: Ship 'em out

When you wake up, Don-G-VNI is sitting in front of you—except he now appears to be BLUE Clearance.

'Good work, Troubleshooters. You found and eliminated the Commie menace, and the ZUM Sector delivery hub is working smoothly once more.'

You notice you're tied down to the chair and Don-B stands behind a protective sheet of plexiglas.

'Now, there's just a few questions I want to go over about your mission....'

Don-G got a promotion because—are the players gonna love this!—even if the Troubleshooters managed to avoid running down Hetty-B, the GREEN goons behind them weren't so fortunate.

With the PLC hub up and running after the Troubleshooters completed their delivery, Don-G took the credit and, with his supervisor conveniently dead, became the new Don-B.

Chief among Don-B's questions is the whereabouts of the receipts and equipment from his Payment2Go card. Yes, that was his personal card. Boy, we hope the Troubleshooters didn't do something silly like spend all the money and get fraudulent receipts for equipment they don't have. That'd probably annoy Don-B.

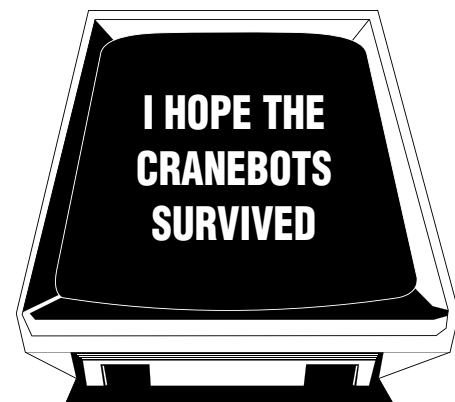
The PCs must also pay for or justify all the property damage they caused, both to the transbots and the surrounding environment.

Not to mention how many citizens they killed.

Oh, and there was that little issue of tampering with the mail.

Still, depending on how much you like these characters, you can have Don-B pull some strings to keep their clone templates active. He's still grateful for the promotion, and technically they did succeed.

Of course, they all owe Don-B a huge debt, and he likes it that way. He can find a use for any Troubleshooter team willing to commit as much treason as this one. So they might just live. For now.



SERVICE Power Services

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Power Services hangouts

Control rooms: In the old days Power Services monitored power consumption through an antiquated system of dials and meters. These days, control rooms are equipped with holographic projectors that display a 3D realtime simulation model of power flow. Power workers often stop by to gawk moonily at the pulsating holographic data. Hardly anyone understands it.

'The Strobe': Part dance club, part testbed for new power technologies, 'The Strobe' (Clearance GREEN) draws citizens from across the complex—and draws power from at least five neighboring sectors. Boasting a 700Gw soundsystem and over 20,000 SeizureBomb 8000 Motorized Lighting Instruments, this club consumes more power per square meter than the Central CompNode.

Rumors

- ④ 'Someone has a sustainable cold-fusion reaction going over in ZYZ Sector. Apparently, it's completely cheap and safe and has no moving parts. We've gotta find it and sabotage it, or those clowns are gonna put all of us out of jobs.'
- ④ 'Dude, you might as well dump those 3-pronged plugs. A bunch of Death Leopard punks keep sticking forks in the outlets, so the whole protocol is on the way out. No worries, though: I hear the boys in the basement are developing a 13-pronged system! That should keep us safe from fork-based attacks for a while. At least until R&D comes up with a 13-pronged eating utensil.'

Service services

- ④ 'Take this 100-kilo spool of copper wire to the transformer station by transbot platform 12-YELLOW. The local quartermaster will sign for it.' (The quartermaster will weigh the spool and determine it's a couple of kilos underweight. Naturally, the Troubleshooters are blamed.)
- ④ 'Bring this radiation meter with you. Record radiation readings from 18 locations in your destination sector, each of which must be at least 100 meters away from the nearest other measured location. Don't worry, these tests are purely precautionary. The area is entirely safe.'
- ④ 'This is Sparky the Teachbot. Soon we will be rolling him out to educate junior clones about the benefits of power generation. He will accompany you during your mission, educating you along the way about any power generation equipment you encounter. Please feel free to ask him questions along the way. Because he is not yet outfitted with color vision and cannot verify for himself, be sure not to ask him any questions that would exceed your security clearance.'
- ④ 'Here's a pallet of software discs with our power-saving tips on them. Please distribute one to each citizen you meet. They'll let us know when they're installed so we can monitor how effective they are in reducing consumption.'
- ④ 'The confession booth at the intersection of corridor AEX 39224-X and AEX 342232-G is drawing way more power than it should, but we've got orders to keep it running under any circumstances. Shut down the six other booths in the area by entering this shutdown sequence in each one.'
- ④ 'We need you to take this ColdFun cart to the INFRARED mess hall in your destination sector. They're using an older model outlet, though, so it has to stay plugged in here. Take this crate of extension cords to make sure you have power when you get there.'
- ④ 'We need to maintain a steady flow of power to the R&D laboratory in the subsector, but there's not enough juice to go around. We've been blacking out the INFRARED living areas, but if we keep them in the dark much longer, there might be a riot. Take these pamphlets of power-saving tips and distribute them to everyone you meet. You can also try turning off the lights, unplugging vendobots, or temporarily shutting down life support systems. We just need about 1.71 gigawatts.'
- ④ 'All your equipment on this mission is being modified to use our new Just-In-Time power receivers. Instead of carrying heavy batteries, all your gear now sports these antennae, and power will be beamed to you, as needed, from the nearest teravoltaic reflector tower. Be sure you are not personally standing between the device and the nearest tower while the power is being beamed, of course.'
- ④ 'It's time to recycle those old, dry batteries once again. During your mission, please check in with any supply depots, vehicle bays, or other service locations to pick up their Battery Bags. Also, inquire with any bots you encounter to see if they have any "presents" to drop off with you. And, of course, make sure no private citizens you encounter are hoarding empty power cells for nefarious purposes.'
- ④ 'A newly-commissioned reactor is being moved up corridor AEX 39224-X today. As the reactor is quite large and access to it must be minimized at all times, you will proceed ahead of the transport sled, clearing the corridor of any and all citizens until it has passed.'



SERVICE, SERVICE! CLEARANCE ULTRAVIOLET

New Power Services service firms

Alternative Energy Consortia

Example firms: Extra Power!, Complex-Friendly Energy

Revenue stream: Contracts with Power Services.

Secret society taint: Pro Tech (common), Mystics (rare), Sierra Club (rare)

Power in Alpha Complex isn't just fission piles and fusion generators. Sure, they provide lots of power, but they're finicky and notoriously unsafe, and there's only so much plutonium to go around. Power Services covers for unexpected meltdowns and uranium shortages by operating other power generation facilities, all run by one or another Alternative Energy Consortium.

Exemplifying Consortium frugality is Citizen Motivated Energy Generation Systems, where otherwise inactive INFRAREDS run on giant treadmills to generate a trickle of electrical power—far less than is expended in feeding and housing them, but at least they're earning their keep! The RED overseers at these facilities can aspire to positions at, say, the Gravitic Sewage Turbines, where effluent cascades down over massive rotors on its way to recycling installations. Then there's the photovoltaic cells in well-lit areas, the windmills in the ventilation system, and energy harvesting from incinerator units and Soyilent biomass extraction.

It's obvious: All the Alternative Energy Consortia exemplify the level of efficiency that has become a byword for Power Services!

Executive Power Chauffeurs

Example firms: Power Tours, ExecuRide

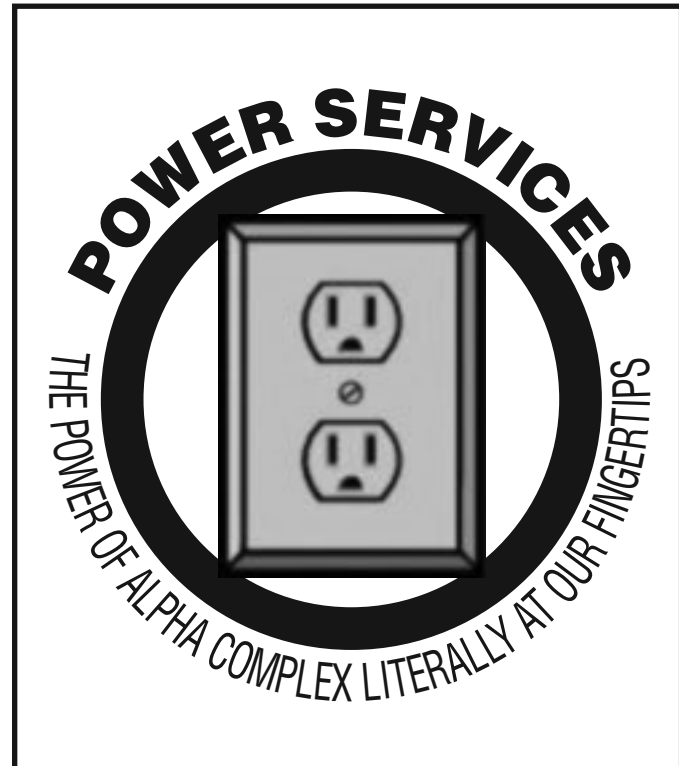
Revenue stream: Contracts with Power Services. Tips from satisfied customers.

Secret society taint: FCCC-P, Illuminati

Many citizens spend long hours spent commuting between home and work, but none so much as the upper echelons of Power Services. Each workday, they shuttle from one remote, isolated power generation facility to another, attending meetings and conducting surprise inspections. The long-running rivalry between Power and Technical Services has engendered too much mistrust for paranoid Power execs to put their lives into the hands of Tech. So Power created its own firms to transport its executives in safety and comfort.

Executive Power Chauffeurs (EPC) firms maintain luxury vehicles ranging from conventional autocars and flybots to opulent 50-passenger transbots, lead-lined armored crawlers and even the occasional decommissioned Vulturecraft. Newly acquired vehicles are fully refitted by EPC engineers, maintained by EPC techs and driven by EPC chauffeurs, all thoroughly vetted for political orthodoxy and loyalty to Power.

RED personnel work in the general pool, driving or repairing vehicles used by random YELLOW and GREEN bureaucrats. Once an EPC reaches ORANGE clearance, he's assigned to an individual manager's personal staff. This can be good if the patron is generous with tips and bonuses. It's even better if the patron gets promoted, as then his EPCs get promoted as well! So, what's the downside? A harsh or inflexible patron imposes fines and penalties on an imperfect worker, and worse,



if the patron is demoted, so is his chauffeur—it wouldn't do for a GREEN citizen to drive a YELLOW around, would it?

Latent Power Accumulation and Harnessing

Example firms: Zing!; Latent Potentials; Rubbed Up the Right Way

Revenue stream: Contracts with Power Services.

Secret society taint: Mystics (uncommon); Pro Tech (common); Romantics (uncommon)

Hidden and unharnessed sources of power exist all around Alpha Complex. Whenever citizens log aggrieved Claims Upon Parties Unknown for Sudden and Painful Jolts of Disconcerting Current (using a form 6373/z/AP-22), Latent Power Accumulation and Harnessing specialists (wearing PLC standard issue RuggedTuff SuperGrip rubber-soled boots) jump to locate, analyze and secure nonstandard high-power potential.

Using portable multimeter probes, LPAH operatives take readings of voltage, current and actuated substances charge potential. When an operative discovers something promising, he is pre-authorized to make reasonable demands of co-workers or team members to confirm the reading: 'Go rub this up against that wall' or 'Could you just see what happens if you discharge your pistol clip into that primary support pillar over there while powerskidding along the corridor? I'm getting a very promising reading.'

Power Plant Protectors

Example firms: Terror-B-GON, We Guard Power!

Revenue stream: Contracts with Power Services.

Secret society taint: Anti-Mutant, Corpore Metal, Psion, PURGE

Alpha Complex power generation systems present an exceptionally tempting target to PURGE and other terrorist groups. Knock out a reactor, and the explosion and fallout kill thousands. And sabotage isn't the only threat; fissile material is rare and valuable, making theft a great risk.

Normally, the Armed Forces and Internal Security handle guard duty. But as far as Power Services is concerned, the Armed Forces' brutish Neanderthals and IntSec's narrow-minded zealots lack sufficient finesse to be allowed anywhere near fragile reactor equipment. Hence their internal guard force: the Power Plant Protectors (PPP).

Because of the risk to delicate electronic systems, PPPs use no energy weapons or explosives. Low-clearance power plant guards rely on unarmed combat skills, vomit gas grenades and the ever-popular truncheon. Elite GREEN-Clearance PPPs have tangles and ice guns. Other workers manage armed guardbot teams, oversee monitor banks and blast door controls, and liaise with Security System Installers and Facility Surveillance firms for security.

Armed Forces units consider the PPPs ineffectual bunglers and harass them at every opportunity. Worse, IntSec deems them a security risk, and has thoroughly infiltrated all PPP firms—at least half the workers at some firms are actually IntSec plants.

Reactor Maintenance

Example firms: UraniFun PS, Nuclear Integrity

Revenue stream: Contracts with Power Services.

Secret society taint: FCCC-P (common), Psion (uncommon), PURGE (rare)

Alpha Complex gets most of its power from nuclear reactors—old, shoddy, badly maintained reactors, held together with spit and baling wire, seething with radiation from thousands of tiny leaks. Oh, sure, there are some new ones too, designed to the highest R&D standards of exciting and unpredictable innovation. Power Services executives would

rather rely on their elderly, ramshackle legacy reactors. At least they know when and how those will melt down, disintegrate or explode.

Reactor Maintenance techs garner great respect, even among the elite of Power Services. Even a lowly RED coolant pumper or bulkhead caulker must subject himself to constant risk and incessant radiation, protected only by his faraday suit and his concrete-solid faith in Power Services and The Computer. Mental illness, radiation poisoning and mutation are all rampant in Reactor Maintenance, but there's never any shortage of replacements willing—nay, eager!—to embrace the opportunities offered here.

Routing Redundancy Regulators

Example firms: All For One, Three Ducts You're Out, Overlapping Conduits PS

Revenue stream: Percentage of first year's cost savings to other Power Services firms.

Secret society taint: Romantics, Psion (uncommon)

Old Reckoning engineers required separate ducts for hot air, cold air, sewage, electrical wiring, communication hardlines, etc. In today's streamlined era, all these services and more can be channeled through a single, multi-functional conduit. All you need are properly insulated components and sophisticated switching-control mechanisms to route each service as needed, so you don't accidentally send raw sewage into Troubleshooter barracks while pushing cold air down into the reclamation center. (Not that this ever happens. Well, only in sharply limited, highly situational circumstances.)

Routing Redundancy Regulator firms analyze existing service routes—tunnels, shafts, ducts, and other off-corridor avenues—and look for parallel lines which could be combined together. Then, upon receiving a contract to perform their recommended 'routing compression plan', they construct a new single-channel conduit and install needed switches. The cost savings can be tremendous!

But RRR firms exist in a sensitive demilitarized zone between Power Services and Tech Services, staffed by, but also deeply suspected by, both groups. Their defense is paper—a blizzard of forms, authorizations, approvals and mandates prepared and pre-pre-prepared to forestall every conceivable turf war. RRR firms fight their own wars, for every available registered mutant known to have Bureaucratic

Intuition; they struggle to procure these workers the way VIOLET executives intrigue to nab each other's prized chefs.

RRR workers can be a little odd. They spend their time in mazes of twisty passages, all alike. The long roundabout ways of normal corridors frustrate them when they're absolutely sure a secret tunnel somewhere behind that wall goes directly to their destination. They are always looking for ways behind the walls, into the ducts and tunnels, under the floors. Some say amazing rewards can be found in the dark, forgotten corners of the habitat system... but also, perhaps, tremendous danger.

Sewage Reclamation

Example firms: SuperSump, Septic Thanks!

Revenue stream: Contracts with Power Services.

Secret society taint: As little as possible.

In addition to maintaining rapidly degrading nuclear reactors, Power Services runs the deep infrastructure for all of Alpha Complex's primary habitat systems, such as traffic, air and water processing. And then there's Sewage Reclamation, at the dead bottom of the Power Services hierarchy. Every day, millions of citizens pump out a constant stream of organic waste, and it all flows downhill to these unappreciated saps. Sewage Reclaimers have the dubious distinction of being viewed with greater disdain than food vat workers.

INFRAREDS in Sewage Reclamation spend their time stirring reservoirs full of muck. RED and ORANGE workers supervise the stirring teams and handle the ground-level pumping and recycling systems. Higher clearances insulate themselves thoroughly from the stench; their control rooms and management offices are starkly clean, air-conditioned, and accessible only through airlocks and hermetic decontamination facilities.

There are a few benefits in Sewage Reclamation. Workers become adept at recognizing unusual organic odors, and they resist noxious fumes that leave others gasping and retching. In addition, the sewage reservoirs are a good place to dispose of (ahem) unwanted organic material. Internal Security contracts with Forensic Analysis firms dedicated to finding and analyzing the thousands of dead citizens found each year in the sewage systems. (These forensic firms are, if anything, even lower in status than Sewage Reclamation.)



Temperature Optimization Enforcers (Power)

Example firms: No Glow; Warm & Cold
Revenue stream: Contracts with Power Services.

Secret society taint: Pro Tech

Power Services knows a high percentage of flawed items signal their decline through abnormal changes in temperature. Temperature Optimization Enforcers investigate and record telltale temperature increases that mark imminent malfunction. Operatives mark affected devices with large, informative stickers that cite the time, date and nature of the abnormality identified, along with a statement that Power Services systems are not the defect's cause. Given their mandate, TOEs can fast-talk their way into areas that might otherwise have remained off limits in order to complete a quick, but entirely necessary, inspection.

Transcendent Motive Energy Consumption

Example firms: Best Foot Forward; Unmatched Mobility; OptiTravel

Revenue stream: Providing hands-on advice and assistance in minimizing wasteful expenditure of motive power through commonsense or innovative application of better travel

Secret society taint: Sierra Club (common); Communists (uncommon); PURGE (rare)

Through improper understanding, the average citizen deprives Alpha Complex of as much as 87.334% motive actualization energy simply by doing things the way they believe they should, rather than doing them the right way and saving all that lost energy. Few citizens realize just how much potential chemical, kinetic and heat energy they waste simply by walking too fast and at slightly the wrong angle in a corridor. At least, Power Service statistics strongly suggest this; naturally, Power itself isn't responsible for all those slumps in expected energy output.

Transcendent Motive Energy Consumption firms offer regular citizens handy techniques involving slingshot theory and motive energy dispersal. Reprogramming your flybot to glide closer to steam vents and cooling towers, while maintain a ventral inclination increase of 1.4536%, increases fuel cell efficiency and produces 1/57th less nuclear pile stress.

Transcendent Motive Energy Consumption operatives constantly innovate new techniques to save energy wasted in transportation, often surprising and astounding teammates with their sudden seat-of-their-pants adjustments to flight plans.

Transit Services (Power)

Example firms: Totally Tubular!, Always On Time PS, Transit

Revenue stream: Contracts with Power Services.

Secret society taint: Frankenstein Destroyers

As part of its authority over primary habitat systems, Power Services runs the transtube network that ties together all of Alpha Complex. Transit Services firms labor ceaselessly to ensure the transtubes are clean and functional. Low-clearance workers clean stations and tunnels and maintain the third rail; mid-clearance engineers seal off defunct stations

and demolish residential and industrial blocks to make room for new tunnels; high-clearance managers crunch the numbers to make sure the firm remains solvent and the transbots run on time.

Everything would be perfect, except other, non-Power citizens keep screwing things up. Passengers litter and vandalize the stations. HPD&MC whines about 'collateral damage' from Power Services drilling and demolition teams. And worst of all, those morons in Tech and their transbots keep getting it wrong. When transbots run behind schedule, scuff the paint on the transtube walls and randomly collide in the middle of the station, killing hundreds of citizens and damaging valuable Computer property, Technical Services is surely to blame!

To keep their transtubes and stations clean and pristine, roving gangs of Transit Services workers sabotage transbots and beat up Tech employees. It may not help the transbots run on time, but it reduces workloads and stress levels in Transit Services workplaces.

True story: At one point while we were touring an attack sub at Pearl Harbor, the ship's quartermaster showed us a huge bulkhead.

'Everything beyond that is classified so I can't show it to you. Mostly, it's the nuke and the nuke crew. You don't want to meet them anyway; they're crazy. We've been parked here at Pearl for nearly a week now and everyone else has been off the ship at least once to have a drink, meet some girls, get some sunlight. But every one of them is still back there. They don't go outside. They don't come forward to call family. They only come through the bulkhead to get food, which they take right back there. Near as I can tell, they just spend all day and all night back there, covered in high-albedo cream. They're all back there, right now, all of them. I think they pray to the damn thing. I try not to go back there if I can avoid it.'

—Dan Curtis Johnson

Power Services personnel

Hazmat Handler

Service firm types: Energy Realization, Fuel Rod Disposal Consultants, Reactor Maintenance

Security clearance: INFRARED through YELLOW

Common mutation(s): Radioactivity, Regeneration, Toxic Metabolism

Secret society taint: Death Leopard, FCCC-P, Mystics, Psion

Typical Access: 05

ACTION SKILLS & SPECIALTIES

Management 04

Chutzpah 08

Hygiene 01

Stealth 08

High Alert 12

Sneaking 01

Violence 07

Energy Weapons 01

Haul Massive Depleted Uranium Rods 13

Unarmed Combat 11

KNOWLEDGE SKILLS & SPECIALTIES

Hardware 08

Bot Ops and Maintenance 01

Nuclear Engineering 12

Software 06

Obtain Map Data For Nuclear Waste Disposal Sites 12

Wetware 06

Recognize Symptoms Of Radiation Poisoning 12

Medical 10

Psychotherapy 01

SECRET SKILLS

Power Studies 04, WMD 04

ASSIGNED EQUIPMENT

(1) faraday suit

(1) Geiger counter

(1) emergency anti-radiation foam grenade

(1) bottle of iodine tablets

PERSONAL EQUIPMENT

(1) bottle of tranquilizers

(1) bottle of stimulants

(1) bottle of hallucinogens

(1) flask of homebrewed alcoholic beverage

Power Services generates tremendous quantities of radioactive waste daily. This waste doesn't just transport itself (pending enforcement of Power Services mandate 214.04.01.234 'Timetable for Automation of Nuclear Waste Disposal'). Disposal is a job for... the Hazmat Handlers!

Clad in brightly-colored faraday suits, these heroic citizens spend their days loading up lead-lined transbots with bundles of spent fuel rods and canisters of irradiated coolant, driving these transbots deep into the bowels of Alpha Complex, and unloading their cargoes in specially prepared concrete bunkers, there to be buried for all time. Or until someone comes up with a use for the stuff, like as an additive to ShinyBrite Toothpaste (now with extra radioisotopes!).

Then again, they might get to haul raw uranium ore up from the mines to the nuclear fuel refineries, or carry fresh fuel rods to the power plant. Some of them even haul tacnuke warheads around Armed Forces bases. Why, just think of all the varieties of fissile materials they get to deal with every day! Doesn't it just give you the chills?

Hazmat Handlers work hard, and they play hard -- often simultaneously. This gives them a well-earned reputation for... well, not 'instability' as such, but rather for 'excessive partying with mood altering drugs while on duty,' which still looks bad but doesn't flag you for a Mind Control psychiatric evaluation. Their superiors turn a blind eye to their wild activities because, hey, they've been there, they know how hard it is in Hazmat Handling, and give the kids a break, okay? They're just horsing around.

Troubleshooters commonly encounter Hazmat Handlers when they're assigned equipment with radioactive components. They pick up the equipment from the Handlers, who are totally hopped up on stims and looking for a fight, or too wasted on alcohol and tranquilizers to properly fill out a Radioactive Materials Transfer Form.

These are bad, bad people to cross. Any sensible Troubleshooter gives them whatever they want and then stays out of their way. Radiation is nasty stuff, and the Hazmat Handlers have access to way too much of it. Did you cut off that Hazmat Handler on the transway? Well, now he's sent you a generous gift: powdered uranium in your dormitory's ventilation system! How nice!





Nuclear Cultist

Service firm type: Any that work with reactors

Security clearance: ORANGE to GREEN

Common mutation(s): Energy Field

Secret society taint: FCCC-P, Pro Tech

Typical Access: 02

ACTION SKILLS & SPECIALTIES

Management 04

Bootlicking 08

Hygiene 01

Stealth 07

Disguise 01

High Alert 11

Violence 03

KNOWLEDGE SKILLS & SPECIALTIES

Hardware 13

Nuclear Engineering 17

Software 06

Wetware 07

Medical 11

Outdoor Life 01

ASSIGNED EQUIPMENT

(1) slugthrower with radioactive solid slugs
(W3K and they give you cancer in 10 years)

(1) tacnuke grenade

(1) Fire extinguisher

(1) tube burn salve

(1) tube SPF-1000 skin cream

PERSONAL EQUIPMENT

Pocket databook of daily ritual checklists

Boron holy symbol

(doubles as emergency control rod)

'All hail the Nucleus, which divides and rejoins to create Light and Heat! Is there no greater perfection than the Fusion and the Fission? Nay, my brothers and sisters, there is none! But the Flame that divides the Great and combines the Small can be angry as well as kind, and only we stand between its wrath and the ignorant citizens of Alpha Complex.'

For some Power Services personnel, spending all their time around an atom-smashing force of thermonuclear Nature has an effect like that of pagan gods on early human cultures. They become Nuclear Cultists.

For the Nuclear Cultist, the safety of the entire world depends on certain rituals, each followed in proper order, so the Nuke is appeased and continues to bestow warmth and power instead of turning angry and blasting all with its devastating rage. Tending the Nuke, basking in its warmth, demands the Cultist's entire attention, devotion and ambition.

They seek no transfers to other jobs. They avoid communal vid-time and mess hall meals.

Some even refuse to spend their sleep-cycle in their own quarters; they pull cots into the reactor room, sleeping out of the way of their fellow Cultists on active shift. They shun those who do not work with reactors; their only community is their fellow Cultists. Personal pleasure, friendship, dreams and goals: these are to be sacrificed on the atomic altar. The Nuclear Cultist feels it is a small price to pay.

However, one goal periodically drives Cultists away from their beloved obsession. Sometimes the Nuke apparently demands specialized ingredients for its coolant, exotic materials to dope into the control rods, forms that must be completed, perhaps even the occasional live victim to be thrown into its gaping maw. When the Nuke makes demands, the cult can appease it only through a quest. The cult's mightiest and most skilled members waste no time in picking someone else to do the job. The chosen junior Cultist arms himself heavily with sacred radioactive weapons and ventures out into the strangely well-lit, confusing world of Alpha Complex.

Nuclear Power Marketeer

Service firm type: Safe Atoms Initiative

Security clearance: YELLOW or GREEN

Common mutation(s): Environmental Control, Radioactivity, Regeneration

Secret society taint: Mystics, Psion, PURGE

Typical Access: 06

ACTION SKILLS & SPECIALTIES

Management 09

Con Games 13

Oratory 13

Moxie 01

Interrogation 01

Stealth 11

Disguise 15

Shadowing 15

Concealment 01

Sleight of Hand 01

Violence 06

Unarmed Combat 10

Energy Weapons 01

KNOWLEDGE SKILLS & SPECIALTIES

Hardware 07

Nuclear Engineering 11

Habitat Engineering 11

Chemical Engineering 01

Vehicle Ops and Maintenance 01

Software 05

Wetware 08

Biosciences 12

Cloning 01

ASSIGNED EQUIPMENT

(1) Geiger counter

(40) 'Raddy the Irradiated Clone presents Why I LOVE Nuclear Power!' leaflets

(3) Nuclear power propaganda and word jumble books

(10) 'I Heart Nukes' INFRARED-clearance t-shirts

PERSONAL EQUIPMENT

(60) gammicillin ('Rad-Free') anti-radiation sickness pills

Safe Atoms Initiative firms promote nuclear power: low-cost energy, somewhat reliable lighting and heating, the statistically insignificant chance of meltdown, etc. But they only get so far with promotional vidshows and jingles, so they also use nuclear power marketeers.

A 'ground level' PR worker, the marketeer disguises himself as an everyday citizen. He converses with the low-clearance masses and waits for someone to say something—anything!—about nuclear power. Then he pounces.

RED citizen: Typical. We're in another brownout, so I can't AAAAAHHH!

Marketeer: Brownouts could be avoided, but only with more NUCLEAR POWER! NUCLEAR POWER is not only safe, it's been shown to reduce Alpha Complex brownouts by 29%! NUCLEAR POWER can be too cheap to meter, when free of excessive regulatory oversight! Don't you want NUCLEAR POWER in your sector? Here, sign this petition and we'll get a new plant within a year! Remember, Raddy the Irradiated Clone says, 'It's Nuke or Nuthin!'

A marketeer often targets Troubleshooter, because they are (or may become) celebrities. He can follow a team for hours, shadowing them or tagging along disguised as an INFRARED drone. As soon as a Troubleshooter says something remotely related to nuclear power ('atom', 'energy', 'light') the marketeer springs into action, distributing T-shirts, loading dismally dull educational games onto their PDCs and wasting everyone's time.

Marketers spend much time around nuclear plants to show how safe they are. Consequently, most of them are bald and have several mutations. Many secret societies target marketeers, especially PURGE (for being so close to potential targets), Psion (for having extra mutations) and the Mystics (for needing chemotherapy).

HLO8 BOTH SIDES NOW WON PAUL BALDOWSKI

3-6 PLAYERS
1 SESSION
(3-4 HOURS)

Power Services has recently enjoyed profound success with a new power source. For Power's perennial rival, Technical Services, the Quantum Photonic Generator represents a real problem. In its first six months of operation, not only has it exceeded all output forecasts, it also has failed to explode, even slightly. In dire secrecy, high-clearance Technical Services officials plan to sabotage the operation.

In 'Both Sides Now', the PCs become unwitting pawns in this sabotage. Rather, their clones do; Technical Services has secretly cloned all the PCs and is using the duplicates as the saboteurs.

Background

Six months ago, a senior technical consultant recently transferred from Technical Services to Power Services hit on an innovative way to harness the energy potential of light. After a period of fast-tracked brainstorming, form filling, resource acquisition and minimal testing, the **Quantum Photonic Core** went live in GSN Sector—and, quite against expectation, it worked. Tech Services kept close tabs on the project, but nothing went wrong no matter how much they wished for an explosion. Six months on, the Core showed a steady surplus and no operational issues whatever.

Then the sector suffered a power outage, lasting no more than a minute. (The light for the Core comes from ancient solar panels on the outer Alpha Complex dome, and lightning strikes Outdoors wrecked a couple of panels.) Keen to make the most of the opportunity, Tech Services made plans to enter the Core and discover the flaw in the system, even if they had to introduce a flaw themselves. To this end, they accessed Troubleshooter Central and diverted the team assigned to investigate the problem. Having sent the original team on a wild-goose chase, Tech officials created their own team of lookalikes.

To duplicate a Troubleshooter

On double-secret super-deep-background instructions from high up, Technical Services clone techs decanted a fresh set of the PCs' clones, and downloaded into them the PCs' most recent MemoMax backups. The technicians forged lower clone numbers for the newly decanted clones, so they appear to be the PCs' predecessors. Then Tech equipped the duplicates with the best gear they could find at short notice.

In total anonymity the officials dispatched their team. They took the precaution of slowing down the real Troubleshooter team—the player characters—by inserting a virus into a standard PDC upgrade patch.

The real PCs arrive late to a mission they appear to have already arrived for, and later face their own clones. Except, these clones seem to be better equipped, have better connections with high-clearance authorities, and have lower clone numbers—meaning, in the benevolent gaze of The Computer, the duplicates were there first.

Alert! Vital update!

It's 08:00. Ask the players to explain what their characters are doing as they begin the morning work shift at their various service firms. After they've all had a say, read this aloud:

Your PDC alarm is a shrill whine. It's an incoming priority message. The gray-green screen shows an alarm clock icon, then a miniature computer monitor. The screen of the monitor begins to fill with dark pixels, while the word 'Loading... please wait' appears beneath. You notice all activity around you has stopped, as other citizens with

Series 1300 PDCs quizzically watch the loading process on their screens.

After a few moments, the monitor fades, replaced by a stylized CPU logo. 'You have sucesfully loaded CPU official :vlraL ../ patch v1.0093111. Do not restart you're PDC. Code implimented and virtual patrition alocaton runnig above expect'd threshold quoota.'

A moment later the screen goes blank. Then another alarm appears, alerting you that you don't have the clearance necessary to receive an incoming message from Troubleshooter HQ.

Each PC's screen freezes with this warning, though the keypad still seems to work. The whine of the alert persists, drawing attention to the Troubleshooter. None of the PCs' co-workers have this problem with their PDCs. Characters can attempt appropriate Software or Hardware checks (drop a hint about the prospect of damaging the PDC permanently), or just muffle the alarm. After several moments of embarrassment:

The screen flickers and blanks again, this time for several seconds. After a long, worrying pause, the display flickers to life with an invitation to an imminent briefing in GSN Sector, Subsector 21, Corridor FF, Room 3405. You might just reach it... if you run like you've never run before.

Characters at work must excuse themselves from their current activities. You can make the extrication simple, entertainingly difficult or life-threatening as you prefer.

What's happened

A high-placed Technical Services bureaucrat pulled in a favor from the Computer Phreaks.



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A compliant Phreak wrote a virus specifically targeting the player characters' PDCs. The virus hit everyone in their service firms, but actually infected only the player characters.

The same virus has spread through the sector, targeting all records of Troubleshooter briefings involving these specific individuals. It's designed to replace all references to the original Troubleshooter mission (the PCs' mission) with a duplicate mission concocted by Tech Services. The virus has propagated unevenly, so some data stores retain the correct information. The upshot is, sometimes checkpoint guards see the PCs' authorizations and let them through, and other times they give the PCs all kinds of (non-fatal) hassle.

In a rush, the Phreak forgot to keep the virus from targeting Tech Services' newly decanted duplicate Troubleshooters. So the duplicates' PDCs are infected too, and they can't connect with their secret societies. However, Tech Services is hustling the duplicates through the briefing system ASAP, so the infection hasn't inconvenienced them.

Cold reception

En route to Room 3405, the PCs discover the problem with their PDCs seems widespread. Secure checkpoints, palm scans, Combot Automated Retinal Checks (CARCs) and ME Card swipes sometimes fail to identify the Troubleshooters correctly. (Unknown to the players, this is due to the Phreak virus Tech Services has spread through the sector.) The only practical ways past these bottlenecks are Management skill, mutant powers and (the all-purpose solution) bribery.

Room 3405 is locked. Any attempt to enter the room or contact Troubleshooter HQ fails. Questionable activities (we leave the determination of 'questionable' to you) alert a GREEN Clearance security detachment with impressive body armor, laser rifles and a stern attitude towards antisocial behavior.

After some delay, a troubled YELLOW-Clearance briefing officer arrives. **Jeffrey-Y-GSN-8** wears only a T-shirt and shorts, and carries enormous paper-stuffed files. Unlocking the door, Jeffrey-Y invites the team into the room. As the PCs take seats, Jeffrey-Y fiddles with the



Same old treason

The corrupted PDC upgrade means the PCs get this mission's secret society messages in unusual form. All Troubleshooters receive an encrypted personal message—either to their PDCs or from another electronic source identified by a message through their PDCs—relating the parameters of their current secret society objectives. Oddly enough, these objectives read, word for word, as they did in the team's last mission.

If you played a mission at a previous session, hand the Troubleshooters the secret orders from that mission, explaining the message arrives in encrypted digital format. Attempts to reach a known contact electronically—like a PDC or comm station—fail. A physical meeting proves impractical.

If you haven't played a mission before, provide the generic objectives from the rulebook, *The Traitor's Manual* or one of the missions in this book. Make it clear the message comes with an old date stamp and appear to match a previous communication, but offer no other explanation for the apparent repetition.

Later in this mission the PCs will meet their duplicates, called 'Beta Team.' Their Beta Team counterparts got no secret society communiques at all, so their current mission takes precedence over all else.

thermostat, dropping the ambient temperature several degrees. He drops the files on the desk at the head of room, then paces erratically, checking the readout on the thermostat regularly and making further downward adjustments.

(What's with the thermostat? Jeffrey-Y is a pyrokinetic mutant with a bad case of hot flashes. He's only comfortable in freezing cold.)

Jeffrey-Y starts the briefing by reprimanding the team for their tardiness, especially as their arrival overlapped a shift change and he had hoped for a little longer in bed, given he wasn't originally due to start for another hour. (This, too, is a consequence of the Tech Services virus, which delayed the PCs' mission so the duplicates could get a head start.)

He pulls an official notice from his files and runs his finger down the page, seemingly skipping through areas of perplexing detail:

'GSN Sector has recently suffered an 85.3% increase in brownouts and power outages, currently designated as resource-dependent performance complexities. Hmm, humm...' *[Skips a bit.]* **'Previously the sector benefited from a significant surplus of power due to the efficiencies of a new stabilized Quantum Photonic Core. Power Services developed and built the Core single-handedly. There have been no previous reported issues with the Core.'**

'Let's see—blah blah blah—Power Services has requested an independent investigation by a team of Troubleshooters, rather than a specialized service group assessor. I can hardly guess why they chose you... I can only hope nothing vital or important needs attention in a hurry, or I should expect we'll see many more problems before too long.' *[Looks at the rest of the document, then sets the page aside.]* **'So, any questions?'**

Jeffrey-Y-GSN-8

CPU, Romantics, Pyrokinesis; Sweat Profusely 12; Software 08, Data Analysis 16, Hardware 8, Habitat Engineering 12, Whittle Pencils To Optimum Sharpness 14, other skills and specialties 06

Jeffrey-Y seems more concerned with the thermostat than with answering questions. When indifference and cold finally force the PCs to leave, they receive a garbled PDC update giving the Core's location.

Sleuths of Hazard

The gigantic, seemingly semi-melted ovoid of the Core rises high above surrounding structures. It glows faintly in the light filtering down from the outer dome.

As the PCs approach the outer Core, two autocars pull up almost simultaneously, narrowly missing them. Two teams of worried men in YELLOW suits emerge, carrying clipboards, geiger counters and thickly stacked files marked 'Test Data'. They fall on the Troubleshooters like a rabid fan club. Representatives of the Safe Atoms Initiative and Battery Backup service firms, these intense and enthusiastic individuals spout tedious statistics about the Core's success, and bemoan the envious service groups who (they feel) caused the current problems.

These service firm reps follow the team through the facility, monitoring, taking notes and spouting pseudoscientific trivia about the functionality of the Core. Though annoying, they do provide decent cover during a firefight.

One representative of the Safe Atoms Initiative, **Linda-B-EHW-3**, asks a Troubleshooter to take a special camera into the Core to prove the facility offers untold potential without any danger whatever. The unusual clamshell camera is made of an odd ceramic material, hard and cold, with a protruding lens. The camera functions perfectly even in the disruptive Core environment. Whoever uses this small, hand-sized gadget to take lots of inspiring footage earns a bonus of 100cr on return of the camera. If the volunteer damages the camera, Linda-B instead fines him 300cr.

The Quantum Photonic Core

Designated PS-GSN-4536/33, the Quantum Photonic Core is an experimental power facility funded and run by Power Services (the group itself, not a service firm).

Imagine a single, globe-shaped building the size of a skyscraper. The smooth, cold and reflective surface at the base sweeps upwards into an irregular patchwork of ceramic tiles and then to oddly organic ripples, seared black, as if exposed to incredible heat. Power Services stick by its official statement: 'The perceived similarities between the Quantum Photonic Core's architectural style and the site of a hypothetical explosive conflagration are coincidental.'

Internally, PS-GSN-4536/33 resembles an onion, layered skins with increasingly shielded inner walls, peaking at a massive, magnetically isolated, ultra-reinforced ball, within which lies the Quantum Photonic Core. Facility rooms have high ceilings with oddly curved walls, making travel disconcerting, whether on foot or in one of the many motorized mini-carts.

The outer layers (**Tension 9**) contain administrative offices and high-clearance conference rooms for visiting dignitaries. Middle layers (**Tension 12**) contain emergency coolant tanks, laboratories, machine shops, control stations and offices of low-clearance supervisors. The inner layers (**Tension 15**) have increasingly heavy bulkhead doors and lots of worried INFRAREDS running around, fighting over whose turn it is to use the hazmat suit. Most rooms contain heavy machinery, whining pipes, pounding pumps and banks of gauges with wildly flicking needles. A steady, background thrum reverberates down to the marrow.

The central Core (**Tension 1**) hangs suspended in mid-air in a magnetic envelope the size of a dozen football fields. Walls of meter-thick LeadLike, tiled with odd little ceramic tiles, supposedly keep quantum radiation in check.

Ludwig-Y-GSN-17

Mutation: Regeneration (Power 13)

Skills: Violence 03, Fine Manipulation 07, Hardware 10, Chemical Engineering 14, Nuclear Engineering 16, Wetware 09, Biosciences 13

Secret society: Humanists

In his earlier career in R&D, Ludwig-Y had a junior role on the LeadLike project. He later invented a type of Cold Fun, intended for Armed Forces use, that doubles as a detonator catalyst, organic field bandage and emergency dessert substitute.

After experimenting with volatile and exotic substances in hopes of making a discovery to garner favor with his superiors, Ludwig-Y seriously damaged his genome. Having realized working at R&D wouldn't prolong his existence, he used Humanist pull to transfer to Power Services, where he immediately landed a senior lab position at the experimental PS-GSN-4536/33 facility. He runs the impressive Hazard Management Research and Control office.

Oddly, he couldn't have made a better choice. The background radiation at the facility triggered his latent mutation, a skewed variant of Regeneration that feeds off the very radiation permeating the building. In a classic example of **PARANOIA** pseudoscience, the radiation steadily repairs his body at the DNA level.

Return visits

1. PLC sends the PCs to investigate why several orders sent to the Core apparently reach their destination—but Power Services deny their arrival. PLC might be seeking to discredit someone; terrorists might be ordering in components for a bomb through valid and seemingly innocuous channels; or jealous rivals might have plans to divert power through an illegal tap.
2. R&D orders the team to test a new environmental hazard suit, built in cooperation with Ludwig-Y. Various grueling physical challenges on the swinging walkways and gantries of the Outer Shell test the wearers more than the suits. Success of the PCs' mission depends on the success of the suits. But Anti-Mutant operatives have set an explosive to enhance local radiation, so the PCs' suits receive unscheduled stress-testing.



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Entry

Entry into the facility requires RED Security Clearance. Again, network systems only erratically confirm the PCs' identities.

Once inside, the Troubleshooters feel dwarfed by the massive size of the Core's interior rooms and confused by the odd angles of the walls. Several anonymous YELLOW technicians take a keen interest in everything the team does, more out of paranoia than concern for the teams' safety. Eric-Y-GSN-3, a meek, pigeon-faced man with a slight stutter and no hair, insists all PCs wear medallions and take a small tumbler full of dietary supplements, 'just to keep up their energy levels'. The medallions, which look like bicycle reflectors, are radiation monitors; they change from green to amber to red in the presence of high radioactivity. Feel free to make anyone who skips the anti-radiation medication light-headed and woozy at inconvenient moments inside the Core; those who took the medication have a dry mouth and mild tinnitus, but no debilitating side-effects.

The PCs see rooms housing enormously complicated interlinked machinery, rivers of cable and piping, bot-mounted scows brimming with printouts, and more low-clearance technicians than they could possibly shoot. The entourage of Safe Atoms Initiative and Battery Backup reps provides running commentary on the facility's marvels. They openly insult the substandard power facilities of other service groups. The meandering tour moves slowly, because the personnel mistrust the Troubleshooters and would rather solve their own problems. PCs might try Management rolls to speed things along, but only considerable success (a margin of 10 or more) moves the group faster.

No body count?!

Unlike a standard **PARANOIA** mission, 'Both Sides Now' benefits from a zero body count once the PCs arrive at the mission site. The Core makes weapon use impractical, so the Troubleshooters must rely on Management specialties, brain power and, at a pinch, fistfights. The PCs must keep their current clone numbers, or else the whole mission becomes even more complex than it already is.

Use the Core's chaotic effects on gravity, energy, biology and storylines to keep Troubleshooters alive with injuries that would otherwise write them off. Be ready with your best Star Trek technobabble: If they fall, gravity inversion slows them; if they throw grenades, a photonic polarity shift contains the blast; and so on. Fudge die rolls to limit fatalities.

If the prospect of letting the team survive intact makes you uncomfortable, console yourself. The next mission's random death and destruction will taste all the sweeter.

Off with your clothes!

In a changing room, clearance-colored MetaMesh 3000 hazmat outfits hang from hooks. The higher the clearance, the sturdier and less antiquated the suits look. Each PC must sign for his own suit, which lacks instructions. Hardware or secret skills may let the wearer secure the suit properly, providing environmental protection and E1 armor. Suits lower than GREEN Clearance consist of a tight-fitting, full-body mesh that prevents wearing anything else except underwear. Tough, shiny ceramic plates of the appropriate clearance color adhere to the mesh, covering the chest, abdomen, back, groin and both sides of the head. Members of the Safe Atoms Initiative group coo excitedly about the MetaMesh outfit, highlighting its considerable protection and maneuverability. Wearers feel like they're being strangled all over.

Intruder alert

As the PCs are half suited up, a klaxon sounds. After feverish discussions, the technicians report several intruders in the Core—as many intruders as there are PCs. Video surveillance shows the intruders tampering with the inner sphere. The technicians guide the team to the primary Core access, an airlock resembling a bank vault door. One technician punches a combination on a numeric keypad by the door. Lights flash and alerts sound: 'WARNING! Stand clear of the door to avoid premature injury or personal harm! Stand clear!'

The PCs enter the long, low, rectangular airlock. They see another vault-like door in the opposite wall. While the first door swings closed, the technicians call encouraging words and warnings through the gap. At the same time, they hear a recorded message from The Computer:

'Welcome to the Quantum Photonic Core, citizens. For your safety and comfort, you must deposit all weapons and metallic objects in the receptacle provided, due to the strong magnetic fields present within the Core. These magnetic fields pose absolutely no threat to your health or well-being. Citizens of BLUE Clearance or higher may request further information following this automated message. Please use the nonferrous ceramic safety tools in the belt strap of your safety suit to complete your work in the Core. Have a good day, citizen. End of message.'

Light weaponry: Each Troubleshooter has a slim case attached just above the groin plate of his MetaMesh 3000 bodysuit. The box contains a dozen tools made of a gray ceramic material: three widths of tweezers, four finger-length flat-headed screwdrivers, a Philips mini-screwdriver, a toothpick, a nail file, a bottle opener and a micro wire cutter. The whole set weighs about as much as a teacup.

Mirror, mirror

For a long moment the Troubleshooters stand alone and unwatched in the dim airlock (**Tension 0**). Remember, you want a zero body count on this mission, so prefer Maimed results over kills.

Once the inner door opens, the team can enter the outer Core. The cavernous space, like a mutated offspring of Escher's Relativity, is hung with gantries, walkways, ladders, supports, cables, pulleys and girders, all made of ceramics. The atmosphere feels staticky and smells of spent batteries, a tangy, electrical odor. Maybe you can hint that time and space themselves feel wonky—just strange enough to plant the suspicion someone really could cross over into an alternate universe.

Anyone who retained weapons or metallic objects feels strong discomfort --a dull ache in the bones and pressure behind the eyes. If anyone tries to use prohibited objects in the Core, check the 'In the Core' sidebar nearby.

The mysterious intruders (henceforth called 'Beta Team') stand on a nearby platform flush against the shell of the inner Core. Half the members of Beta Team point their weapons at the PCs, while the rest make complex adjustments inside an open maintenance hatch.

The PCs can try to ignore Beta Team, but this draws the ire of everyone from The

Computer down. Through static-filled radio links in the MetaMesh headplates, the Safe Atoms Initiative and Battery Backup techs outside insist the PCs do something. If the Troubleshooters delay, the techs threaten to call Internal Security. Nothing for it; they must apprehend the traitors.

Depending on your whim, you may prefer to stage the players' discovery as a sudden stunning surprise, or as a gradual, sidelong building of dreadful suspicions: Once the Troubleshooters get close, they realize Beta Team consists of their exact duplicates, physically identical in every way.

Hey! It's us!

Each Beta Team Troubleshooter wears a helmeted, full-body suit, much more protective and fashionable than the PCs' mesh suits, with cool utility pouches and tools in handy loops. Each also carries a laser rifle and wears bandoliers of grenades. They all look and act like new-and-improved versions of the PCs, right down to personal tics. They all have nameplates with names identical to the PCs, except each Beta member's clone number is one less than the corresponding PC's. (If a PC is on clone #1, the Prime, so is his duplicate.)

Beta Team insists the characters leave them alone; they hold seniority by clone number and they'll answer interference with force. If the PCs fight, Beta Team tries to neutralize them without casualties, although Core effects hamper both them and the Troubleshooters (see the sidebar 'In the Core'). If the PCs call for backup, Beta Team calls in and countermands them. If the PCs stand back and let Beta Team continue, IntSec guards enter the Core with specialized ceramic pistols, and the whole standoff gets sticky.

Beta Team

Beta Team has strong motivations to get their job done. The very virus that stalled the Troubleshooters has also cut off Beta Team's contact with their secret societies, so for once they aren't placing non-mission activities ahead of their assigned task. This also means Troubleshooters can't appeal to Beta Team's personal principles. Beta Team would rather not kill their counterparts, but this is mere vague familial reluctance rather than professional obligation. Because the chaotic environment prevents weapon fire, Beta Team resorts to intimidation, superiority and unarmed assault.

Beta Team members match the PCs skill for skill, specialty for specialty. They all carry laser rifles (W3K energy), stun grenades (stun for one round) and wear special issue enhanced environmental suits (E1/I1) with appropriate permissions for all items normally above their clearance. After they realize their guns don't work due to chaotic Core side effects (see 'In the Core' nearby), Beta Team may use the weapons as makeshift clubs (S5W impact).

In the Core

Should anyone fire a weapon or bring a metallic object into the Core, roll 1d20 and consult the tables below to determine the consequence:

Weapons discharge

01-04: The discharge hangs like a bubble at the muzzle of the weapon, then drifts away.

05-08: The weapon makes a deafening crack and the projectile emerges, but then it dissolves into nothing before reaching its target.

09-12: The weapon shudders under the strain of massive recoil, but no projectile or discharge emerges. The firing chamber or muzzle clogs with a fine blue powder.

13-16: The weapon explodes harmlessly when fired. When the smoke clears, the weapon has turned itself entirely inside-out.

17-20: The weapon simply doesn't work. Pulling the trigger still depletes power or ammo as if the weapon fired normally.

Metallic objects

01-04: A nimbus of blue energy surrounds the object, crackling and hissing violently. An enormous static discharge knocks back everyone in the vicinity, and the bearer drops the object.

05-08: The object grows suddenly hot, then spontaneously catches fire and melts.

09-12: A localized earthquake centers on the bearer of the object, gradually concentrating into the metallic object before it shatters into flinders.

13-16: The object bends and swings wildly, as if exposed to extreme changes in G-force, before ripping from the bearer's hand and flying off at speed to lodge deep in a distant, inaccessible wall.

17-20: The object feels greasy and slippery. The bearer must make a Violence/Fine Manipulation check just to keep hold of it, and needs a large margin of success to actually use it.

Ultimately the Troubleshooters can't resolve their dilemma with the tools they have. Beta Team counters all their requests to outside personnel, including Jeffrey-Y, Troubleshooter HQ and The Computer. Given Beta Team's superior weaponry, a fight seems the least likely option—but desperate Troubleshooters might try to take advantage of the multi-level gantries and connecting cables to stage an

ambush. The trouble is, after Beta Team's rifles and grenades fail to work properly, they too take full advantage of the surroundings, and they wear better protection.

Run the conflict between the two teams until one side has a clear advantage—perhaps the first group to inflict Snafu results on more than half the opposition in a single round. Play up the similarities between the PCs and their Beta rivals, especially in regard to their sneaky treacheries.

Then bring on a BLUE-Clearance IntSec SWAT team, backed by all needed mandates from The Computer, to end the proceedings and hustle everyone to the next stage: accusations.

Double jeopardy

The IntSec commander, Petrov-B-GSN-3, firmly asks all occupants of the Core to fall back to the airlock. Beta Team seems reluctant, but moves on Petrov-B's second request, or if the PCs start moving. Troubleshooters who refuse these orders enjoy the rare luxury of a second warning; then Petrov-B starts



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imposing fines—steep fines. He doesn't want to kill anyone until he can resolve the current situation, so for now he relies on Intimidation (rating 15).

IntSec cautiously herds both teams into the airlock but no further, cycling the door closed behind them. The SWAT team and Petrov-B remain outside, observing through several security cameras (**Tension 19**).

The Troubleshooters' clothing and gear are gone. Actually, they're in a box under a retractable floor grating. The grating controls are outside the airlock, just beyond the 30cm-thick reinforced bonded-ceramic vault door. (Given time and his miniature tool kit, a PC who succeeded big on a Hardware/Mechanical Engineering or Habitat Engineering check might override the hydraulic release system from within the airlock. However, Beta Team wouldn't let him, and Petrov-B is watching.)

Benches on either side of the airlock face each other. Petrov-B asks both teams to take a seat.

'I find myself in a difficult situation here, citizens. I have an order here for Team 533.2/a12 to attend a situation identified at this station. I have logs recording briefings for both teams by different officers for the same mission, an hour apart. I have an administrative trail that shows no sign of tampering or malfunction—so far—yet I have two sets of clones functioning at the

same time. I'm open to feedback on why I find myself in this situation and what we plan to do about it. Who's the leader of the underdressed team? Care to comment?'

The PCs now have the opportunity to discredit the Beta Team as imposters, traitors or perhaps even other-dimensional, alternate-universe intruders teleported here through a bizarre and irreproducible Quantum Photonic Core malfunction. If they witnessed Beta Team trying to install something in the power core, the PCs might assume the duplicates have a dangerous agenda. Unfortunately, they have no evidence. Security footage accessible to IntSec shows Beta Team in the restricted area of the Core, but fails to show how the Team got in or their actions in the inner sphere. (This is due to bad positioning of the cameras and possibly Tech Services sabotage.)

Without becoming aggressive or offensive, Beta Team points out their superiority in clone sequence (that is, their lower clone numbers); they all have a clone number 1 less than the corresponding PC. They counter all accusations calmly; they received the mission alert and briefing first (true), and clearly some terrible sabotage triggered a fresh batch of clones (false, but hard to verify right now). They try to lure the PCs into admitting difficulties accessing secure areas and confirming their identities. Beta members call for a PDC security spot check, which the

Troubleshooters fail—just as they've failed so many other checks earlier. Beta Team drops heavy hints and innuendo concerning the PCs' secret society affiliations and mutant powers, careful to avoid associating this knowledge with themselves as the pure, loyal and original clones.

PCs who try to portray Beta members as traitors may endanger themselves. Alpha Complex justice relies heavily on the principle of 'guilt by association', and (as Petrov-B points out) who is a closer associate than one's own clone? Clearly, if the original has treasonous impulses, wouldn't the duplicate as well?

Petrov-B manages the discussion as The Computer observes. They exert authority only if the discourse descends into name-calling or violence. Members of the Beta Team ignore goading or insults, remaining cool, calm and confident. But if the PCs attack, Beta Team uses grenades to stun them. For Beta, the violence represents another opportunity for them to reassert their loyalty and superiority over the PCs.

You might run this as a 'combat' using the treason version of the University Hostility Formula. Characters level charges against one another, and The Computer judges the success and result of each treason attack. The Computer usually decides in Beta Team's favor, because of their evident seniority in clone numbering.

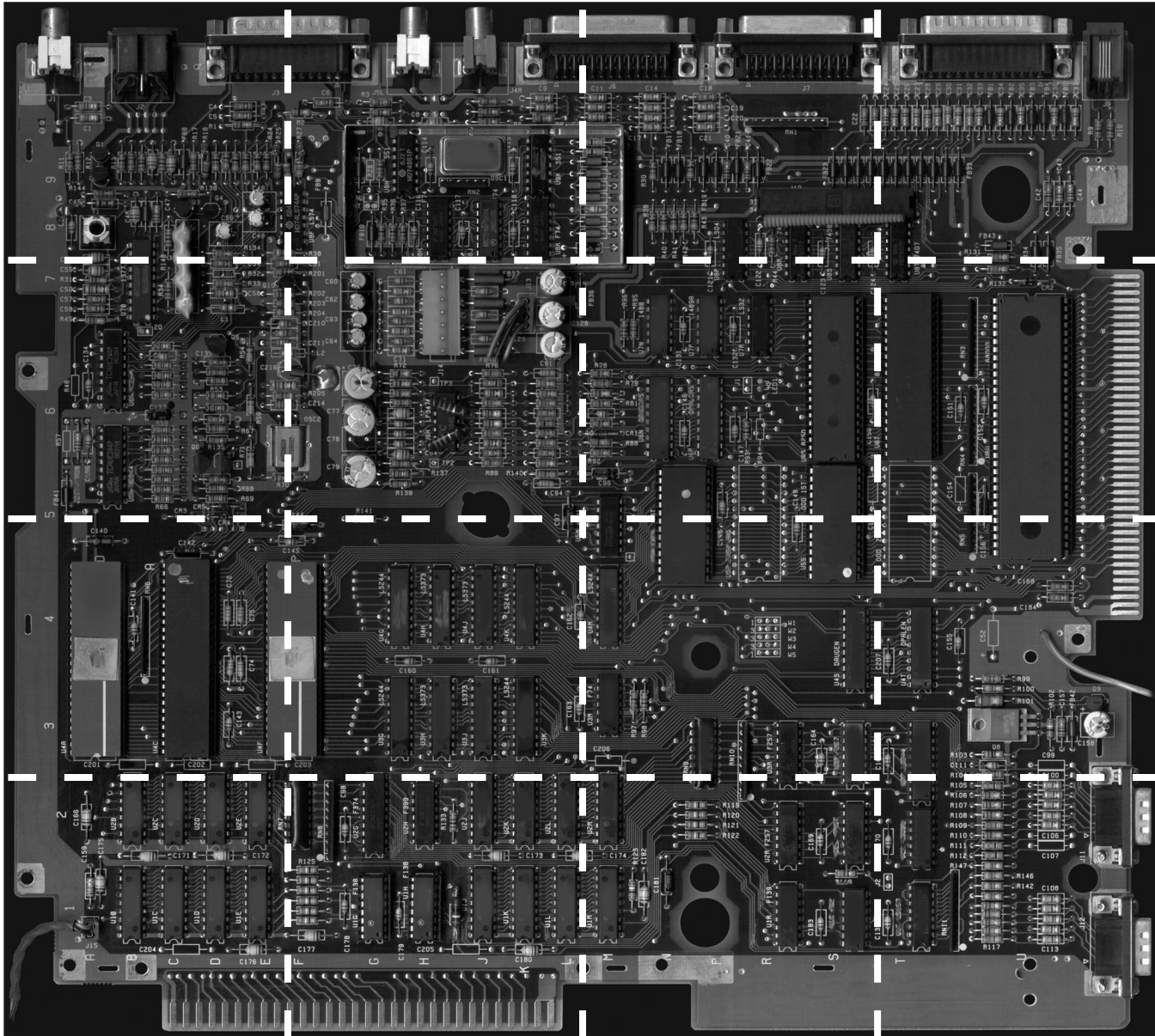
Ultimately The Computer decides the sensible course is to terminate the unwanted duplicates—the PCs. But as the IntSec officers move to arrest them...

She's gonna blow

A giant explosion rattles the Core. The airlock shudders. The inner door creaks wildly, makes an odd popping sound and falls off its hinges. On the intercom you hear the frantic techs from the Safe Atoms Initiative and Battery Backup. Petrov-B sternly calls for calm. Streams of acrid smoke wash in, and for a moment the entire airlock chamber goes dark. You can't see anything.

What caused the blast? Either Beta Team set a diversionary bomb, or possibly Petrov-B's interruption left something loose and dangerous in the inner shell. Whatever the cause, the blast produced only cosmetic damage: a few worrying cracks on the inner shell and a lot of smoke drifting weirdly in the chaotic fields of the Core.

Emergency override junction



We magnanimously bestow upon you permission to photocopy this emergency override power junction for personal use only. **Unauthorized use is treason.** Cut out the pieces along the dotted lines and present them to your players face-down, as described on the following page. (From 'Both Sides Now' in the **PARANOIA** supplement Service, Service! Copyright © 2005 Eric Goldberg and Greg Costikyan. All Rights Reserved.)

A substitution?

Once you smoke up the airlock, expect a heavy note flow from your players. Use this to your advantage as a way to increase paranoia: Make them suspect a Beta Team duplicate has traded places with one of their own teammates.

Give each of your players a note—either a real response to an action they took, or just a note reading, 'This is a meaningless note. Nod or shake your head.' Mysteriously roll the die a few times.

When the smoke clears, Beta Team is gone—apparently—and the PCs see a pile of Beta armor on the airlock floor. There's enough armor for one person, maybe two. Say, 'You don't know what happened to the duplicate who wore that armor. Now that you think about it, you didn't

see any other way to distinguish a duplicate from the original.' Then leave it at that, though you may cast a glance of seeming significance at one or another player, now and then.

In fact Beta Team hasn't replaced any of the PCs. The team leader dropped his armor to provoke just such suspicions. But what happened to the duplicates?

Override emergency

In the smoke, Beta Team charged back into the outer shell. The confusion gives them ideal cover to complete their mission. They carry a small electrical component they intend to link into the wires behind the



SERVICE, SERVICE! CLEARANCE ULTRAVIOLET

maintenance panel. (Don't concern yourself much with their exact plans; just assume they're doing something Power Services wouldn't like.)

A klaxon sounds, and from the control room Eric-Y starts babbling into the teams' earpieces. In a panic he says the blast caused an imbalance in the central Core. Left unchecked, it could cause an overload and catastrophic meltdown. The only way to avoid disaster is to activate an emergency override power junction. This could divert the current flow through an undamaged secondary circuit.

The Computer politely offers the PCs the chance to prove their loyalty to Alpha Complex and thereby avoid termination. It assigns them to activate the override junction at once. Eric-Y gives the location of the override and pleads with the team to hurry.

If the PCs linger long in the airlock, people in the control room highlight the original mission and remind them to prove their worth over Beta Team. Linda-B of Safe Atoms rallies her chosen camera operator to get inside and shoot footage proving the facility's resilience to terrorist attack.

Beta has headed straight back to the maintenance cover they opened before. The team leader is wearing only a mesh bodysuit like the PCs. When they see the PCs approach, Beta acts out a charade that their team leader (who is a duplicate) is in fact the original PC team's leader, whom they have kidnapped. They hold him hostage, threaten to shoot him, he begs for mercy, and so on. They hope this sows dissension among the PCs, who may reasonably suspect their own team leader was replaced.

Individual PCs can try to sort out the override, interfere with Beta Team or both. The Core still prevents Beta Team from using weapons without risking unpredictable side effects, but with failure looming they're willing to take risks. If nothing else, they can try to beat the Troubleshooters to a sticky pulp. If all the PCs head to the override, half of Beta Team decides to distract them, bullying, bluffing and beating as opportunities arise.

Aligning the override

Faced with the possibility of a meltdown, the Troubleshooters must using their tools to align the circuits of the delicate override junction. But they must be careful. As the technicians outside make blindingly clear, the junction carries enough current to fry anyone touching it.

Copy the circuit-board jigsaw puzzle nearby, cut it apart, and lay the pieces before the players, face down. They have two minutes to solve the jigsaw without touching the pieces directly or getting up from their seats. They cannot insulate their hands with anything, because their Troubleshooters have no material to cover their hands; their bodysuits stop at the wrists and can't be pulled down farther.

You might put a pair of tweezers within reach, depending on how fair or foul you're feeling. Otherwise, the players must improvise with pens/pencils, drinking straws, pieces of congealed pizza, character sheets or dice.

Players can spend Perversity points to increase or decrease the time the PCs have to fix the override. Every point spent adjusts the time available by 1 second.

It all goes horribly wrong

If the PCs fail to activate the override interface, little explosions break out across the Inner Shell. Cracks and holes appear, and brilliant streams of light flood out. The whole chamber vibrates; gantrys and walkways shudder. The team's priority should be rapid departure—but when they reach the airlock, IntSec troopers led by Petrov-B stand at the door with laser rifles ready. Beta Team stands smugly behind them as Petrov-B arrests the Troubleshooters for sabotage of the Core.

The PCs might plead their case, blame someone for the sabotage or start a fight. Selecting a patsy from among the rest of the team might well shift the greater share of the blame, but in the cold, harsh light of the interrogation chamber, the whole team failed the mission. If Linda-B's camera operator got damning shots of Beta Team's activities, Petrov-B claims the evidence for consideration.

If the PCs resort to violence, IntSec troopers take considerable, sadistic pleasure in beating them unconscious before hauling them away to the cells.

Ultimately, investigation discredits Beta Team's accusations, but not before IntSec terminates the PCs as faulty duplicates. Eric-Y and his workers stabilize the critical overload, but not before the Core suffers considerable damage.

Another day, another credit

If the PCs align the override circuitry, the Core instability quiets. Everyone in the control room enters through the airlock and congratulates the PCs for quick thinking. Beta Team seems less happy, and IntSec takes them away for questioning—and termination, after medical analysis reveals them as unnatural fakes.

Though high-clearance Power Services personnel strongly suggest Technical Services committed the sabotage, no one has sufficient evidence to do anything about it, even if Beta Team confesses.

The PCs, heroes of the moment, regain their security access and suffer no further identity glitches. The Computer bestows standard mission bonuses and possibly Official Commendations. The Safe Atoms Initiative and Battery Backup firms both seek out the PCs for interviews, reports and other random form filling. Indeed, Safe Atoms Initiative may well choose charismatic PCs as mascots for an upcoming vid-campaign highlighting the superb Power Services safety protocols.

On the other hand, the Troubleshooters' PDCs still harbor a trojan that permits outside access by any Computer Phreak worth the name....

The best thing since sliced Cold Fun?

So, this new power facility means an end to energy problems for Alpha Complex, right?

No. For the rare **PARANOIA** GM interested in internal consistency (*ewww!*), here is the feeble post-hoc rationale why this breakthrough needn't transform your setting:

The Quantum Photonic Core is a fluke. Though the Core generates lots of energy, the power requirements of GSN Sector fall below the Alpha Complex average anyway, so its incredibly promising figures don't stand up to extended scrutiny. Light from the antiquated solar panels becomes increasingly erratic over time, victim to bad weather, seasonal changes and continued neglect. The expense of the project, combined with the statistical analysis on output, stability and security, make this the first and last instance of this facility type.

Power Services has a lasting monument to its originality and competence. The other service groups have a reminder of what can happen if they ignore another group's outrageous ideas.

SERVICE Research & Design

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R&D hangouts

Synovation conferences:

Researchers work in quiet isolation. Were it not for the annual/semiannual conferences, some scientists might never leave their labs. High-clearance R&D Project Directors host these conferences so researchers can share ideas and show off their latest triumphs. However, because R&D researchers tend to be highly secretive about their work, many present bogus projects and inaccurate data, to throw off their jealous rivals. Said rivals then covertly shanghai Troubleshooter teams to purloin the actual project notes.

Rumors

☉ 'It got loose.'

☉ 'Is it just me, or have there been a lot fewer people around the lab these days, ever since they started looking for volunteers for that teleport belt? Still, they're offering test subjects something like five grand... Maybe I'll sign up for one of the open slots next week.'

☉ 'Armed Forces is curtailing its budget big-time. All those juicy defense projects are going away any day now and all the redundant staff is being demoted to INFRARED and transferred to a bunch of PLC warehouses.'

☉ 'Another assassination over in Mutation Suppression Research. Some mutie got in and took out a dozen researchers with some kind of energy power. Looks like *something's* got Psion rattled. You don't work on anything genetics-related, do you?'

Service services

☉ 'The entirety of Troubleshooter team BSY-Four-Niner perished in action in your destination sector. The team was testing an experimental self-motivated smart weapon. Retrieve the weapon intact and bring it to the nearest R&D facility.' (The aforementioned weapon killed its Troubleshooter team, and will gladly do the same to the PCs.)

☉ 'Bring this flask of modified hantavirus to BLUEgene R&D Laboratory Compound 4. Don't open it, break it, or allow anyone else to come near it. It's fragile, so try not to get shot at, knocked down, jostled or anything like that.'

☉ 'One of our most brilliant scientists, Peyton-I-PZM-5, is being transferred to Classified Project WEQ-19, and since it's on your way, we want you to escort her. She may bring some experimental devices with her; you are explicitly forbidden from testing any of them on her behalf, nor are you to allow her to reveal their existence in a public place.' (How do you stop an INDIGO from doing anything? Good question!)

☉ 'The confession booth at the intersection of corridor AEX 39224-X and AEX 342232-G has had an experimental mutation detection device installed. Unfortunately, we think we're getting false positives. Please test it with a confirmed non-mutant.'

☉ 'This datadisk contains the design specifications for a weapon recently approved for mass-production by The Computer. Take it to Factory 17 and give it to the YELLOW supervisor on duty there, and he will give you a reward.' (Of course it's not that simple, but we don't really need to explain who else wants the design specifications or to which secret society the designer and/or the PLC supervisor owes a favor, do we?)

☉ 'Mike-R-RIL-2 was testing an experimental personal cloaking device in the area before he suddenly disappeared. He isn't answering his PDC, and he hasn't

responded to pages, so we think he may have gone rogue. While you're on your mission, look for signs of an invisible Troubleshooter. If you find him, let us know immediately and follow him until we arrive. Do not try to apprehend him yourselves, as we don't want the cloaking device damaged.' (This could just as easily be a wild bot chase if the cloaking device, say, sucked Mike-R into hyperspace or something.)

☉ 'There is an INDIGO corridor between here and your mission zone. We'll give you 5,000 credits each at the end of your mission just for walking from one end to the other. Here are vouchers to let you walk through it legally. Make sure you wear these telemetry suits when you go through it.' (The corridor has just been outfitted with an experimental security system aimed at preventing low-clearance citizens from 'accidentally' wandering into high-clearance areas. It is unlikely the Troubleshooters will ever collect their reward, because the security system will stop them.)

☉ 'You will be testing a new micro-camera. Here, this chip on my fingertip is actually a box containing six camera prototypes. Use these to record all aspects of the mission, instead of the usual multicorder. Each one is approximately the size of a speck of dust. You may place them on your uniform or any other surface. Do not misplace or lose track of the cameras, as they cost approximately one hundred thousand credits apiece.'

☉ 'Our contacts in CPU and Technical Services have indicated voice-operated menu navigation is the single largest success factor in reducing time and cost in their service departments. So all your equipment for this mission will be voice-operated. Simply state your preference from the list of options provided to you by, say, your laser.' (Of course, the reason voice-operated menus have reduced call costs is because citizens now hang up quickly in irritation.)



New R&D service firms

Agricultural Upgrade Engineering

Example firms: GREEN Thumb, AgriGene

Revenue stream: Percentage of profits on new agricultural developments.

Secret society taint: Mystics, Pro Tech, Sierra Club

R&D is all about making things bigger and better. So, too, in the field of agriculture. From the lowly slimes and yeasts in the food vats to hydroponic fruits, vegetables, grains and legumes, there's nothing R&D won't subject to bizarre chemical and genetic experimentation in search of cheaper, tastier and more cost-efficient foodstuffs.

RED and ORANGE Agricultural Upgrade Engineers (AUE) spend their time tending food vats, moving crates of experimental foodstuffs, and feeding test products to overjoyed INFRAREDS. Higher-clearance AUEs muck about with genetics and chat up curmudgeonly PLC bigwigs who might have reservations about adding hybridized yeast-asparagus-mangrove starch to their Cold Fun formula.

Troubleshooters occasionally get called in to deal with emergencies at Agricultural Upgrade Engineering firms. Humans aren't the only organisms subject to mutation, and AUE scientists love to hang around the cutting edge of the vegetable genome. The results are rarely as dangerous as the Slime Mold Apocalypse of 211, but even the occasional telekinetic avocado can take its toll in citizen lives.



Cryptography Developers

Example firms: CodeCorp.; Buy The Numbers; Randomization Development Enterprises

Revenue stream: Annual grant from The Computer; contracts with other groups.

Secret society taint: Computer Phreaks (pervasive), Sierra Club, Illuminati

Because much information is restricted by security clearance, Alpha Complex needs someone to develop codes and cryptography to ensure that citizens can't read what they're not supposed to see. (As opposed to the norm of not understanding what they are allowed to see.) Cryptography Developers are R&D's answer to this need. The job is cushy and relatively safe, except anybody even remotely involved is automatically a target for bribery, blackmail, extortion or worse.

At lower clearances workers are assigned either *Backdoor Duty* or *Random Hunting*. Backdoor Duty usually means testing for and/or inserting alternate ways into any code scheme developed. Naturally RED-Clearance citizens are not entrusted with an entire backdoor themselves. Typically a citizen on Backdoor Duty only sees the small section of the backdoor he designs himself. This must mesh perfectly with another section designed by someone else he'll never meet and whose portion he'll never see. It all works out about as well as you'd expect, except anybody who is extremely good at it immediately generates suspicion he's seeing more than he's supposed to.

The Random Hunters find new sources of randomness to use for generating codes. This can involve everything from the way water droplets spray from a broken pipe to the actual arrival times of scheduled transbots. The best randomness is Outdoors, so this duty tends to attract Sierra Clubbers looking for a way out of the complex.

As their security clearance rises, workers move from trying to get proper permissions from The Computer to let them do their work, to doing the math involved, to eventually dealing with other service firms (and societies) that want unbreakable codes or backdoors put into their rivals' codes.

Death Ray Mapping and Orientation

Example firms: Don't Stand Here; Death from Above

Revenue stream: Contracts with R&D.

Secret society taint: Mystics (very common), Illuminati (common), Romantics (uncommon)

The common citizen lives in peaceful ignorance of what lies Outdoors, but many members of R&D have a vivid understanding that threatens their sanity. Those with high clearance know about the grass, the trees and the endless sky; some even know about the inky blackness of space; but what really worries the highest brains in R&D are the death ray satellites. Unable to locate and bring down the satellites (possibly because such satellites don't actually exist), R&D opts to map out the path of the deadly orbital platforms. For this they hire Death Ray Mapping and Orientation agencies to track occurrences of telltale death ray radiation and random, inexplicable explosions.

Operatives use scanners and personal reports to feed data back to headquarters. HQ collates and extrapolates data to generate historical maps and forecast the future path of death ray emissions. Unexplained explosions, radiation leaks and people dropping dead—especially those lightly cooked in the process—all attract DRMO operatives. Due to the sensitive nature of their research, few low-clearance operatives really know why they do what they do, but at high clearances they learn information more readily, and take on roles in analysis and forecasting.

Explosives Formulation

Example firms: Better Booms; Kinetic Energy Associates; Force Majeur

Revenue stream: Contracts (arranged via R&D) with Armed Forces, annual grants from The Computer.

Secret society taint: Death Leopard (very common), PURGE (common), Pro Tech

In the constant battle against the Communist threat, The Computer is convinced it needs high-grade weaponry and explosives. These guys provide the bang for the buck. Lower-clearance workers for these firms are often involved with placement and testing of highly experimental, highly explosive devices. They're also highly sought after for 'samples' by any secret society with an interest in blowing things up (ie, most of them).

Unfortunately, the work, though sometimes glamorous, is dangerous. Because of the high risk, workers in these firms may receive more perks than normal. From The Computer's viewpoint, it tends to even out in the long run anyway. Feel free to subtract a clone or two from a character in this firm, but grant him higher Access in compensation.

Believe it or not, not every R&D researcher belongs to this service firm type; it just seems that way sometimes.

Mutation Suppression Research

Example firms: Mutie-Free RD, Purer Genomes Through Science!

Revenue stream: Yearly grants from R&D.

Secret society taint: Anti-Mutant (very common), FCCC-P (uncommon), Free Enterprise (rare), Psion (sabotage; frequent)

The Computer allocates much of each year's R&D budget toward eliminating the 'mutant problem.' Over the years, Mutation Suppression Research projects have shown great promise, yet somehow the mutant menace has only grown stronger. In response, Internal Security purges these firms annually, while R&D increases their clearly-insufficient funding.

As a result, Mutation Suppression Research is the most orthodox, most heavily overfunded department in all R&D. These firms devote entire subsectors to genome archiving, biochemical research and psionic barrier design, staffed primarily by political appointees with all the scientific acumen of a potato. The

few real scientists in the lot face constant scrutiny for signs of disloyalty. Occasionally they do come up with something useful, but more often they get forced into lab assistant positions or demoted to the food vats.

Few would ever suspect a mutant could possibly belong to a Mutation Suppression Research firm, so this provides a screen against accusations of mutation—not enough to override actual evidence, of course, but enough to discourage wholly unfounded allegations. On the other hand, any worker actually suspected of mutation is summarily reassigned to such RED-Clearance tasks as cleaning out the mutant cages and scrubbing Mutant-No-MOR stains off the linoleum.

Object Combinators

Example firms: Double-Stuff, Anti-Gemini, Duo Uno

Revenue stream: Percentage of all sales of newly devised hardware.

Secret society taint: Romantics

The modern Troubleshooter—or any citizen of high clearance—faces a perpetual problem: the ever-growing collection of gadgets, peripherals and tool items they carry around for all the situations they might face. Communicators, hygiene items, surveillance gear, scanners, jammers... the mid- to high-level citizen might sometimes cart around dozens of bulky items. Obviously, there's big money in finding a way to reduce the number of physical items without losing functionality.

Object Combinator firms make that money by finding clever-- yet intuitive-- ways to combine two or more useful functions into a single new-and-improved combo-device. From these firms Alpha Complex received such useful innovations as the chronometer thermos, bullhorn binoculars and night-vision towel. And who can forget the entire series of hygiene grenades?

Of course, there is the occasional flop, especially when one of the combined-in functions is obsolete or too obscure to appeal to the market, or is limited to too-high clearance access. Even now PLC warehouses are still bursting with pill-dispensing laser crowbars....

Peripheral Optimization Assessors

Example firms: Better Now; So Much More; GearPlus

Revenue stream: Contracts with R&D.

Secret society taint: Pro Tech (very common), Computer Phreaks (common)

Research & Design creates many wholly new devices and reverse-engineers Old Reckoning equipment—but they seldom get it right the first time. Minor defects necessitate modifications, patches and physical additions to devices.

Peripheral Optimization Assessors fit, tweak and review modifications in action. They can quote to bemused owners the serial numbers and implementation dates for changes. They carry small, specialized toolkits to make minor adjustments or even scratch-build modifications on the spot. For example, they may adjust weapon firing rates, reflect armor reflectivity, PDC reception quality, etc. Their adjustments are allegedly improvements, at least for some definitions of 'improve'.

Assessors take full responsibility for their modifications, or at least provide highly detailed reports of what went wrong and why someone else was responsible. R&D rewards both detailed feedback on assigned peripherals and innovative ideas for further modifications.

Perpetual Motion Design

Example firms: Infinite Power!, Entropy Exterminators RD

Revenue stream: Yearly grants from R&D.

Secret society taint: Pro Tech (common), Communists (rare)

Given the perpetual rolling brownouts and intermittent meltdowns endemic to the Alpha Complex power grid, it's not surprising The Computer greeted with great enthusiasm the discovery of Old Reckoning research into infinite energy sources. That there were no historical examples of a successfully designed and constructed 'perpetual motion machine' was irrelevant; after all, everyone knows Alpha Complex had long ago surpassed the feeble technological capacity of the benighted Old Reckoning era. So it was that R&D gained a perpetual assignment to design and construct devices that would generate infinite amounts of power without consuming precious natural resources.

To date, all Perpetual Motion Design firms have failed utterly. But that doesn't keep them from trying! Researchers into Perpetual Motion Design tend to be even more deranged than run-of-the-mill R&D worker, and their projects look (shudder) even crazier. Half the time, a Perpetual Motion lab echoes with the cacophony of ticking building-sized clockworks, whistling steam-powered gyroscopes, crackling three-story van de Graaf



generators, roaring phlogiston furnaces and all manner of screaming, wailing, teeth-gnashing scientists at odds over the failure of someone's latest experiment.

The other half of the time, these labs are cold, dark, empty hells. It turns out that, in defiance of all of the laws of probability, Perpetual Motion Design labs have unexplained total power outages at least 20 times more often than other R&D facilities! One might almost think Power Services didn't want these firms to succeed in their mission...

Singularity & Dimensional Portal Disposal

Example firms: DimensiClean, Confidential Clearance, Spacetime Removal Services

Revenue stream: Individual contracts with other R&D firms.

Secret society taint: Death Leopards, PURGE, Free Enterprise

Unfortunately, not every R&D experiment in opening new dimensions is successful. For those rare occurrences when transdimensional and singularity research goes a little bad, a service firm needs someone to clean up the resulting debris, fallout material, etc. What's more, they need someone who has some idea exactly how to clean up some of the more interesting messes that develop. What do you do, after all, when your gravitronic generator runs amok and you're left with a quantum black hole slowly dropping to the center of the planet?

For a large fee, plus all your documentation, Singularity & Dimensional Portal Disposal firms take over responsibility for the failed experiment and figure out a method to contain and dispose of the mess before it gets worse. What's more, they maintain the confidentiality

of the experiment from rival firms, or at least give the originators an opportunity to counterbid before spilling everything they know.

Lower clearance citizens work closer to the actual clean-up activities, such as trying to scrape nanomolecular grey-goo into a bucket. Higher clearances determine (from a safe distance) exactly what cleaning activities should be undertaken.

Test Subject Trainers

Example firms: Object Subject, Ready Freddie's, Subjexperiment RD

Revenue stream: Contracts with R&D to provide test subjects.

Secret society taint: All of them (see below)

Experiments in Research & Design really need three components: a device to test, a person to turn on the device, and a test subject to bear the brunt of whatever the device does. There's no shortage of devices nor citizens to use those devices, but for some reason it's difficult to find citizens willing to participate on the other end. Test Subject Trainer firms come to the rescue, providing test subjects (usually traitors, suspected traitors or Troubleshooters) guaranteed to assist any test of any device.

They guarantee this by training the test subject beforehand. If R&D is testing a device for jamming PDC signals, the Test Subject Trainer firms ensure test subjects know how to use a PDC and when to use it during the test. By preparing subjects this way, the Trainers ensure data collected from the tests will be free from user error. Which means the high-clearance mad scientists have no one to blame but themselves. Which makes them unhappy. Which means they're more likely to ignore the testing phase and push devices straight to market.

Trainers know this, so they often give explicit instructions to test subjects to ensure a test looks successful. ("When that girl in the BLUE labcoat flips that switch, fall on the ground and pretend to be in extreme pain. Don't stop until you hear me cough. Got it?") This makes the scientists happy, which brings more credits into the Trainer's pockets.

These firms also recruit test subjects, a task at which they are surprisingly effective—thanks to secret societies.

R&D's deadly reputation is well known, and the idea of being a test subject for an R&D experiment drives some citizens to terminate themselves to save time. Every secret society has infiltrated these firms to use them as executioners for members who've fallen out of favor with the current society leadership. Corpore Metal discovered a member's cybernetics were just plastic glued to the skin? Send him to the Trainers. A PURGE member not ideologically pure? Send him to the Trainers. Even normally peaceful groups like Sierra Club find it convenient to eliminate a fallen member from time to time, to encourage the rest.

Citizens who work for the Trainers often have casual knowledge of many secret societies—nothing specific or damaging, but they might know about the next Death Leopard party or Romantic recruitment film. They may also have a remarkably casual attitude towards R&D. After all, they themselves never have to test some crazy new weapon; they just round up the poor saps who do.

PRODUCTION, LOGISTICS & COMMISSARY *Consumable Quality Maintenance*

Instruction: Ensure everything a citizen eats meets proper quality standards by taste-test.

Benefit: You are authorized and required to taste-test anything any citizen is eating, regardless of clearance of the item or the citizen.

(If you're not a Matter Eater, better hope you don't see one.)

PRODUCTION, LOGISTICS & COMMISSARY *Garment Inspection, Maintenance & Repair*

Instruction: Check clothing for stains, rips and holes, and repair damaged clothing onsite.

Benefit: You receive a Portable Garment Maintenance Kit containing several small bottles of detergent, bleach and dye, along with a handheld sewing machine with several different colors of thread. Whenever you meet a citizen whose clothing is discolored or damaged, you are authorized to repair the garment, removing it from its wearer if this proves necessary. For each discrete clothing problem you fail to repair, you will be fined 10cr. You are the primary suspect if the owner of the clothing reports any personal possessions lost or stolen within one hour of maintenance.

R&D personnel

Free Radical

Service firm type: any R&D firm (if the firm will admit it)

Security clearance: YELLOW or GREEN

Common mutation(s): Machine Empathy, Regeneration, Uncanny Luck

Secret society taint: Pro Tech (if the society will admit it)

Typical Access: 08

ACTION SKILLS & SPECIALTIES

Management 04

Stealth 08

High Alert 12

Sleight of Hand 01

Violence 06

KNOWLEDGE SKILLS & SPECIALTIES

Hardware 12

Chemical Engineering 16

Mechanical Engineering 16

Nuclear Engineering 16

Bot Ops and Maintenance 02

Habitat Engineering 02

Vehicle Ops and Maintenance 01

Software 09

C-Bay 13

Data Analysis 13

Bot Programming 01

Hacking 03

Wetware 11

Bioweapons 15

Medical 01

ASSIGNED EQUIPMENT

None

PERSONAL EQUIPMENT

(1) portable spectrum analyzer

(1) portable electron microscope

(1) solder gun

(1) tube of supergum

and much, *much* more

Everyone knows Research & Design has some extremely intelligent, extremely weird citizens. In fact, there seems to be an inverse relationship between intelligence and sanity. (Which is being studied to see if dumb scientists would produce better experimental equipment.) This is all part of the normal world of R&D—normal to itself, at least.

But there are some scientists who are way, way out there, even by R&D's flexible standards. Technically not insane, these citizens are nonetheless so smart their heads are messed up. They can solve equations on the quantum-wave properties of gluons while standing on their heads, but they'll do that while *literally* standing on their heads.

R&D service firms have no idea what to do with one of these citizens. He's too unpredictable and possibly dangerous to keep on staff, yet he's too smart and possibly important to get rid of. Most firms solve the problem by paying him a salary to stay away unless called on.

This is a Free Radical. He wanders where his security clearance allows, not so much homeless as unsure where home is any more. He sets up cutting-edge experiments in corridors and FunBall stadiums, unaware other citizens might not appreciate the quest for understanding. This often leads to an arrest, until a high-clearance R&D type frees the Radical, who plods off to discover more dimensions and whatnot.

A Free Radical is obviously an expert at R&D-style experimentation and invention, but he's also skilled at using C-Bay; he needs materials from somewhere. In fact, he usually is pushing a cart full of bits and parts like some sort of homeless Albert Einstein. The one thing he lacks is a lab assistant, which is where the PCs come in.

When a Free Radical meets a PC, he shanghai's the poor sap as a lab assistant for a crucially important experiment. (See the box nearby for ideas.) In return, the Free Radical does something trivial for the PC, like download an uncensored map to the briefing room or recalibrate a laser pistol to fire in the VIOLET part of the spectrum. Not a bad tradeoff, really... assuming the PC survives the Free Radical's experiment.



Typical experiments for which a Free Radical shanghai's the PCs

- ☉ Test this new insulator by wearing a thin sheet of it while sneaking into a [reactor core / chemical foundry / biohazard zone].
- ☉ Just lie back and relax while a reprogrammed docbot tests its new surgical tools. On you.
- ☉ Field-test this space-warping device by teleporting into that reactor, and bring back some plutonium for my next experiment.
- ☉ The clamps on this nuclear containment unit are broken, so you hold the hemispheres closed while I get some fission going inside!
- ☉ With drugs, cyberware and electricity, I believe I can return the dead to life. But I need a corpse. Who'd like to be one?



Promethean Unbound

Service firm type: Any with relations to the Armed Forces

Security clearance: YELLOW through BLUE

Common mutation(s): Electroshock, Pyrokinesis

Secret society taint: Pro-Tech, Death Leopard

Typical Access: 05

ACTION SKILLS & SPECIALTIES

Management 03

Con Games 01

Oratory 07

Stealth 05

Violence 07

Demolition 11

Field Weapons 11

Hand Weapons 01

Unarmed Combat 01

KNOWLEDGE SKILLS & SPECIALTIES

Hardware 15

Electronic Engineering 01

Nuclear Engineering 19

Vehicle Ops and Maintenance 01

Weapons and Armor Maintenance 19

Software 06

Wetware 09

Bioweapons 14

Cloning 14

Medical 01

Psychotherapy 01

ASSIGNED EQUIPMENT

None; supervisors often discourage equipment assignment to Prometheans

PERSONAL EQUIPMENT

Several burst-batteries in various extremely large capacities

Half-completed semi-portable railgun

Small amounts of poorly-stored isotope material collected 'here and there'

Stopwatch

Geiger counter

Giant fresnel heat-focusing lens

6-8 drums of homemade gunpowder

For most citizens of Alpha Complex, the question 'Why?' occurs to them from time to time; after a moment's consideration they simply shrug it off apathetically. But there are some citizens who never think to ask 'Why?' in the first place. Promethean Unbound is one of them. He already knows why: 'Because. We. *Can!*'

Strangely, this personality type is invariably drawn to things that go boom, things that arc, things that burn way too hot and things that go WAY too fast. Others may be interested in the subtle and precise aspects of Science, but not this guy. There is no subtlety to him at all. Whereas others find ways of reining in the overpowering forces of nature so they can safely serve the citizens of Alpha Complex, Promethean Unbound just wants to know what happens when he turns those forces *completely loose*.

When confronted by more rational minds, Promethean Unbound's favorite response is, 'If we don't do it, someone else will!' In Alpha Complex, this is (in fact) absolutely right. So Promethean Unbound can always find a place to pursue his work. The occasional sector-wide disaster is a regrettable, but accepted, consequence.

Hazmat Handler (R&D)

As the Power Services version of the Hazmat Handler, except the R&D version works for Goo Cleanup firms, transporting failed (or successful!) genetic experiments, unusual bioweapons, and all sorts of noxious sludge. Replace the Nuclear Engineering specialty with Biosciences, and the WMD secret skill with Bioweapons.

It need hardly be said Hazmat Handlers in Power Services and R&D nurse smouldering mutual hatreds and years-long petty feuds. When R&D Hazmat Handlers arrive at work one morning to find their lab benches ankle-deep in strontium-90, they know where to start looking for suspects....

POWER SERVICES

Circuit Breaker Testing

Instruction: Confirm circuit breakers are functioning properly by creating short circuits.

Benefit: You are provided a small circuit-breaker test plug. You can test an area's circuit breaker by plugging the tool into any electrical outlet. This should cause a temporary electrical outage in a room or corridor before the circuit breaker resets. In case the short circuit does not trip the circuit breaker, be prepared to extinguish electrical fires, for you are responsible for damage caused. You may make a Habitat Engineering check to determine which outlet to short circuit to get the desired blackout, assuming the circuit breaker is functional. The fine for deliberately tripping a circuit breaker without a mandate is 100cr.

POWER SERVICES

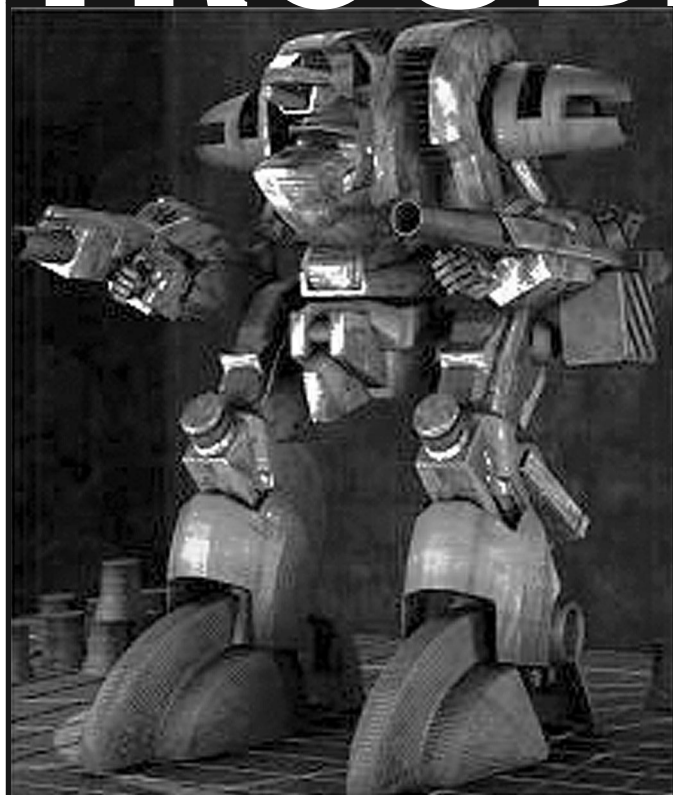
Emergency Reactor Shutdown Testing

Instruction: Shut down and restart nuclear reactors to ensure proper function.

Benefit: You receive a geiger counter and a temporary brevet badge authorizing you to enter specific reactor-related higher-clearance areas (up to INDIGO). While you are in a reactor control room, you may request the command codes to shut down and restart the reactor. This requires two Hardware/Nuclear Engineering checks. You are liable for any damage incurred during the shutdown and restart procedures.

TROUBLEBOTS

From Armageddon 2089 (Copyright © 2003 Mongoose Publishing)



ERIC MINTON

3-6 PLAYERS
1 SESSION
(3-4 HOURS)

To address the scarcity of bot brains in Alpha Complex, the service firm laboratory UltraTech RD has devised a way to implant scrubbed human brains in bot housings.

The plan: Use these new bots as Troubleshooters.

The problem: The brains go insane.

The solution: Get a bunch of real human Troubleshooters to train the bots and vouch for their effectiveness, then toss the project to PLC and let them deal with implementation.

Mission alert

It's just another day in the RED barracks. Suddenly The Computer's dulcet tones ring out:

Congratulations, Troubleshooters! In recognition of your exemplary record of loyalty and expertise on behalf of The Computer and Alpha Complex, you have been chosen for a very important mission. You are to report to Conference Room 2, UltraTech RD Facility 1100, KQF Sector, where you

will assist in training the next generation of cutting-edge adaptive bot brain technology. A transbot will arrive in 30 minutes to transport you to your destination. All equipment will be provided on-site. Have a pleasant daycycle!

Give the players a few minutes to pass you notes regarding their activities over the next half-hour. Suggest that they might have an interest in visiting their secret society contacts. Honestly, some players just don't have the necessary initiative. Then, whisk them away to UltraTech R&D and their mission briefing.

NEW! Mission briefing: now 17% briefer! (Tension 15)

The conference room contains a long, sleek table full of high-tech vidscreens and holographic projectors, all half-hidden by heaps of papers, bot parts, and transparent canisters containing live human brains. A single BLUE citizen sits at the head of the table, flanked by a pair of guardbots.

Diana-B-RYK-4, the project director responsible for the TroubleBots, greets the team with a plastic smile. A lifelong experimenter and researcher, she's been promoted out of her depth; dealing with people isn't her strong suit. It simply doesn't occur to her that the Troubleshooters might view the prospect of being replaced by creepy brain-bots as anything but a miracle of *Science!*

'Welcome, Troubleshooters! We in R&D are rolling out a wonderful new development that you'll find terribly exciting. We've cracked the old bot brain design problem by tackling it from a new angle. Our latest bots are operated by genuine human brains! We remove them from traitors, inasmuch as they aren't using them any more—ha ha—and scrub them clean of impure thought, then implant them into our new *TroubleBots!*

'Yes, that's right, TroubleBots. These new bots have been designed to aid Troubleshooters in the course of their duties! In the future, you'll each have your own TroubleBot to help you out in times of trouble. I'm sure you don't need me to tell you just how exciting that will be.

'Here's an example of a scrubbed brain. As you can see, it's perfectly healthy! And if we turn on this speaker, we can hear its thoughts.'

She flips a switch on one of the brain canisters. After a crackle of static, a speaker set into the canister screeches like a banshee. 'Noooooo! Somebody, kill me! End my tormented existence! Pleeeeease!'

Diana-B smiles glassily and switches the speaker off. She then continues with her spiel:

'As you can see, it remains capable of thought and language, even after the surgery and the brainscrubbing process. Isn't science amazing?'

'Your job is to train these bots so they're just as good at Troubleshooting as you are. Not so they can *replace* you, oh no—nonono!—but so they can *assist* you properly at all times. We've designed a number of training sequences to help you impart all necessary skills.

[continued on page 103]

AND FOR THE LOVE OF COMPUTERS, DON'T EVER PRESS THIS BUTTON.



UltraTech RD

Security checkpoint

Tension 18

This small enclosure contains a walk-through metal detector and X-ray machine, much like a modern airport, overseen by a bored YELLOW security guard. Oh, and there's also a massive laser turret on the ceiling. An ORANGE R&D technician stands on a stepladder; he's got an access plate on the turret open, with festoons of sparking wires hanging down like Spanish moss. The turret automatically points at any PC who talks. Fortunately, the cannon's firing mechanism is disabled, but don't let the players know that.

Hallways and corridors

Tension 6

In the research facility proper, broad corridors gleam under harsh track lighting; the air is cold and smells of ozone. Unseen machinery hums, occasionally interrupted by a distant explosion or scream. Massive doors slam shut at regular intervals, sealed by ME Card locks. Metallic scraping noises emanate from one door, which is surrounded by bloody footprints and a faint haze of smoke. (This is Lab 14C. Yes, this will come up later.)

A few GREEN and BLUE scientists walk briskly down the corridors as they scribble on clipboards or talk shop. Others labor over machines that buzz or crackle or scream. The scientists ignore the Troubleshooters unless addressed, at which point they eagerly babble about their latest invention, which is certain to be above the team's security clearance.

Offices

Tension 12

Each scientist of clearance GREEN or higher has a personal office, containing a cluttered desk and a terminal. If the Troubleshooters have the time (and can keep their bots from following them around), a successful Stealth/Concealment check might discover some interesting things, like a scientist's secret society affiliation.

Laboratories

Tension 9

The laboratories scattered throughout the facility vary in size from 'broom closet' to 'Vulturecraft hangar', though each is equally stuffed with monitors, workstations, and an inconceivable array of massive, incomprehensible devices. Blinking lights and a cacophony of bleeps, bleeps and crackles overwhelm the senses.

Each lab also contains one to four guardbots, along with up to a dozen jackobots. The occasional overworked scrubot zips around sponging up goo.

Key UltraTech RD personnel

Diana-B-RYK-4

Project director

Pro Tech; Deep Thought (Power 10); Management 10, Chutzpah 14, Intimidation 01, High Alert 11; no weapons, BLUE reflc (E1)

Diana-B truly believes in the wonders of... *Science!* She tends to view Troubleshooters as she would scrubots; they should do their jobs and stay out from underfoot, and any back talk or poor hygiene must be the result of defective software. Or treason.

Adam-G-JAS-4

Armaments researcher

Pro Tech; Mechanical Intuition (Power 12); Sneaking 12, Shadowing 12, Violence 09, Weapon and Armor Maintenance 17; tangler (entangling), GREEN reflc (E1)

Adam-G sincerely wants this project to succeed. Unfortunately, he's not in a good position to do much about it. The best he can do is to whitewash problems and hope for the best. If Troubleshooters are the problem, he'll whitewash them right into their next clone.

Theodore-G-FDW-2

Theoretical researcher

Corpore Metal; Puppeteer (Power 8); Con Games 13, Intimidation 12, Security Systems 15, Projectile Weapons 12, Hacking 14; ice gun (S3K impact), GREEN reflc (E1)

Theodore-G has ambitions. He's not willing to linger in his current position, and he dedicates all his energies to gathering dirt on his co-workers. He'll gladly cut deals with the Troubleshooters if it'll give him a leg up, but he's just as willing to blackmail them for any illegal acts they perform on his watch.

Cyrus-G-PKQ-5

Cybernetics researcher

Death Leopard; Electroshock, Pyrokinesis (Power 10); Demolitions 14, Chemical Engineering 13, Bot Ops and Maintenance 16; no weapons, GREEN reflc (E1)

Like so many others in Alpha Complex, Cyrus-G just likes to see things go boom. He loves to borrow experimental weapons 'just for a minute', blow something up, then blame the destruction on the PC. Who's The Computer gonna believe, a GREEN researcher or a lowly RED Troubleshooter?

Guinevere-G-EFC-3

Genetics researcher

Sierra Club; Adrenalin Control (Power 15); Intimidation 10, Energy Weapons 12, Biosciences 17; energy pistol (W3K energy), GREEN reflc (E1) or powered battlesuit (armor 4, full-figure, hardened)

Guinevere-G subscribes to Sierra Club beliefs regarding The Jungle, a legendary place (or is it a state of mind?) in which everything preys on everything else. She plans to bring The Jungle to Alpha Complex. This generally manifests in her work on bioengineering predatory monsters from Old Reckoning genetic stock. But when Troubleshooters come through, she'll gladly stoop to engineer conflicts between them. It's the survival of the fittest!

[continued from page 101]

'And if your bot performs particularly well, you may receive the astounding, once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to have your brain transferred into one of the new TroubleBots! Admittedly, you'll have your brain scrubbed thoroughly, and there have been some tissue rejection issues, and we haven't licked the neural degradation problem yet. But you'll have an immortal robot body, free of all those annoying fleshy bits! What could be better?

'Oh, and please ignore the smoke from Lab 14C. Just a little accident with the new BioVore project, nothing for you to worry about at your security clearance. Just don't go inside. Or anywhere near it, really.'

The trouble with TroubleBots

Diana-B leads the team down to the main robotics lab (**Tension 9**). There, a throng of YELLOW techs buzz around a handful of bots, under the watchful eyes of four scientists in GREEN lab coats. They all draw back respectfully when Diana-B arrives. 'Here we are,' she trills. 'Your new companions and trainees—but not replacements, never that! Please give a great big Troubleshooter welcome to... the *TroubleBots!*'

She then introduces the bots to their trainers, like this:

Diana-B: Okay, citizen, what was your name again?

Troubleshooter: I'm Kenji-R, ma'am.

Diana-B: Good! TroubleBot 278347/s, your identification code is now KenjiBot. Got that, KenjiBot?

TroubleBot: Yes, ma'am!

On a workbench nearby, Diana-B points out a large red crate. 'There's your equipment,' she observes. 'You should find everything you need in there. If you need anything else, just submit the proper forms and we'll pass them along to PLC.'

She also introduces the four GREEN scientists, saying they will be responsible for handling the four training sequences that have been set up for the TroubleBots. She then mentions something about lots of paperwork; she scurries off, leaving the team to 'get acquainted' with their new bots.

Assigned equipment

- (6) RED laser barrels
- (6) grenades
- (6) slide rules
- (10) meters of plasticord
- (1) detergent cannon (as flamethrower, S1S impact)
- (1) flashlight
- (1) gas mask
- (1) fire extinguisher
- (1) bot maintenance kit
- (1) geiger counter
- (1) portable gas spectrometer

Give the team a few minutes to talk to their bots. You may also want to hint that this might be a good time to chat up the GREEN scientists; after all, they might be bribable, right? And a couple of lab assistants should turn out to be secret society contacts, giving you a chance to dispense a few secret society missions at this time.

Once things start to slow down, or whenever you get bored, Adam-G checks his watch and peremptorily announces that it's time to move on to the first training sequence.

What the bots do: The bots do nothing but respond when spoken to. This is where they pick up their first behavior or two; they model their speech patterns over whatever their trainers display.

Narrow specialties learned: Address Others With Chirpy Good Humor, Address Others With Disdain, Ask Others Annoying Questions About What Skills They Have.

The bots

These bots resemble short, stylized humans in plastic, aluminum and steel. Think of the androids from the movies *I, Robot* and *A.I.*, the battle droids in *The Phantom Menace*, or C-3PO. They're designed to be friendly, trusting and eager to learn. They're also highly adaptable; they take on the personality traits of their trainers, so exposure to real Troubleshooters should turn them into petty, venal little monsters in short order.

As a result of the special brainscrubbing techniques and neural interfaces used to create the TroubleBots, they pattern their behaviors directly on those of their trainers. Whenever a PC demonstrates an ability or behavior in front of his bot, write it down on that bot's sheet. (See the TroubleBot character sheet nearby.) Think of these as narrow specialties designed

Secret society contacts

Instead of giving separate missions for each secret society, we've included generic assignments you can easily configure for the societies in play. These can be spaced out over the first third of the scenario; give one during the introduction, another via a guardbot just inside the R&D facility, and so forth.

1: Your teammate, *[insert name here]*, belongs to *[rival secret society]*. You are to *[steal/sabotage/destroy]* valuable equipment and frame your teammate for the theft.

2: No one must be allowed to interfere with the TroubleBots project! Your teammate, *[insert name here]*, belongs to a secret society that seeks to interfere. Observe him at all times to ensure that he does not. Kill him as often as is feasible.

3: The TroubleBots project is an abomination that must be destroyed! We will take action shortly. In the meantime, your teammate *[insert name here]* belongs to a secret society that supports this atrocity. Keep an eye on him at all times, to ensure he does not disturb our preparations! If the opportunity arises, kill him. A lot.

4: These new 'TroubleBots' would be extremely valuable to us. Recruit two or more bots into our organization. Discretion is crucial.

5: We have learned one of these new 'TroubleBots' has been suborned by *[rival secret society]*. Determine which bot has been corrupted. Destroy it.

6: If you're on security detail at UltraTech, you'll be in a great position to steal things we will want. Specifically, we're looking for a *[describe experimental device that will definitely be assigned to a different PC]*. Get hold of it and sneak it out of the facility.

There may be some problems if a PC is in Corpore Metal. If that's the case, either have that PC infiltrate the Frankenstein Destroyers (making it dangerous for him to be given a bot body), or have another PC infiltrate Corpore Metal to give him some competition.



specifically to make the players miserable. If you need to roll against a behavior, treat it as having a rating of 14.

There's only room on the sheet for a dozen behaviors. Once they're all filled in, the bot can't learn anything new. Attempting to force the bot to learn more just gives it neuroses.

If you remember, you can also add a point or two to any skill or specialty the bot's trainer successfully employs in an interesting or entertaining way. Don't put too much effort into tracking that sort of thing, though. It's not like the TroubleBots are going to learn a whole lot from a bunch of RED Troubleshooters anyway.

Sample narrow specialties: Order Someone Else To Do It, Suck Up To The Team Leader, Ask Inane Questions, Discuss The Importance Of Good Hygiene, Loudly Praise The Computer, Sulk.

Complications

Each of the four training sequences includes a number of complications. These complications are optional ways to make this scenario even more convoluted. Sprinkle some or all of them in during play. Don't feel compelled to use them all! You're not supposed to suffer; that's the players' job.

Training sequence #1

Adam-G leads the team to a cavernous room, its ceiling lost in a haze pumped out by a massive, chugging fog machine (**Tension 3**). Dozens of seemingly random partitions break the area up into 'rooms' and 'corridors.' It all has the air of a Hollywood sound stage.

A table by the entrance holds a number of exotic-looking devices.

'Okay! These are your experimental weapons. You'll be training your bots in

Experimental weapons

- ☉ **Retractable heat whip:** S3M Energy. Poor insulation renders grip too hot for humans to handle.
- ☉ **Gas gun:** Comes with vomit gas and hallucinogenic gas shells. 10m long spray, 3m wide. Billowing cloud almost invariably engulfs the wielder.
- ☉ **Repeating blaster:** M3K Energy. Unlimited shots, but has no internal battery; it must be plugged into a wall socket or a bot's power source to function.
- ☉ **Point defense armor:** Armor 4 (hardened). Weighs several hundred pounds. Any PC wearing the armor must make continual Violence checks to avoid hernias, spinal deformation or falling over.
- ☉ **77-ZX Smart Weapon:** W3K Energy. Aims and fires independently. Corpore Metal controlled; refuses to kowtow to meatbags. Can be convinced to work with a Corpore Metal PC, but most eagerly embraces being wielded by a bot.

TroubleBot character sheet

Value: 25,000cr (BLUE)

Weapons: unarmed combat (S5K impact)

Armor: 3 (hardened)

Skills:

Management 08

Stealth 08

Violence 08

Lift Heavy Things 14

Unarmed Combat 12

Hardware 08

Software 08

Wetware 08

Behaviors:

- 1: _____
- 2: _____
- 3: _____
- 4: _____
- 5: _____
- 6: _____
- 7: _____
- 8: _____
- 9: _____
- 10: _____
- 11: _____
- 12: _____

how to spot trouble and shoot it! Once we start the simulation, we'll present you with simulated traitors, which you should shoot, and simulated loyal citizens, which of course you won't shoot. To demonstrate the importance

of getting traitors before they get you, our simulated traitors will open fire if you don't shoot them quickly enough. No worries, though; their weapons are only moderately lethal.

'I shall grade you on alertness, accuracy, and weapon operations and maintenance. Just be natural and do your jobs, and everything will work out fine. Good luck!'

Adam-G assigns the experimental weapons (see the box nearby), then drifts away into the fog, clipboard in hand. Then, suddenly, a silhouetted figure pops into view! Mention which Troubleshooter is closest to the figure, then ask who's shooting at it. Count down from five; when you've finished counting, let anyone who's taken a shot make a roll. Anyone who asks what the silhouette looks like or what it's doing gets to spend the round looking instead of acting.

Each silhouette is a cardboard cutout of a loyal citizen, a Commie or a bot. Which ones represent loyal citizens and which ones represent filthy traitors? That can be hard to tell. One sure way, though, is to see which ones shoot back; several cutouts have experimental weapons strapped to them, and they open fire on the closest Troubleshooter after five seconds. This is why you mention which PC is closest. Don't worry, your players will get the picture soon enough.

Change things up throughout this sequence. Sometimes the PCs get a clear view of the latest popup. Describe the popup, making it clear the bots are learning whom to shoot at based on whom the PCs shoot at. Then describe the next popup as resembling a caricatured member of someone's secret society. Repeat as needed.

Emphasize, also, the smoke obscures vision. A lot. Let the Troubleshooters split up. Mention how it's easy to get into a position where you can see a teammate but he can't see you. Let slip the fact a shot aimed at that next popup could 'accidentally' keep going and hit a teammate in the back of the head.

Complications:

- ☉ PCs encounter popups that clearly belong to their own secret societies. Do they shoot them, teaching the bots to kill members of their societies?
- ☉ At one point, there are a number of popups that clearly demonstrate mutations or secret society affiliations... and are wearing lab coats. Adam-G watches the team carefully, pen

poised above clipboard, as these traitorous scientists appear. Do the Troubleshooters open fire?

- ☉ 'Ah, look, my colleague Theodore-G has arrived. Let's try it again, but this time you have to escort Theodore-G safely through the testing area.'
- ☉ 'Now, I want each of you to dismantle your experimental weapon, recalibrate it to Phase 17 settings, and put it back together. You have three minutes.'
- ☉ Hand out Experimental Equipment Report Forms from the mission blender in the *PARANOIA Gamemaster Screen* insert booklet.

What the bots do: As of now, they're still pretty much blank slates. Expect each one to pick up two to four behaviors during this sequence. Because they're still so untrained, they won't take any action on their own. If prompted to do something, they'll pick up a skill along the lines of 'Convince Someone Else to Do It.'

Narrow specialties learned: Shoot Anyone Who Pops Suddenly Into View, Refuse to Take Equipment, Shoot Troubleshooter In The Back.

Training sequence #2

Once the first training sequence is finished, Theodore-G takes charge. He escorts the team into a small, dimly lit laboratory. After closing the door, he takes out a small remote control and presses a button. Anyone who makes a successful Stealth/Surveillance check notices the little red lights on all of the security cameras blink off and on irregularly (**Tension 0**). He then addresses the team:

'All right, here's the deal. You're going to show your bots how to infiltrate a Commie base, capture their leader, and bring him back for interrogation. One of our scientists, Ronnie-G-LQT, will play the role of a traitor. You have to sneak into his office, knock him out, and bring him back here. If you let anyone other than the target discover what you're doing, or if you cause serious harm to anyone or anything in the process of fulfilling your mission, then you've failed. You do *not* want to fail. Got it?'

Keeping things on track

Ideally, the PCs want to avoid having their brains scooped out and placed in robot bodies. If they all persist in trying to succeed, here are a few bits to help put them on track:

1. Brainscrub-a-dub-dub

Let them get a good look at just how thoroughly brainscrubbed these brains are. Possibly a brief stop in one of the labs is in order:

Scientist: Okay, that was a nice, gentle scrub. Now let's see how well it took. What is your name?

Brain: I don't know.

Scientist: Good! And what is your favorite food?

Brain: What is 'food'?

Scientist: Oh, very good. On the other hand, you seem to remember what the meaning of 'is' is. I think another neurotransmitter bath may be in order.

2. There is no Bot Liberation Front

Bots have no rights. Sure, they're valuable property, but they still have to do what they're told.

RED Janitor: Hey Sparky, I'm gonna go out and have a smoke. Go and muck out that damaged sewage pipe, okay?

Guardbot: That is not in my specifications. In addition, my waterproofing is not suffice—

RED Janitor: Shut up and do it, Sparky.

Guardbot: Yes, sir.

3. Hey, buddy, can you spare a microchip?

Not only don't bots have rights, they don't have any money. But they still have expenses...

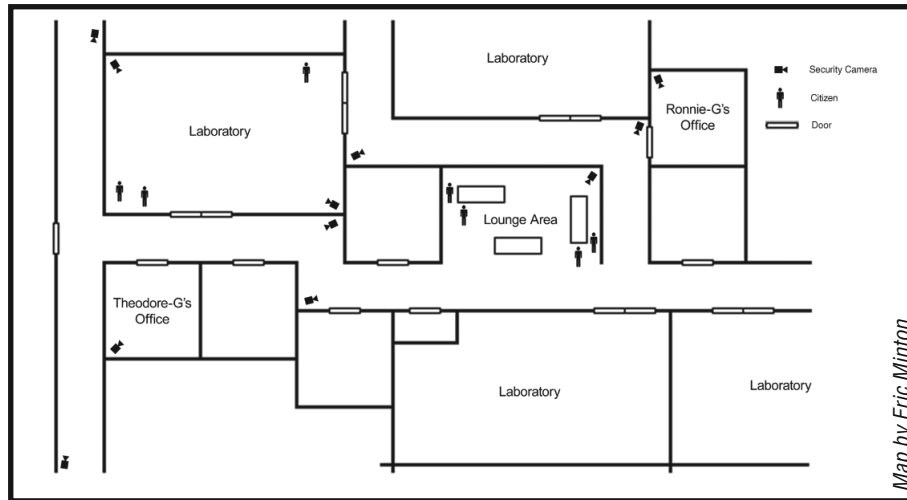
Jackobot: Citizen, do you have a moment?

Troubleshooter: Uh... what do you want?

Jackobot: If you please, citizen, I have suffered severe damage to my left servo unit during recent experiments, and R&D refuses to supply me with a new one. As a bot, I have no income, and the RED janitors keep confiscating my stash. Could you see your way clear to loaning me a few credits?



SERVICE, SERVICE! CLEARANCE ULTRAVIOLET



The scientist presses some more buttons on his remote. Several monitors light up, showing the views from a number of security cameras. Most of them show sections of corridor, but one reveals an office, where a single citizen pores over a stack of forms.

'I'll be observing your progress every step of the way. You will be graded on your skills in stealth, subduing traitors, and interrogation. Now hurry. You have ten minutes.'

Theodore-G provides a map of this section of the facility, along with a stungun and a tangler. (Stun guns are ORANGE Clearance, and tanglers are GREEN. And no, he's not providing brevet badges or paperwork authorizing the PCs to use them.) Then he turns them loose.

Ronnie-G-LQT is sitting alone in his office, doing the paperwork for his latest research

Cybernetic enhancements

- ☉ **PowerLimb:** This hydraulic cybernetic leg lets the character leap tall buildings in a single bound. Used indoors, it slams the character into the ceiling (S5K impact).
- ☉ **ExoSkull:** Basically a titanium helmet riveted to the character's skull, with holes for eyes, nose and mouth. It's impossible to determine the character's facial expression under the ExoSkull. Ignore Maimed results that target the head.

in neural interface design theory. He has absolutely no idea he's been volunteered as a simulated Commie leader, and he will not go quietly or easily.

Complications:

- ☉ 'Okay, to help you get into the mindset of a TroubleBot, we're going in implant a couple of you with these nifty cybernetic devices. Please hold still. This will hurt a lot.' (See the box nearby.)
- ☉ 'You lay a hand on me and I bust you down to INFRARED!'
- ☉ 'My colleague—er, that is to say, this Commie—refuses to divulge information on the inner workings of this new experimental device. Make him talk.'

What the bots do: By the end of this sequence, the bots should have filled at least half of their behavior slots. They're more likely to start taking independent action here; browse through their behavior list to see if they know how to do anything that'll make the current situation worse.

Narrow specialties learned: Weasel Out Of Direct Order, Unexpectedly Punch Seated Scientist In Head.

Interlude: Switchbot switcheroo

By now, the Troubleshooters should be at each other's throats, each of them trying to do worse than the others in the training sequences so that they don't get their brains scooped out and implanted into the bots. Naturally, this strains even the scientists' ability to cover up any and all problems with the bots. So at this point, Diana-B meets them in the corridor outside of Theodore-G's lab. She confronts them with a disappointed air and informs them plans have

Ronnie-G-LQT

Romantics; Slippery Skin (Power 14); Management 06, Stealth 08, Violence 06, Projectile Weapons 10; Old Reckoning slugthrower (W3K impact), GREEN reflc (E1)

changed. Now, she says, the trainer of the *poorest*-performing bot will be transplanted into a bot body!

Training sequence #3

Diana-B, along with couple of guardbots, escorts the Troubleshooters to a bedroom-sized airlock and herds them in. Inside, they meet Cyrus-G, who's just finished donning a shiny environment suit. He places a bubble helmet on his head, cycles the airlock, and leads them onto the upper floor of a large, split-level laboratory (**Tension 2**). A ramp leads down to the lower level, where several machines belch forth gusts of foul, corrosive smoke that conceal a number of shadowy shapes.

'Ho-kay! As you can see, this lab has caught fire! Well, not really, but pretend it is, you know? Your job is to get down there and rescue all personnel and valuable equipment. You need to make sure you rescue the most important personnel and equipment first. You'll be tested on your ability to assess value and threats, your first-aid skills, your ability to handle valuable lab equipment, and, um, I can't tell you about this last skill at your security clearance, but I'm sure you'll do fine. On my mark... get set... go!'

Treat the smoke as vomit gas; at your discretion, it may have additional negative effects, like blisters and hair loss. Several ORANGE and YELLOW lab workers are loitering in the mutagenic smoke. All of them have gas masks. What, the Troubleshooters only have one gas mask among them? What a shame.

Let the players make Hardware checks to recognize which pieces of lab equipment are valuable. Let them make more checks to actually disconnect the equipment, and Violence checks to carry it up the steps and into the airlock. What, a failed roll? Oops! Some expensive item just broke, or went into self-destruct mode when tampered with. *Someone* has to take responsibility...

Complications:

- ☉ Adam-G, Guinevere-G and Theodore-G stand together in a tight group, clad in environment suits. Each insists he is the most important person in the lab. They're turning this into a referendum on their importance in the lab pecking order, and are quite annoyed at not being picked first... or worse, being picked last.
- ☉ 'I don't care if this is a training sequence, I am not leaving my workstation! This research project is far more important than your piddling mission. Get your hands off me!'
- ☉ Several brains in jars insist on being taken out of the lab. They rant and scream, obviously less than sane. Upon hearing the PCs talk, some insist that they know the PCs, and offer to reveal the locations of hidden valuables or threaten to reveal secret society links unless the team brings them out of the lab—or gives them the mercy of death to end their suffering. But again, they're valuable equipment, and the PCs are liable for their cost if destroyed.

What the bots do: This sequence should fill in most or all of the bots' remaining behavior slots. Let the bots start to seriously interfere with the team's activities, if any of their behaviors are appropriate. Feel free to allow the bots to start having flashbacks to their former lives, as indicated in the accompanying sidebar.

Narrow specialties learned: Steal Lab Equipment, Shamelessly Flatter GREEN-Clearance Citizens, Grab A High-Clearance Citizen And Drag Him Out Of The Room

Training sequence #4

Once the Troubleshooters finish clearing out the 'burning' lab, Guinevere-G conducts them to her office, where a pair of YELLOW technicians fit her into a suit of powered battle armor. She doesn't look at the Troubleshooters as she tells them what's what:

'Training sequence? Uh, yeah, whatever. Listen, maybe this sequence was supposed to be about fixing up the reactor core or something, but there's, uh, been a change of plans. We're going to Lab 14C to, uh, "practice"

cleaning up after an experimental error. Just make sure all of the lab equipment is undamaged, the specimens are returned safely to their cages and all the goo gets cleaned up.'

Once she's suited up, Guinevere-G leads them to Lab 14C. A scrubot is busily mopping up bloodstains from the floor outside the door, but there's still a lingering smell of smoke. She informs them that they've got ten seconds to get inside once she opens the door, and that she'll blast anyone who lingers outside. Yeah, she means it.

The lab interior is full of smoke. Most exposed devices, like light sources and security cameras, have been smashed (**Tension 0**). It's full of moving shapes, subsonic growling, and the grating chalkboard shriek of claws on metal.

The specimens are massive clawed things that seem eager to feast on clone entrails... but the PCs aren't allowed to hurt them. Guinevere-G explains over the intercom these 'BioVores' don't like the taste of metal. Hence, though most of the PCs are in danger, those with large

BioVores

Regeneration (Power 15); Sneaking 16, High Alert 14, Agility 14, Unarmed Combat 16, all other skills 01; claws (S3K), furred carapace (armor 2)

cybernetic implants or full-figure battle armor may prefer to wait until their teammates are dead before handling the problem.

Complications:

- ☉ 'Skills you'll be tested on? Huh. What is your security clearance, citizen?'
- ☉ Much of the lab equipment is already busted, and a lot more will get damaged in play. As usual, someone's got to take the blame.
- ☉ Whether from laser fire or a specimen's poorly aimed claw swipe, the room's

20 unusual TroubleBot behaviors

If things are getting slow, or if some of the characters are actually training their bots properly rather than filling their scrubbed little minds with dangerous notions, then you can spice things up by having the bots start to recollect personality traits from their old lives. Here's a handy-dandy chart full of fun behaviors that might come back to the bots. Note that these fill up blank Behavior slots! Pick and choose the most entertaining ones for your situation, or just roll 1d20.

- 1: Spout Secret Society Propaganda
- 2: Attempt To Ingest Food Or Drink
- 3: Talk About Old Service Firm Job
- 4: Remember How PC Double-Crossed Me Back When I Was Still Human
- 5: Seek An End To The Agony Of Existence
- 6: Set Stuff On Fire
- 7: Hum Annoying Jingle From Popular Vidshow
- 8: Obsessive Botspotting
- 9: Attempt To Induct Teammate Into Secret Society
- 10: Steal Small Objects
- 11: Attempt To Sell Equipment To Teammate At Bargain Prices
- 12: Stare In Fascination At Own Reflection
- 13: Attempt To Borrow Money From Teammate
- 14: Kneel To Pray Facing Central CompNode
- 15: Express Venomous Anti-Mutie Sentiments
- 16: Express Venomous Anti-Bot Sentiments
- 17: Swoon Over Teela-O
- 18: Loudly Sing Loyalty Songs
- 19: Repeat Back What Was Said To Me, Phrased As A Question
- 20: (Choose a tic from a character previously terminated as a traitor.)



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fusebox shorts out, leaving the PCs in a dark room full of monsters that track their prey by smell.

What the bots do: By this stage, each TroubleBot should be full of dangerous and irritating behavior patterns. Let them cut loose! Just look over each bot's sheet to see which traits would cause the most havoc. In addition, if any bot has reason to harm one of the Troubleshooters... it's in a dark room, with no surveillance.

Debriefing

Once the last training sequence is over and any replacement clones have been decanted, Diana-B contacts the team leader and instructs the Troubleshooters to return to Conference Room 2. They find her sitting there with Adam-G, Cyrus-G, Guinevere-G and Theodore-G. Half a dozen guardbots line the wall behind them.

'Welcome back, Troubleshooters! We're finished totaling up your training scores, and we're about to determine who gets to have his brains implanted into one of our amazing new bots! I just need you to tell us how the mission went from your perspectives, so we can handle things like commendations,

reprimands, fines, penalties, all that kind of thing. If you need to explain why you did something, or why someone else did something, now is the time!'

Encourage the players to rat on each other. C'mon, you know the drill.

What the bots do: No matter how well the Troubleshooters have tried to train them, the TroubleBots handle things wrong, wrong, wrong. Bots who've learned selfish habits screw over the PCs by reflex. Bots who've learned to do things by the book selflessly, sorrowfully incriminate their trainers for every little indiscretion. And what if a bot doesn't have a reason to turn on its trainer? Time for it to remember how that PC turned it in for treason, so that it was imprisoned in this horrible metal body!

Once the team finishes turning on one another, Diana-B thanks them for their service. 'Your help has been invaluable,' she says, and all the scientists nod unctuously. 'We've achieved outstanding results today. You've moved this project forward by months, if not years. You should all feel proud!'

She then names the Troubleshooter with the highest training score and promotes him to ORANGE. Inasmuch as you're not actually tracking the training scores, just pick the PC whose promotion will cause the most conflict. She also picks one team member to have his brain implanted in a TroubleBot. 'You'll be in the next batch, which'll come out sometime within the next, ah, well, that information's not available at your security clearance. But soon, I promise!'

Epilogue

As the Troubleshooters make their way out of the UltraTech compound, monitors all around them light up, displaying their names and faces along with a fanfare of martial music. The voice of The Computer booms out:

'Citizens! Look well upon these noble Troubleshooters, for they are now Heroes of Our Complex! Through their valiant efforts, all RED-clearance Troubleshooters will henceforth have their brains extracted and implanted into robot bodies, that they may better serve Alpha Complex! Admire them! Praise them! That is all.'

A few minutes later, the team emerges onto a crowded public concourse. There they find a dozen well-armed RED Troubleshooters waiting for them, each with a homicidal gleam in his eye.

Fade out.

POWER SERVICES

Security Camera Energy Conservation

Instruction: Attach cutoff timers to security cameras to conserve power.

Benefit: You receive six to twelve timers that turn a security camera on and off randomly, conserving power while retaining the psychological impact of surveillance. With a successful Hardware/Electrical Engineering or Stealth/Surveillance check, you may install a timer in a security camera. You may only install timers in areas with a designated Surveillance Rating of 'Low'; this information is available at Clearance GREEN to any citizen who submits a properly completed Form R78/R4-578-782-G. It is trivially easy to tamper with a timer so the camera switches on and off at a schedule of your choosing, but this is a class PP offense.

RESEARCH & DESIGN

Experimental Equipment Maintenance

Instruction: Ensure experimental equipment is functioning within normal parameters.

Benefit: When your team receives experimental equipment, R&D will download copies of all related operating manuals to your PDC. (Average document length: 6,743.78 pages.) Make Software/Data Search and Data Analysis checks to determine the proper function of a given piece of equipment. Operating manuals delete themselves after the mission is over; it is almost unheard-of for them to delete themselves during a mission, especially not just when you need them! You are liable for equipment damage attributable to user error.

SERVICE Technical Services

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Technical Services hangouts

Autocar garages: Although most Tech Services workers cannot afford their own autocars, many still enjoy working on them during off hours. In fact, many Tech Services garages keep a few junked old-model autocars just for recreational tinkering. The hobby is so popular, some tinkerers have established illicit underground racing leagues where they can race (and crash) heavily customized cars.

Rumors

- ☉ 'That service ticket for the rattling ventilator fan behind bulkhead 390-6200 is still open. They've sent two or three repair teams on that one, and none of them have come back. I heard there's a PURGE hideout back there and they're wasting anyone who stumbles across them.'
- ☉ 'Tech and Power are arguing again over who has control over the transtube third rail. The Computer's solving it by giving Power control of half the rails and Tech control of the other half and seeing who does a better job maintaining them. The bosses are giving under-the-table bonuses to any worker who sabotages a Power rail.'
- ☉ 'Psst... my buddy dropped an easter egg into the new jackobot software upgrade. Now, if you whistle the first two bars from the Teela-O theme song, the jackobot does this hilarious little dance! Just make sure you're a good 10 feet away before you start whistling...'

Service services

- ☉ 'We need you to fix a stripped power conduit in Corridor 5643-N90. Just take this applicator, set the primary to 34G and the secondary to RED-9, twist the sixth flange like so, lock the beading gauge like so, release this catch, and pull the trigger gently—.04 KSI sounds about right, yeah? Don't worry, it's dead easy, even a third-year trainee could do it.'
- ☉ 'We're getting constant noise complaints about a scrubot with squeaky wheels working in the INFRARED area between D and H barracks, but nobody's managed to safely get close enough to read its unit number. We need you to find the bot, capture it and return it to our maintenance bay undamaged.'
- ☉ 'One of the ventilation fans in C Block, somewhere between intersections 451 and 600, is stuck. Unfortunately, someone has tampered with the sensor link so we don't know which one it is. You will have to enter the ductweb and manually identify it. Be careful, though—the other 149 fans are still functional, and when they kick on they have a powerful draft. Take these suction-gloves with you.'
- ☉ 'The confession booth at the intersection of corridor AEX 39224-X and AEX 342232-G is malfunctioning and delivering a lethal charge to any occupants. Take this schematic and perform the power-down sequence.'
- ☉ 'We're sending a technician to service a malfunctioning guardbot in a factory practically on the way to your mission zone. We need you to capture the bot so the technician can perform the necessary repairs, but don't damage it. Try not to let it kill any of the hostages, either.'
- ☉ 'We just received a report from one of our ceiling lighting technicians. Apparently, someone took the self-extending ladder he was using, and he can't get down without taking a 30-meter tumble onto the factory floor. We need you to get him down safely. See if you can find out who took his self-extending ladder, too. It's kind of valuable.'
- ☉ 'Under the new color palette defined in Electrical Signalling Schema Update C14.2.2, the active-current indicator light for all ZB-355 transformer patch bays is to be changed from "Shocking Scarlet" to "Tickly Crimson". This box contains one gross of the new indicator lights. Whenever you see an access panel for a ZB-355, use this tool to unlock the seal and open the panel. Change the indicator light inside, but only if it isn't glowing at the time. You can't miss those ZB-355 panels-- they're the ones that say "DO NOT OPEN UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES / MEGAVOLTAGE ACTIVE AT ALL TIMES".'
- ☉ 'The escalators in your target area are due for their quarterly lubrication. Take these bottles of ultra-slick machine oil and lubricate any escalators you encounter during your primary mission. Also, the slidewalks in the same area are due for their quarterly tension increase. Takes these bottles of friction-thickening gummyfluid and apply some to any slidewalks you encounter during your primary mission. Do not accidentally lubricate slidewalks or thicken escalators, as serious damage to machinery and harm to citizens might occur!'
- ☉ 'There has been a recent rash of crank calls to our dispatch center. As fully-trained technician service-call time is obviously very expensive, service requests will first be screened on-site by your team. Upon arriving at the scene, determine if there is actual hardware requiring service. If so, we will dispatch a technician. For each call that results in a legitimate dispatch, your team will receive 10% of the service call fee.'



New Tech Services service firms

Bot Processing (Tech)

Example firms: Bolts to Bots, Bot De-Junkers, A.I. Trauma Care, Veteran Vets

Revenue stream: Contracts with Technical Services to salvage and repair damaged bots

Secret society taint: Corpore Metal (common), Pro Tech (common)

Bots play many important roles in Alpha Complex. Unfortunately, bot construction requires complicated components—many of which are expensive to manufacture from scratch. It is far less expensive to swap parts out of broken bots to repair damaged bots or to construct a new one.

Bot Processing (Tech) firms salvage junked bots for parts. As bots often break down in places with no easy access, technicians are forced to enter dangerous or cramped areas. Once on the trail, they are unwilling to give up their prize, and when technicians from rival firms squabble over valuable materiel, citizens are advised to steer clear of the area. Bot Processing firms frequently recruit Troubleshooters for reclamation missions when none of their own technicians are willing.

The bots produced by these firms can have identity crises as a result of being made up of multiple parts. They malfunction more often than factory-built models; their most frightening flaws are often inobvious, such as poorly calibrated sensors or missing asimov circuits. Though Tech firms have different interests than Bot Processing (R&D) firms, conflicts occasionally arise between them—usually fights over bot brains. These conflicts usually begin as high-spirited debates over whether a particular bot is worth restoring. They may end with laser fire. Once the discussion is resolved, the losers may illegally sabotage or remove the bot brain in a petty gesture of defiance.

Lighting Maintenance Engineers

Example firms: BulbFixers, Brighter Is Better

Revenue stream: Contracts with Technical Services.

Secret society taint: None

Proper illumination is crucial to Alpha Complex. Oh, sure, people need warmth and oxygen. But without light, there's no way to tell what clearance anyone—or anything—is! Traitors would have endless shadows to hide in, where they could plot and scheme unopposed! Civilization would collapse into chaos!

Fortunately, whenever a bulb breaks or a fuse blows, the Lighting Maintenance Engineers (LMEs) are there to bring light into darkness. Supplied with cases full of fuses and bulbs of every shape and size, armed with 10,000 kandelpower Intens-O-Beams, they putter along in their perpetually glowing LightCarts to save the day from unexpected illumination shortfalls.

Their sunny smiles fade when they encounter Power Services workers. Too many Power firms make their living by deliberately turning off the lights, especially Battery Backup, Fuel Cell Replenishment and Power Oscillation Professionals. It wouldn't be so bad if the LMEs in Tech were paid per light restored, but no, they're on salary. Every stolen battery, broken bulb or pulled fuse might be the work of someone from Power, and so the LME's ire rises and rises. When an LME joins the



Troubleshooters, he's even more overjoyed than usual. Troubleshooters get weapons...

Maintenance Observation Teams

Example firms: Pipe Patrollers, Go4Broke

Revenue stream: Contracts with Tech Services and Power Services. Bonuses based on the number and importance of damaged systems reported.

Secret society taint: Death Leopard (common), Free Enterprise (common), Pro Tech (rare)

Some would say the good folks at Technical Services don't have any interest in repairing things. Nothing could be farther from the truth! They simply don't trust ordinary citizens to follow the appropriate protocols when requesting repairs. So when the bigwigs in Power and Tech want to know what really needs fixing, they go to the experts: the Maintenance Observation Teams (MOTs).

High-clearance MOT managers model each sector's habitat system integrity and manufacturing efficiency, then correlate this information with system installation dates and reports of treasonous activity to determine where maintenance is most likely needed. Teams of lower-clearance workers travel to these hot spots to investigate, then report back with lists of damaged, sabotaged, defective or decayed equipment. Middle management then prioritizes the damage and forwards the information to the appropriate Tech and Power firms, who presumably perform repairs in their own sweet time.

Despite efforts to rein in corruption, MOT firms are cesspools of graft and fraud. Because these firms are paid for every instance of damage they discover, field teams consistently demolish otherwise intact systems to pad out their damage reports, while management covers up their activities to keep the money flowing in.

Noise Pollution Preventers

Example firms: Shhhh!, Quiet Starts With You

Revenue stream: Contract with Technical Services to lower decibel measurements in a given area.

Secret society taint: FCCC-P

Noise pollution can be a big problem in Alpha Complex. Sound carries, often into other citizens' workspaces and entertainment lounges. Many a fight has started because one group of INFRAREDS was watching 'Teela-O Reads Your C-mails Live!' while in the room next door another group was watching 'Tacnukes Caught On Video with EXTREME EXTRA FOOTAGE!!!'. That's when it's time to call on a Noise Team.

These teams first collect data about area noise levels: mean and median decibel levels, times of noise spikes, disaggregated sound sources, wall composition and more. After they analyze the data, the team creates a noise pollution action plan to lessen the noise. This can range from putting up soft fabrics along the walls to breaking up sound waves to actively... discouraging loud citizens from contributing to the problem.

Tommy-R: All right! Which of you sons-of-a-bot used my toothbrush!

Noise Team member: Fire! *[Team fires stun darts into Tommy-R]*

Tommy-R: Ouch! What the ... oooh happy sleepy la la la pretty floor ugh

Noise Team member: sir... keep your voice down... don't yell for us to fire...

Noise team leader: Don't order me, you ... oooh happy sleepy la la la pretty floor ugh

Noise Team member: carefully now... put the duct tape over both their mouths....

Noise Teams have all kinds of audio recording devices, some astoundingly sensitive. But all workers undergo rigorous training to sharpen their own hearing. All teams use high technology, but there comes a time in every pollution cleanup where they turn off all devices and just give a good listen. After all, the citizens affected by noise pollution don't use recording equipment. 'Use your ears to see what ears can hear' is their motto.

Because they basically spend their jobs listening, Noise Team members can be excellent sources of gossip and blackmail material. High-clearance citizens often send them to an enemy's subsector in hopes of

digging up some new dirt. Hence these workers are both loved and hated: They always bring you some good gossip, but the next batch might be about you.

Safety-Part Installers

Example firms: Breakaway Construction, Safe-T Foamworks, Protect-All

Revenue stream: Standard repair and installation fees, bonus based on reductions in injuries.

Secret society taint: Humanists, Mystics

There used to be a time when everything in Alpha Complex was dangerous. Everything had sharp edges, shattered into dangerous slivers, lacked guardrails, etc. Today most obviously dangerous things have long since been cleared away, due to the many, many safety regulations governing everything from doors to desks, from stairways to stackable boxes. However, there is always room for improvement. A few corners here and there still have old construction predating enlightened code changes. And of course the many complicated systems in Alpha Complex have their dangerous aspects. Not a day goes by without a citizen of Alpha Complex being injured or killed because some piece of hardware or construction just wasn't quite as safe as it could have been. That's where Safety-Part Installer firms come in.

If, during a routine repair call, it is found that failure occurred because of older 'legacy' hardware or construction, SPIs replace it with some newer, safer, code-approved alternative. Granted, these more modern installations—with their more modern and safer parts—can cost a little more. Okay, an astronomically large amount more. But the reduction in injuries pays for itself! (Note: 'Pays for itself' assumes amortization over a period of seven centuries.)

Some firms take a more proactive stance, actively seeking out older, less safe technology and then ensuring it experiences Catastrophic Disruptive Failure Mode so it can be replaced—as it should be!—with something safer. The most proactive firms of all don't stop there. They lobby The Computer (via kickbacks to High Programmers) to tighten safety regulations so some existing part or system must be replaced with something newer, safer and (of course) probably more expensive... something no other firm has started manufacturing yet. When the standard changes, these firms are positioned to become the primary (if not exclusive)

supplier and installer of the new code-approved technology.

Temperature Optimization Enforcers (Tech)

Example firms: Zenuzi; Jussrite

Revenue stream: Contract with Technical Services to locate, catalog and sticker devices showing clear signs of abnormal temperature resulting from inefficient power modulation

Secret society taint: Pro Tech

Technical Services knows a high percentage of flawed items signal their decline through abnormal changes in temperature. Temperature Optimization Enforcers investigate and record telltale temperature increases that mark imminent malfunction. Operatives mark affected devices with large, informative stickers that cite the time, date and nature of the abnormality identified, along with a statement that Technical Services systems are not the defect's cause and in fact checked out sound as a bell just five minute earlier. Given their mandate, TOEs can fast-talk their way into areas that might otherwise have remained off limits in order to complete a quick, but entirely necessary, inspection.

Transit Services (Tech)

Example firms: TranceBot Industries, MoveAlong TS

Revenue stream: Contracts with Technical Services.

Secret society taint: Corpore Metal

As part of its authority over public services, Technical Services operates and maintains the fleet of transbots that provide transportation to the citizenry of Alpha Complex. Transit Services firms labor ceaselessly to ensure the transbots are clean and functional. Low-clearance workers scrub the transbots and maintain their chassis and other non-critical systems; mid-clearance engineers perform major repairs and upgrades; high-clearance managers crunch the numbers to make sure the firm remains solvent and the transbots run on time.

Everything would be perfect, except other, non-Tech citizens keep screwing things up. Passengers litter and vandalize the transbots. R&D whines about 'psychological stress' suffered by transbot brains due to grueling transit system schedules. And worst of all, those morons in Power can't keep their transtubes and stations in order. When



SERVICE, SERVICE! CLEARANCE ULTRAVIOLET

transbots are slowed, halted or destroyed by potholes, flooding, smoke, power failures and bombs on the third rail, Power Services is surely to blame!

To keep their transbots clean and pristine, roving gangs of Transit Services workers seek out and beat up Power employees. It may not help the transbots run on time, but it reduces stress levels in Transit Services workplaces.

Vending Machine Outfitters

Example firms: Beverage Beverage, Serve and Enjoy, Wrapped Joy, Boxes O' Fun

Revenue stream: Contracts with Technical Services.

Secret society taint: Frankenstein Destroyers, Free Enterprise

Many Alpha Complex food, beverages, and drugs are distributed by vending machines in areas of every security clearance. These automatic machines require regular restocking and occasional repairs. Vending Machine Outfitters keep these devices in working order.

Vending machines break down due to metal fatigue, bot brain neurosis, or deliberate sabotage so citizens can resell "purchased" items on the IR Market. Malfunctioning vending machines may provide the wrong item (or no item at all), charge too much, transmit confidential ME Card information to third parties or loudly dispense secret society propaganda. Vending Machine Outfitters gladly provide partial refunds to citizens who submit the appropriate refund request form along with proof of malfunction.

Their contracts with Tech Services notwithstanding, Vending Machine Outfitters still require proper authorizations to make repairs. Because the work order forms required by HPD&MC are enough to make a hardened bureaucrat sweat, firms generally expect someone affected by an outage will submit the necessary paperwork. Vending Machine Outfitters are often required to restock and service machines in areas above their security clearance, so they routinely receive special permits to enter parts of Alpha Complex normally off limits.

Vermin Terminators

Example firms: Verminators TS, Wiring Wardens, Death to Vermin!

Revenue stream: Contracts with Tech Services and Power Services.

Secret society taint: Anti-Mutant, Psion, PURGE, Sierra Club

Though The Computer disapproves of animals in principle as unhygienic and undisciplined, some small scavengers still thrive in their own ecological niches inside Alpha Complex. Rats, cockroaches and other vermin breed in walls and conduits, emerging only to eat food scraps, skin flakes and the like. They occasionally get into the food vats—but that only increases the protein content, so it's okay.

It's not okay when these pests start chewing on wiring and insulation. Even a minor short-circuit can inconvenience hundreds; a major system breakdown or power failure can kill thousands. So Technical Services has established teams of Vermin Terminators to keep the conduits clear of infestation. Armed with traps, poisons, gas grenades and the heaviest imaginable personal weaponry, they alertly stalk the dark, twisty underbelly of the city in search of their prey.

Their job is made harder by the nature of Alpha Complex vermin. Did you think only humans suffered from genetic drift? Vermin Terminators face rats and roaches that can deflect laser fire, spit electricity and

chew through steel. Even Vulture Warriors respect anyone who can handle that kind of opposition.

Waste Reduction Monitors

Example firms: RRR, Treasure Not Trash, Substance Sorters, Secondary Resources

Revenue stream: Contracts with Tech Services; sale of rare finds to collectors.

Secret society taint: Free Enterprise, Romantics

Alpha Complex is the closest humanity has ever come to living in a closed system. This makes the reclamation of both inorganic and organic materials essential to the survival of Alpha Complex's inhabitants. Waste Reduction Monitors are responsible for minimizing waste in their jurisdiction, using any reasonable means necessary. Given the importance of their task, these service firms are especially well-funded.

Waste Reduction Monitor strategies have changed significantly over the years. Early firms did all the work themselves—mining landfills and dumps for reusable material or sorting citizens' trash for recycling. Modern Waste Reduction Monitors work smarter. Under pressure from WRM firms, PLC manufacturers now include a material code on many products. Garbage dumpsters have been replaced by a dozen bins—each with a corresponding material code. Waste Reduction Monitors hired HPD firms to encourage citizens to sort their waste by component materials using these marked bins.

As Waste Reduction Monitors expand their influence, PLC engineers are under pressure to design multi-material devices that can be quickly and easily rendered to component parts so each substance can be placed in the correct bin. These waste-free designs have been successful for most everyday items, though there have been fragility problems with in larger, durable waste-free goods.

Low-clearance Waste Reduction Monitors patrol recycling bins, scolding and occasionally fining citizens who place materials in the wrong bin or fail to break composite objects into their components. These fines are larger for citizens who carelessly litter. Waste Reduction Monitors nurse a righteous grudge against particular citizens who unnecessarily incinerate or vaporize potential secondary resources, and those who make a habit of such wastefulness may meet a Monitor who makes an unscheduled reclamation of their organic resources.

RESEARCH & DESIGN

Innovate Alternative Methodologies

Instruction: Encourage fellow citizens to think outside the box, though within permissible boundaries, by suggesting alternate uses for their tools and processes.

Benefit: If, at any time, you have a Really Good Idea about how to use some piece of equipment or process to achieve an alternate (and permitted) function or result, you may direct appropriately equipped citizens to attempt the new idea on the spot. If they succeed in demonstrating your new idea, you may all be eligible for a credit bonus. If they fail, you may take charge and attempt your idea personally. If it still fails, you may be liable for resulting damage, loss of productivity and threats to good order.

Technical Services personnel

Noise Teams

Service firm type: Noise Pollution Preventers

Security clearance: RED to YELLOW

Common mutation(s): Hypersenses, Scream

Secret society taint: FCCC-P

Typical Access: 06

ACTION SKILLS & SPECIALTIES

Management 07

Oratory 11

Interrogation 01

Pretend Not To Hear Stuff That Would Get A
Citizen Killed 13

Stealth 11

High Alert 15

Sneaking 15

Concealment 01

Security Systems 01

Sit Very, Very Quietly 17

Violence 05

Projectile Weapons 09

Agility 01

KNOWLEDGE SKILLS & SPECIALTIES

Hardware 07

Habitat Engineering 11

Electronic Engineering 01

Identify Where That Sound Is Coming From 13

Software 04

Wetware 09

Psychotherapy 13

Suggestion 01

Know When Those Noises Are All In A Citizen's
Head 15

ASSIGNED EQUIPMENT

(1) dart gun with sandallathon darts (Impact, stun only, 10 shots)

(2) ultrasonic sound wave detectors

(1) decibel measuring microphone

PERSONAL EQUIPMENT

(2) rolls of duct tape

(1) thick blanket

(12) extra-strength earplugs

Noise Teams are assembled by a Noise Pollution Preventer firm (see page 111) to identify and stop sounds that are too loud. In theory, this is straightforward: With a few simple adjustments, the Noise Team makes the off-balance washing machine run a lot quieter and earns commendations for a job well done.

That's rare. Usually, no one has any idea what's making all the racket, and the Noise Team has to spend hours or even days in the area, analyzing recorded sound and feeling for subsonic vibrations. They are trained to hear sounds others cannot, in case their devices do not operate normally. Once they identify the source, they fix it. Or try, anyway.

Though expert at hearing, Noise Teams have only moderate skill at fixing things. Their preferred method is to break the noisemaker so it stops doing whatever is making noise—problem solved! This can then generate a call for a Tech Serv repair team, so supervisors see no problem with this heavy-handed approach.

Noise Teams get upset if someone walks through their testing area unannounced, upsetting their delicate instruments and ruining the recordings. This usually leads to an argument, further complicating the noise levels. That's when the team pulls out dart guns; when the noise is coming from a citizen, they are authorized to

neutralize with injected sandallathon. Noise Teams have been known to knock out really loud citizens, slap duct tape across their mouths, roll them in a thick, muffling blanket, wrap duct tape around that and walk away.

These teams are usually composed of four RED citizens and one ORANGE or YELLOW supervisor. They all have incredible hearing, and given the nature of their jobs, they often hear things they shouldn't. Some teams are full of jittery workers waiting to be terminated for knowing too much, whereas others stride confidently down the corridors of Alpha Complex, secure in the belief blackmail will keep them safe.

Some teams make a nice side-job with blackmail. They sneak quietly around the corridors, looking for conversations to eavesdrop on. Many a Troubleshooter has turned a sharp corner to find five people aiming a parabolic microphone at him. It's their job to record noises, so the Noise Teams often get away with it.





Cloning Quality Control Inspector

Service firm type: Clone Tank Support Services or MemoMax Quality Assurance
Security clearance: ORANGE to GREEN
Common mutation(s): Creeping Madness, Detect Mutant Power, Puppeteer
Secret society taint: Anti-Mutant, Communists, Psion
Typical Access: 08

ACTION SKILLS & SPECIALTIES

Management 09

Hygiene 13
Interrogation 13
Intimidation 01
Moxie 01

Stealth 04

Violence 07

Energy Weapons 11
Field Weapons 01

KNOWLEDGE SKILLS & SPECIALTIES

Hardware 09

Chemical Engineering 13
Nuclear Engineering 13
Bot Ops and Maintenance 01
Weapon and Armor Maintenance 01

Software 07

Data Analysis 11
Bot Programming 01

Wetware 12

Biosciences 16
Medical 16
Psychology 16
Outdoor Life 01
Cloning 01

ASSIGNED EQUIPMENT

(1) PDC 1300
(1) Portable bioliquid spectral analyzer
(1) Tape measure
(1) Laser pistol

PERSONAL EQUIPMENT

(1) ME Card reader
(1) Medkit

It goes without saying the cloning process in Alpha Complex is perfect. Yet sometimes the wily Commie Mutant Traitor hordes get in a lucky strike and something goes subtly wrong with a replacement clone. Technical Services sends Cloning Quality Control Inspectors into the field to monitor for treasonous tampering.

Cloning Inspectors know a lot about biology, nuclear power and chemical engineering. However, they never take part in actually cloning anyone and really have no clue how it

happens. Instead, they focus on clones who differ fractionally from baseline norms.

A Cloning Inspector measures and observes a particular clone for signs of imperfection, including but not limited to: mutation, moles, long fingernails, loss of memory, dry mouth, unusual sweating, high blood sugar, low blood sugar, obsessive-compulsive disorder, mental feebleness and treasonous tendencies.

Their measurements run from observing and note-taking to analysis of blood and urine samples, but they do it all under normal living and working conditions. The Cloning Inspector can follow his assigned clone for hours, always getting in the way and making it hard to do anything secretly—even use the bathroom.

If he finds a clone to be defective, a Cloning Inspector is authorized to terminate it; Tech Services provides a replacement free of charge and without incrementing the citizen's clone number. Because this can be inconvenient to say the least, many Inspectors carry a ME Card reader for convenient payment of bribes.

Through a combination of training and field experiences, many Cloning Inspectors are medical experts. However, they refuse to use their skills to help clones they are observing, for fear of tainting their study.

Team leader: Okay, I guess we have no alternative. Call a docbot.

Cloning Inspector: No need. I can patch you up.

Team leader: Wait, what are you—? *[Falls silent as Inspector treats him.]* Huh! That actually feels better. Thanks!

Loyalty officer: Hel-lo! I'm still bleeding over here!

Cloning Inspector: I know.

Loyalty officer: ...? Fix me up like the others!

Cloning Inspector: Nope. It'll skew my data.

Loyalty officer: Will me dying skew your precious data?

Cloning Inspector: Nope. Mind if I sample what's leaking out?

Tuttle

Service firm type: Any Technical Services firm

Security clearance: GREEN to INDIGO

Common mutation(s): Mechanical Intuition, Hypersenses, X-Ray Vision

Secret society taint: Humanists, Pro Tech

Typical Access: 09 (15—see below)

ACTION SKILLS & SPECIALTIES

Management 08

Con Games 12
Oratory 01
Appear To Have Almost No Technical Skill 14

Stealth 12

Security Systems 16
Sneaking 16
Concealment 01
Shadowing 01
Repair Machinery Silently 18

Violence 06

Hand Weapons 10
Energy Weapons 01

KNOWLEDGE SKILLS & SPECIALTIES

Hardware 12

Habitat Engineering 16
Mechanical Engineering 16
Bot Ops and Maintenance 01
Vehicle Ops and Maintenance 01
Use Whatever Is Convenient To Fix A Mechanical Problem 18

Software 09

Data Analysis 13
Hacking 13
Bot Programming 01
Vehicle Programming 01
Ventilation System Software Diagnostics 15

Wetware 04

ASSIGNED EQUIPMENT

None

PERSONAL EQUIPMENT

(1) toolkit backpack with just about every tool in it
(1) night-vision goggles
(2) grappling hook guns
(1) black stealth suit
(1) PDC with security hack program
(1) incredibly big wrench (S4K impact)

Because Technical Services works in such sensitive areas as paint control and The Computer's hardware, loyalty is prized over actual technical skill. In certain firms or sectors, too much ability in fixing things can obstruct career advancement. The reasoning is, if a worker can fix things quickly and easily, he can also sabotage things quickly and easily.

In such places few high-clearance Technical Services citizens can repair stuff. Most BLUE Tech Serv executives in these maladjusted firms couldn't hang a picture on a wall, never mind diagnose and fix a faulty autocar engine.

Most. Not all.

Some high-clearance citizens in Tech Serv hold a dirty secret—they are phenomenally good at fixing things. Through a combination of mutant powers and innate abilities, these citizens can fix just about anything. Yet they

keep this a secret lest they be demoted. The official term for one of these citizens is 'Internal Security Citizen of Interest,' but most people just call him a *Tuttle*.

During the day, a Tuttle looks like every other clueless Tech Serv executive. He ranges from GREEN to INDIGO Clearance. He can be anything from a service firm leader to a member of the Technical Services Administration Board. He is quite skilled in faking incompetence, or else he'd never have risen so high.

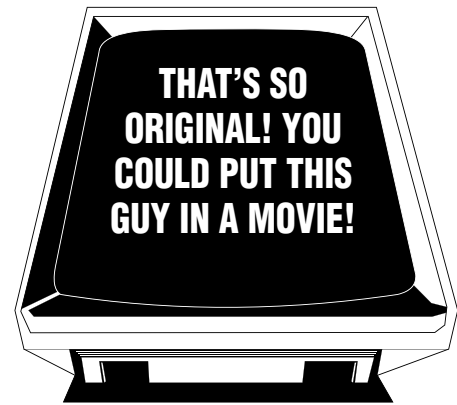
A Tuttle uses his talents during nightcycle. He dons stealth gear and sneaks across Alpha Complex, breaking into places in need of repairs he knows Tech Serv will never get to. Under cover of darkness, he silently repairs machines, out of sheer, honest love for getting dirty and fixing stuff.

Tuttles are adept at breaking into areas undetected and repairing all manner of machinery. Most focus solely on habitat and mechanical engineering problems, although

some are Data Tuttles who deal with the software side. Regardless of their area of expertise, they follow the same M.O.: strike quick, fix it and sink back into the nightcycle. They are guerrilla repairmen.

PCs who encounter a Tuttle during the day notice nothing unusual; if the Tuttle can fool high-clearance personnel, he can easily fool a few Troubleshooters. If they meet him in the night, the chance encounter can go one of two ways. If the PCs leave the Tuttle alone, he leaves them alone or even helps them out. Deep inside, a Tuttle is a nice guy. He'll fix whatever machine he came to fix, and if there's any time, he'll lend the PCs a hand.

But if the PCs mess with the Tuttle in any way, or try to call The Computer, the Tuttle does not attack. Combat is not his style. Instead, he slips back into the shadows and sneaks away. The next day, the PCs find some suspicious mechanical breakdowns in their gear. And their vehicles. And their dormitories.



Normally a Tuttle has Access 09. But when he suits up and goes on a mission, his Access shoots up to 15. A Tuttle really knows how to get things done, mostly because he does it himself without waiting for permission.

RESEARCH & DESIGN

Promote Scientific Understanding

Instruction: Teach scientific principles through demonstrations.

Benefit: Explain the science behind events and objects to anyone who asks. You may invent simple experiments to illustrate scientific concepts. For example, demonstrate inertia by instructing a passenger to remain standing without holding onto anything as the transbot starts and stops. Your designated volunteer(s) must participate unless they know as much about the subject as you do. (You and all volunteers must each roll 1d20 against the appropriate Knowledge specialty. If you get a higher margin than a volunteer, he must participate in the demonstration.) R&D imposes stiff punishments on those who use this mandate to make citizens distrust science and technology.

TECHNICAL SERVICES

Assess Quality of Bot Personalities

Instruction: Converse with all bots encountered to verify they have pleasant and properly obedient personalities.

Benefit: You are issued a special BP-202 VocBox for communicating more efficiently with bots. Conversing through it with any bot for at least one minute, you may attempt to use Management skills (which are normally only effective on humans) to affect the bot's behavior. The higher your margin of success, the more significant your effect on the bot. If you make the roll exactly, you can slightly influence the bot's normal actions; by 1-5, the bot may act slightly differently; and with a margin of 6 or more, you may make the bot act outside its permitted range of operation.

TECHNICAL SERVICES

Asimov Circuit Oversight

Instruction: To ensure bots do not go frankenstein, verify their asimov circuits are functioning normally.

Benefit: You receive a pocket-sized bot maintenance kit. Whenever you encounter a bot you or a higher-clearance citizen considers to be acting aberrantly, you are authorized to examine the bot's brain for damage to its asimov circuits. Examination of the bot brain requires a successful Hardware/Bot Ops and Maintenance check; repairing damage to the asimov circuits may require another such check or a Software/Bot Programming check, depending on the type of damage. All bots with functioning asimov circuits will recognize your authority; therefore, you should encounter no difficulties in fulfilling this mandate.

TECHNICAL SERVICES

Vendobot Operations Check

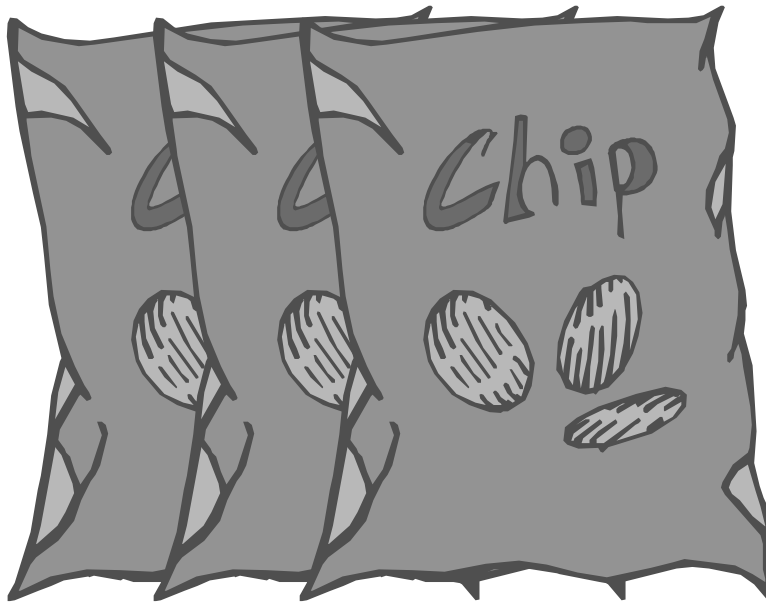
Instruction: Confirm all vendobots dispense the correct goods at the posted clearance by purchasing at least one item from each vendobot you encounter.

Benefit: You receive a special ME Card with credits licensed only for vendobot purchases. Vendobots are programmed not to provide items of a higher security clearance than that of the citizen making the purchase. By using the special ME Card, you may override this and purchase (from vendobots only!) items above your security clearance. You are *not* cleared to use high-clearance goods, and you are required to return them to Technical Services within 24 hours. Retain the vendobot receipt to show Internal Security you aren't carrying goods illegally.

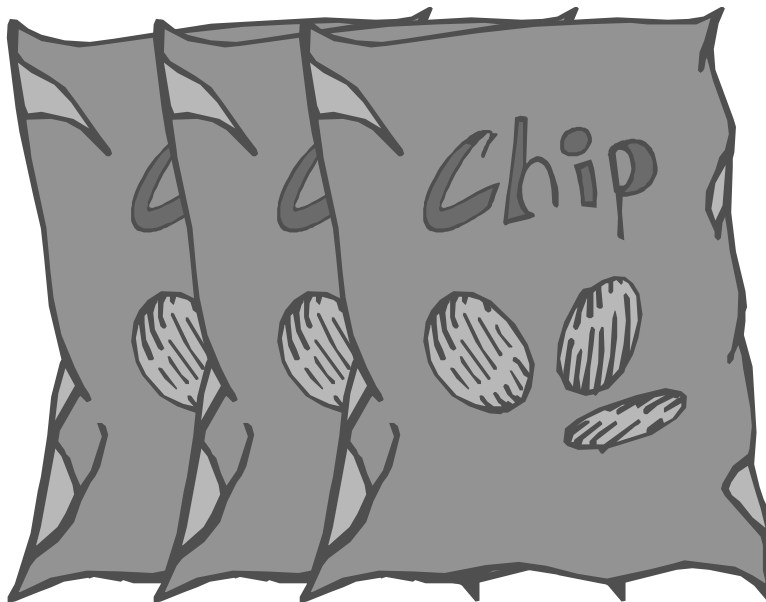
Technical Services is suspicious of a new PLC algae chip, so the service group assigns a Troubleshooter team to pretend to stock the new chips in vendobots at one of their facilities. Tech hopes the Troubleshooters will either accidentally destroy the chips or uncover what PLC is up to. Along the way, the Troubleshooters anger every Tech Services worker they encounter.

When Tech Services confirms its suspicions—the new chips are in fact a PLC plot to discredit the group—it orders the PCs to return all the chips. Unfortunately, the Troubleshooters really *did* stock the chips in vendobots, and Tech Services personnel have started eating them. Which means the PCs must revisit all the same places and reap the rewards for their earlier behavior.

It's not possible the Troubleshooters *abused* their authority earlier, right?



THREAT
4-6 PLAYERS  1-2 SESSIONS  (4-8 HOURS)
THREAT



UP!
DOWN!

BILLO'DEA

TECHNICAL SERVICES THREE UP, THREE DOWN

Mission background

Production, Logistics and Commissary not only makes food for Alpha Complex, it runs the food distribution network as well. From low clearance cafeterias to high clearance gourmet restaurants, PLC gets the credit, and the credits, for supplying food to citizens.

With one exception: vendobots.

Technical Services has control of the fleet of vendobots that provide quick and tasty snacks. The group gets the credits from vendobot food sales, not PLC, and this makes PLC jealous. Is it Technical and Commissary Services? No! PLC should be getting those credits!

So PLC hatched a plan to steal the duty of keeping vendobots stocked. They invented a new type of algae chip called Happy Shapey Chippies. It's the same old algae chip but stamped into shapes that are supposed to resemble items from Alpha Complex life: scrubot chips, FunBall chips, even Troubleshooter chips.

Happy Shapey Chippies are going complex-wide, but PLC has a special batch for the vendobots in Tech Services's Dev-Y Institute. These have been lightly frosted with thymoglandin, otherwise known as Combat Quick: a drug that makes citizens need immediate action, usually violence.

The plan is to dope Tech Services's mechanics with the drug so they go nuts and start smashing vendobots. Then PLC will

file for a change of contract, arguing Tech Services can no longer be trusted to hold such a valuable contract. Given the damage caused by insanely aggressive Tech Services mechanics, The Computer must agree—or so the plan goes.

Tech Services has gotten wind of something involving the Happy Shapey Chippies bound for them, but not the details. So the group applied for a Troubleshooter team to restock the vendobots in its training facility. The Computer ordinarily dispatches Troubleshooters only to maintain good order or handle dangers to Alpha Complex, so Tech Services came up with an excuse: The vendobots in the training facility are showing treasonous behavior, and the Troubleshooters must investigate under the guise of stocking new chips.

There is no 'treasonous behavior,' at least not beyond the norm for a vendobot. The real mission is to stock the new chips and see what happens. Tech Services hopes either the Troubleshooters will somehow discover what PLC is up to, or at the least ruin the chips with a hail of laser fire and accusations of treason.

Mission Summary

1: Wherehouse briefing

The PCs attend a mission briefing inside a warehouse in WJI Sector. Once briefed on their

mission, they are given several large boxes of bagged algae chips and sent to investigate four vendobots in a Tech Services facility called the Dev-Y Institute.

2: Three up

The PCs must open and pretend to stock each vendobot while downloading and checking the bot's programming. While doing this, the PCs will anger and upset the Tech Services citizens who are trying to do their normal jobs. Fortunately, the PCs have a strongly worded authorization to stock the new chips and can act all rude and pushy. The PCs will also actually stock the new chips, despite not being told to do that.

3: Three down

Just as the PCs reach the fourth vendobot, Tech Services uncovers the PLC plot and orders the PCs to return with all the new chips they were given. The PCs must revisit each vendobot and undo what they did. This is complicated by Tech Services citizens who ate the drug-laced chips and now want a good rumble.

1: Wherehouse briefing

Attention Troubleshooters! Rejoice in your opportunity to serve the citizens of Alpha Complex as part of Team Chippie! Report to PLC Warehouse W-67RE in WJI Sector for your briefing. Thank you.

Warehouse W-67RE (**Tension 5**) should be easy to find. The corridor leading to it is wide, tall and full of forkbots moving crates out of the warehouse. A meter-wide strip of RED runs down the center of the corridor for safe pedestrian traffic, though 'safe' might be too strong a word. Anyone unlucky enough to trip while walking down the corridor is snafued, picked up by a forkbot and deposited outside the corridor. The forkbot turns and leaves the area, and the character gets to try again.

Once inside the warehouse, the PCs witness the awesome majesty of a PLC automated warehousing system. Thousands of crates

of all sizes and compositions are constantly stacked, unstacked, dropped, shaken, stirred and otherwise moved around in a seemingly random pattern.

The pattern is random. Boxes and Docksies, the licensed PLC service firm in charge of this warehouse, gets a budget based on average hourly activity; if the warehouse is abuzz with activity, then the firm must be working very hard and therefore deserves more credits. 91% of the crates moved are simply put in another part of the warehouse, and all those forkbots simply return through another door.

Where's the briefing officer? He set up a table and some folding chairs just to the left of the door, but between then and now, forkbots built a wall of heavy crates that cut him off from the door. He can hear the PCs enter, so he contacts them via PDC.

'Team Chippie? Is that you by the warehouse door? This is Cedric-B-VFS-4, your briefing officer. I've set up a briefing in this warehouse. Please hurry to it so we can start your mission. I'd tell you how to reach me, but I'm not sure where I am any more.'

The PCs must get to Cedric-B on their own; he's no help, nor is The Computer, because the crate maze is constantly in flux. When the PCs stride confidently down between two rows of crates, a forkbot appears out of nowhere to block further passage.

Make this sequence slightly frustrating, but not too much. Have fun closing passageways and zooming forkbots all over the place, especially if the players try something as predictable and boring as, 'We try to solve the maze.' Heck, trap them in a ring of crates and let them cool their heels. And don't forget about



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the forkbots—they shouldn't be deadly, but they can pick up a PC and drop him at some random spot in the warehouse.

Reward clever and creative suggestions with success and Perversity points; the Troubleshooters can now tell which direction to head in, or they see Cedric-B wave and point to his watch. In case some PC tries to get violent with the crates, use the 'Random crate contents' table in the **PARANOIA** rulebook appendix. If someone tries to cut his own path through the crates, the forkbots get protective—and violent.

Once the PCs arrive at the briefing, have a forkbot pull away some crates to reveal a short and easy path from the door to the briefing room. That's right: If they had just waited, it would have opened up for them. That'll teach them to get all hyper over finding a briefing room.

Forkbot maze prop hint

Photocopy a complicated maze like you find in lame activity books full of word jumbles and 'brain teasers.' Write 'door' at the start and 'briefing officer' at the end. Then place a dozen coins on the map to block random paths. The players must solve the maze to get to their briefing, and move the coins around every so often, especially if they get close.

I'm not implying anything, honestly

The briefing officer, Cedric-B-VFS-4, is reasonably honest, fair and efficient. He's not overmedicated, incompetent, bonkers, clueless, bitter or even preoccupied. His record is exemplary but not overly so, and he'll conduct this briefing well.

Cedric-B is so honest, people sometimes misinterpret him. When he says, 'Try not to let anything happen to the traitor on the way to IntSec, if you know what I mean ...', he really is

making sure people understand they *shouldn't* do anything to the traitor.

'Thank you, and please sit down. We are having this briefing here to save time; this will also be your outfitting. Though it may not sound as important as your previous missions, I'm sure this assignment is completely worthy of your time and effort. How could it not be?'

'Technical Services is reporting some unusual behavior from the vendobots in their Dev-Y Institute, a Tech Services training facility here in WJI Sector. Your mission is to look for treasonous programming in their code. But this is a secret; your cover story is a mission to stock these vendobots with a new brand of algae chip, Happy Shapey Chippies.'

'Why a cover story? Because the traitors may be Tech Services mechanics. But what are the chances of that, right? It's not like they have total access to the vendobots or anything. You'll have authorization to stock the vendobots too, so they shouldn't get in your way. If they do, I'm sure you know how to deal properly with things getting in your way. We understand each other, right?'

Cedric-B is speaking the entire truth, without irony, but make it sound like he's insinuating blanket permission to commit mayhem. Maybe he has a twitch in his eye, so he's winking constantly.

In the chips

Now Cedric-B assigns Mandatory Bonus Duties if the PCs don't already have them. Then he promptly proceeds to outfitting. He gives each PC a cardboard box full of Happy

Cedric-B-VFS-4

Tech Services, Psion, Puppeteer 10; Management 12, Sound Like He's Implying Something When He's Not 18 BLUE reflec (E1), no weapons.

Shapey Chippie bags. The boxes are light but bulky; the size of large suitcases. A character could carry a box with one hand, but that would make it difficult to get through doorways and stairwells.

The Team Leader gets a 'Certain Service Certificate' (CerSerCer) that reads, 'WARNING! These Troubleshooters are stocking vendobots! Do not interfere or you may be liable for treason under more mandates than can be listed in this space!' It's signed and stamped by Cedric-B, so citizens should accept it as authentic.

The loyalty officer (or, if there is no loyalty officer, the most officious player) receives a modified PDC. It can only check a vendobot's code against an uncorrupted version on an IntSec secure server. Because the whole 'treasonous programming' angle is a ruse, it will never indicate a problem.

'If you find a vendobot with treasonous programming, alert me at once. If the vendobot is normal, move on to the next. I am told there are only four vendobots in the facility, so they'll be easy to spot. When you are finished with all vendobots in the Institute, return here for debriefing.'

Let the players ask a few questions; give out answers if you feel like it, then let the PCs leave.

Just before the briefing ends, if you're feeling particularly nasty, have forkbots fill the path to the door with crates.

2: Three up

The Dev-Y Institute should be easy to find, especially after the warehouse maze. The entrance is blocked by ORANGE Tech Services security guards armed with ORANGE laser pistols. Once they see the PCs' CerSerCer, they back down and let the PCs enter. Now the PCs can get down to stocking the vendobots and checking their code.

There are only four vendobots for the mechanics in the facility, so the PCs only

have to worry about these four. *Finding* them is another story -- the PCs must search the Institute and find the vendobots themselves. Of course, there's a lot going on in the Institute, and the PCs might become a nuisance. In fact, you can practically guarantee that.

Surprisingly, that's not the point. In Episode 3 the PCs will be ordered to recall all of the Happy Shapey Chippie bags they stock in this episode. That means they have to revisit

each vendobot location after they stocked the chips, and that means they have to deal with people who've tried the drug-laced chips. It's their own fault, really.

Dev-Y Institute

The Dev-Y Institute is a small training center for Tech Services personnel. It's not large, and

the four vendobots are located in the four largest rooms. Depending on how much time is available, GMs can roleplay searching broom closets and classrooms in between the four big rooms, or the small rooms can be skipped entirely in favor of the big important ones.

Or they could just happen to be the first four rooms visited by the PCs. Coincidences happen all the time. Either way, the players can visit the first three rooms in any order, but the fourth location must be last. The rooms could be in one long row, interconnected, or whatever, as long as the PCs arrive at the Advanced Mechanics Laboratory last. Otherwise, they'll get the order to recover all the bags of chips before they've stocked them. And we can't have that.

There's one key point about the vendobots the PCs don't know yet: They need a vendobot key—a small circular key that opens the front half of the machine and allows access to the snacks and the programming core. Vendobot keys are as common with Tech Services personnel as truncheons with IntSec agents, and any PC with even a slight technical background knows this. Inasmuch as they're in a Tech Services facility, it shouldn't be too hard to get some help, right?

If a PC tries to jimmy open the vendobot, it lets out an ear-piercing wail and starts screaming for IntSec -- 'Help! Traitors are trying to break into me! Help! Traitors are trying to break into me!' -- until someone resets the vendobot's security system. Resetting vendobot security systems would make a very useful narrow specialty, albeit a suspicious one for a PC in this mission. Otherwise, use the Bot Ops/Hardware skill to stop the damned noise.



As you approach the vendobot, it sends out a low-powered laser to scan you. 'Welcome, Troubleshooter!' it says in a loud mechanical voice. 'You look hungry and/or thirsty. Care to buy one of my many tasty snacks and/or canned beverages? I have low prices to meet your nutritional and/or happiness needs! Exact credits only!'

Bot 1: Testing their patience

The first room is labeled 'Exam Room B' (**Tension 13**). It's a lecture hall filled with rows of seats and desks that slope gently down to a small stage. Close to a hundred RED citizens are taking their Tech Services certification exams while ORANGE proctors and a YELLOW supervisor check for cheating. Everything is really, really quiet; the only sound comes from the students furiously filling in little circles with pencils.

As soon as the PCs enter the room, an ORANGE proctor quickly (but quietly) runs up to the PCs and orders them to leave so they don't disturb the test takers. Once the PCs show her the CerSerCer, she quietly gets furious. Then she points to a vendobot on the other side of the room, past the desks and students.

To get to the vendobot, a PC must 'Excuse me! Pardon me!' all the way down a row. Students give the PCs evil looks, even idle bystander PCs. They believe they need complete silence or they'll fail.

A handwritten sign is taped to the front of the vendobot: 'DO NOT USE DURING TESTING.' This is because a vendobot can be quite chatty at times.

ORANGE proctor

Tech Services, Pro Tech, Charm 08; Violence 07, Stealth 10, Spot Cheating 16; no weapons or armor.

YELLOW supervisor

Tech Services, Romantics, Call Bots 05, Management 11, Violence 06, Intimidate By Staring Silently 17; YELLOW laser pistol and YELLOW refler.

The vendobot doesn't have much of a repertoire, and it continues to cycle through this speech until either the Troubleshooter buys something or manages to open it up. But even stocking the chip bags sounds loud given the circumstances. The PCs constantly get glares from everyone in the room, but no one dares do anything that risks violating the CerSerCer.

Bot 2: #FF495DF3 looks good today

The second room is the Dev-Y Institute's Cafeteria Automat (**Tension 7**). Tech Services needs to feed all their citizens in this Institute, but they'd rather not let PLC set up a cafeteria. So they built a special vendobot that would supply food for everyone.

The room is a large square filled with tables, chairs and Tech Services citizens eating lunch at those tables and chairs. Three of the walls are blank save for some inspirational posters such as, 'Work Harder, not Smarter!' and, 'It's the Little Things that lead to Termination.' The last wall, the one opposite the door, is one giant vendobot.

It doesn't cover the wall; it *is* the wall. Imagine a vending machine big enough to carry entire meals, then stretch it to fit a 10-meter wall. The vendobot has almost every conceivable food available for YELLOW Clearance or lower on large metal poles. The slot near the floor is even big enough for a citizen to crawl through.

Ordering can take a while; there are thousands of options, and even when a citizen's made a choice, they need to carefully type in the meal's number. Typing 'BM399HJ7' gives him the Soyilent Circular Patty with



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Special Sauce Meal Deal he wants, whereas 'BM399HK7' causes a Hypoallergenic Yeast Roll and Radberry Sawdust Shake Combo to drop instead.

There's a single pole inside the gigantic vendobot for algae chips. The PCs can see this once they enter the room. They can also see the line of some 20 citizens waiting to get food during their 20-minute mandatory lunch break.

The PCs can wait in line if they want, but try to discourage that. Have Cedric-B call for an update, or have the citizen just ahead of them in line get really talkative and annoying. Most likely, the PCs will relish the opportunity to skip the line and disable the vendobot while they stock the new chips and scan the programming core.

This vendobot does not open up like other, smaller bots. Once a vendobot key is used, the entire front moves forward about half a meter. There is now enough space for a person to stand inside the vendobot and stock it if he squeezes through the slot on the bottom. Should the key be removed while the person is still inside ... he is impaled by several poles (M2K impact).

Unlike the situation in Exam Room B, the citizens here have no reason to stay quiet—and they don't. They loudly complain and

Serena-Y-FRE-2

Tech Services, FCCC-P, Hypersenses 13; Hardware 09, Violence 05, Sort Recyclables 15; no weapons or armor.

argue with the PCs, even after having the CerSerCer shoved in their faces. They have only a little time to get their food and return to work or class, and the PCs are using up their precious time.

Bot 3: Sort like you mean it!

The third room is the Sortables Training Range (**Tension 3**). This room is used to train new Waste Reduction Monitors.

WRMs need to monitor other citizen's recycling efforts. To that end, each WRM must know which recycling bins are used for which recyclable objects.

Thanks to a combined CPU, PLC and Tech Services BLUE-ribbon panel, recycling in Alpha Complex was simplified and made more efficient by sorting all recyclables into twelve different colored bins:

1. Glass, such as bottles and vidscreen faces.
2. Plastic, such as bags and the rest of the vidscreens.
3. Circuit boards and unrepairable electronics.
4. Non-toxic biowaste, such as cold Hot Fun and ... um, bathroom stuff.
5. Toxic biowaste, such as spoiled soylent. (Unspoiled soylent can go in either bin 4 or bin 5.)
6. B3 cans.
7. Clothing and fabrics.
8. Paint, cleansers and hygiene products.
9. Dead citizens and paper.
10. Pocket and belly-button lint.
11. Spent light bulbs and laser barrels.
12. Other. (Anything not covered by bins 1-11.)

Read the following when the PCs enter this room:

You see a long, well-lit room. The long wall to your right is lined with twelve recycling bins of different colors: dark green, blue, orange, pink, pink with a

black stripe around it, yellow, brown, black with a red stripe around it, light green, red, white and white with a black stripe around it. They are all empty.

Against the left wall stand seven RED citizens. They all look sad and nervous. A YELLOW citizen is yelling at them about something. She stands next to a tall black box filled with something. It's hard to tell from this far away.

At the far end of the room is a single vendobot.

The YELLOW citizen is **Serena-Y-FRE-2**. It's her job to train these RED-Clearance WRMs to put recyclables in their correct bin, but they keep putting things in the wrong bins. It's not that they're stupid, it's just ... well, okay. They are kinda stupid. Got on the wrong end of genetic drift, if you get our meaning.

When Serena-Y sees Troubleshooters enter the training range, she decides to enlist their help.

The YELLOW citizen waves you over. 'Troubleshooters! For the love of FC, you must help me here. These vatheads don't know which recycle bins to put common, everyday objects in—and it's their jobs to know it! If a Waste Recycling Monitor doesn't know how to do it right, how can they make sure everyday citizens don't make mistakes?'

The RED citizens mutter something about anyone can make a mistake, and this makes the YELLOW citizen angry.

'Oh really? We'll see. Troubleshooters, who is your Team Leader? Good, good. Come here. I'm going to give you one object. As soon as you get it, you'll run over and put it in the correct recycling bin. Don't hesitate like these idiots. Ready?'

She hands out a large block of discolored, half-melted plastic.

Obviously, the colored bins along the opposite wall are the recycling bins. You'll notice we never labeled the 12 bins with any colors. That's because it doesn't matter. No matter what bin the team leader goes to, it's the correct one.

Now, calm down. We're not making it easy for the Troubleshooters without a good reason. Trust us.

Once the team leader has placed the hunk of plastic in a bin, Serena-Y congratulates him

for picking the right one. If the PC picked the pink bin, Serena-Y says something like, 'See? Even an untrained citizen knows to put plastic in the pink bin!'

Then she hands out another object to the happiness officer, then the loyalty officer... several PCs get to play this game, and each one always chooses the right bin. Even if a PC mixes glass with paper or something obviously wrong, it turns out correct. ('See? Even a Troubleshooter noticed that was a stack of #14 paper which, as you know, is plastic resin-based!') And every time a PC gets it right, Serena-Y berates the RED WRMs for not being as smart as the PCs.

By the time the players have twigged to what's going on, the WRMs are seething with anger and jealousy. Serena-Y thanks the Troubleshooters and goes back to her training. The PCs are welcome to stock the vendobot with no interruptions.

The turning point

The fourth vendobot is located in the Advanced Mechanics Laboratory (**Tension 4**). This is where entry-level Tech Services citizens apply what they've learned in the classroom. Although the term 'Laboratory' connotes an R&D-style scariness and propensity for death, not so here.

A pair of double doors open into a room the size of a FunBall stadium. You see a vendobot right in front of you. And another. And another. And another....

The entire room is filled with vendobots. There must be over five hundred of them here. They're powered, stocked and they look identical, down to the flashy CruncheeTym Yeast Twists logo on the front of each.

As far as you can tell, there's no one here. It's a big room and there's plenty of places to hide, but the only sound is the hum of so many working vendobots.

All these vendobots are fake. They're just training stations for Tech Services personnel. Though they look like real, working vendobots, they have no programming. This won't be apparent until someone opens the vendobot and sees there's no programming core.

One vendobot is real: #329, located just to the upper right of the middle of the room. It was put there by mistake, but that doesn't matter.

Let the PCs panic a bit. Heck, let 'em start trying to stock Happy Shapey Chippies—they'll run out by #58. Just when they've run out of options (or chips), they get an urgent call from their briefing officer.

'Team Chippie? Cedric-B here. I just got a mission update, so I'm passing it on to you. This may come as a surprise, but it turns out there is no treasonous programming of vendobots. The mission has been scrapped. Return here for debriefing.

'Be sure to return with all the Happy Shapey Chippie bags intact. PLC wants every one of those. I'm sure they need them really badly.'

The mission is over because Tech Services found out what was wrong with those Happy Shapey Chippies. After the PCs stocked the new chips, a few Tech Services citizens tried them -- and went on a violent rampage like a drunken grizzly bear who just caught Mrs. Grizzly in bed with a wolf. The Dev-Y Institute is a mess, all thanks to the PCs' big mistake.

Which big mistake, you ask? As we said, Cedric-B is a very literal person. He never explicitly told the Troubleshooters to put the chips in the vendobots; he only told them stocking chips would be their cover. Cedric-B gave the chips to the Troubleshooters hoping they'd either destroy the chips or figure out what PLC is planning with them, not actually put them in vendobots.

If Cedric-B finds out the PCs put Happy Shapey Chippies in the vendobots, he gets extremely upset and demands the Troubleshooters get every last one. If the Troubleshooters keep this to themselves, they don't get yelled at. Either way, they still need to go back and collect all the Happy Shapey Chippies.

At this point, the players should go wide-eyed as they realize they need to go back and deal with those people again. There's a lesson to be learned here.

3: Three down

The PCs must navigate the Dev-Y Institute backwards, starting the last room they entered and ending with the first. If the players want to deviate from this plan, you can let them if you want. Or just throw some Tech Services guards at the end of corridors you don't want the PCs walking down.

Either way, they need to collect all the chips. Some have already been eaten by the Institute staff and students, but the PCs will probably not be able to determine that without sitting down and thoroughly counting their inventory.

We've bin here before

Once the players return to the Sortables Training Range, read the following to them.

The same citizens you met earlier are still here, but things have changed. The YELLOW citizen has tape across her mouth and she's running from bin to bin, frantically sorting recyclables. The RED citizens are standing in the center of the room, laughing and screaming at her.

'Now plastics go in the pink bin! Move!' They all laugh and throw bottles

at her as she scrambled to move plastic stuff to the pink box.

One of the RED citizens sees you enter. 'Well, lookie here boys! It our favorite Troubleshooters! C'mere, wimps! You've got more recycling to sort!' They laugh some more and brandish broken bottles and other trash as weapons.

If the players look for the vendobot, it's still at the end of the room but there's empty Happy Shapey Chippie packets lying around it. The RED WRMs got into the chips and the thymoglandin has kicked in big time.



Drugged RED WRMs

Tech Services, Pro Tech, Energy Field 07; Violence 07, Hand Weapons 11, Sort Recyclables 04; various hand weapons (S5K impact), no armor.

If the players make even the smallest threatening move, like trying to use a PDC or sneezing, the mob attacks by throwing stuff first (S5K impact), then closing for hand combat with more stuff (S5K impact) or their fists (O5W impact). Don't forget they're all doped up on Combat Quick; they get two attacks per round.

But don't forget they're all doped up on Combat Quick. They won't use clever tactics—they won't use tactics at all, unless you count charging into a group armed with laser pistols as a tactic. Once in the grip of drug-induced bloodlust, they're just as likely to beat up on each other.

After the PCs have taken care of the RED WRMs, they can rescue the YELLOW trainer. Although she knows the chips stocked by the Troubleshooters are the cause of what happened, she doesn't want people to know about what happened to her. So she'll quickly thank the Troubleshooters and ask them to drag the bodies over to the brown bin for recycling.

A quiet lunch

Everything is quiet in the Cafeteria Automat—too quiet. There's a good 20 citizens sitting at the tables; there's no line for the giant vendobot anymore. Everyone is eating slowly and looking at each other suspiciously. You can feel the expectation and tension in the air, like just before The Computer announces the names of citizens to report for reactor shield duty.

Oh, and there's a body on the floor. She's probably dead, what with a spork sticking out of her eye socket and her not screaming for someone to take it out.

No one notices you yet. They're too busy watching each other.

Only two of the 20 citizens ate the thymoglandin-laced chips, but after they killed the one on the floor over not passing the salt,

everyone is on edge. Like school children, they're don't want to get in trouble for starting a fight, but they're not going to miss one either.

Believe it or not, the PCs can get through this without a fight:

If they don't talk to anyone in the room, including themselves...

...and walk slowly around the perimeter of the room to reach the vendobot...

...and don't make eye contact with the Tech Services citizens...

...and take the Happy Shapey Chippies without too much noise...

...and walk back around the perimeter to exit the room...

...then there's no fighting and no problems.

(We included this scenario so you can tell your players it was possible and the fight wasn't inevitable.)

Assuming one of the PCs violates the conditions for peace, the room explodes into a food fight. Citizens grab their food and start chucking it at everyone, Troubleshooters included. Soon, they will run out of food. That's when they'll start throwing chairs and tables (S4K impact), and then go into unarmed combat (O5K impact).

Once the food starts flying, the floor becomes slippery. Any PC trying to get through the room to reach the vendobot or come back from it must succeed in a Violence/Agility check to stay upright.

The Automat doesn't have a high Tension, but a fight of this magnitude is hard to ignore. Once the PCs have gotten the Happy Shapey Chippies out of the vendobot and are about halfway out of the room, IntSec crowd control agents show up to stop all this silliness.

Zap note

If you are running this mission as a Zap game, you must have one IntSec agent say, 'What's all this then?' just before getting hit in the face with a cream pie. The tradition must be upheld.

The windup

Let the players come up with their own way to avoid being arrested with everyone else. The IntSec agents notice the PCs are Troubleshooters and not Tech Services workers, so they are more inclined than normal to listen to an explanation and, if the explanation is good enough, let the PCs go with only a stiff fine.

The test must go on

There's nothing different about Exam Room B when the PCs finally return. RED citizens are still taking a test, ORANGE proctors are still looking for cheating, and a YELLOW supervisor is standing on the small stage at the lower end of the lecture hall. The vendobot is still there, and it shows no signs of being used. In fact, no one has used it. Eating is not allowed during testing, so the drug-laced chips remain in the vendobot.

They only thing that's changed from last time is the Troubleshooter's right to be there. When the PCs enter the room, the same ORANGE proctor runs up and tries to escort them out. If the Troubleshooters show their CerSerCer again, the proctor smiles and points out the authorization is for stocking, not removing, and thank you for leaving quietly, have a nice daycycle, no seriously, leave now.

Let the players come up with their own way to get into the room. Calling The Computer won't help; it respects testing conditions. Besides, the players *don't* have authorization to remove the chips. A call to Cedric-B might help, especially if he already knows they put the chips into vendobots. If the PCs kept that little piece of information to themselves, Cedric-B goes ballistic.

We hope the players try bribery, con games, or other preferred **PARANOIA** techniques. If they try such fun activities, reward their behavior with Perversity points. On the off-chance the players decide to wait until the test is over, dock them Perversity points and send some thymoglandin-addled Tech Services workers their way until they get the point.

Once the vendobot is cleared of Happy Shapey Chippies, the PCs can run back to Warehouse W-67RE for debriefing.

When the chips are down

The forkbots still zoom in, out and around the warehouse with big crates. But right now, there's a clear path to Cedric-B and his chairs. Who wants to try first to reach the chairs?

There should be no problem in reaching the debriefing, but don't let the players know that. Give them a few scares with forkbot close calls, but get them in safely.

This is the standard debriefing. PCs will have the chance to rat on each other, accuse each

other of treason and so on. All accusation must have corroborating evidence, or the accusing citizen is guilty of a DD/1 offense (O5C). Encourage the players to backstab each other all they want.

The only tricky part involves the Happy Shapey Chippies. If the players kept their secret and Cedric-B doesn't know the chips were stocked by mistake, use 'The happy(ish) ending' for the rest of debriefing. If Cedric-B knows about the chips being stocked, then use 'The unhappy ending'.

Either way, Cedric-B collects all the boxes of chips from the Troubleshooters, puts them in a large crate and watches as a forkbot quickly grabs the crate and carries it off into the giant sprawling warehouse. Cue the *Raiders of the Lost Ark* soundtrack....

The happy(ish) ending

Cedric-B looks happy. 'Though it turns out the treasonous programming of vendobots was unfounded, your investigation accidentally uncovered an IR Market drug ring in the Dev-Y Institute that sold thymoglandin, a BLUE clearance drug reserved for combat situations. While it is unclear why that drug was being sold, several citizens have confessed to dealing the drug.'

'Technical Services is proud of you; so much so, they have requested you be transferred to one of their service firms. The Computer has authorized this transfer. Please report to the Sortables Training Range in the Dev-Y Institute for your next assignment as a Waste Recycling Monitor.'

Your PDCs beep with an incoming C-mail. It says, 'Please bring one bag of garbage with you—Serena-Y, your new boss.'

The unhappy ending

Cedric-B looks angry. 'You made a huge mistake, and it cost Technical Services a lot of credits and lives. The Computer has evaluated your performance and deemed you unfit for Troubleshooting duty. Please turn in your laser pistols and reflec.'

'But fear not! Technical Services has taken pity on you and has given you all a new assignment with one of their service firms. Please report to the Cafeteria Automat in the Dev-Y Institute. Inasmuch as the vendobot there was broken during the riot, you will work inside the vendobot, taking orders from Tech Services personnel and providing the correct food choice, until the vendobot can be fixed.'

'Due to other damage in the Dev-Y Institute, it is estimated a Vending Machine Outfitter team will not be available until four months from now. Enjoy your new duties, citizens.'

Appendix 1: AlphaNet

by Bill O'Dea

Traitor Recycling Studio designer Bill O'Dea wrote a great eight-page article about AlphaNet, the Alpha Complex version of the Internet. It's all great stuff, but eight pages—sheesh!

We're breaking up this monumental piece across various PARANOIA supplements. This appendix talks about AlphaNet as it relates to service groups. In the rules supplement Extreme PARANOIA, another extract talks about how to use AlphaNet to change careers. The STUFF 2 equipment book is all about the illegal Gray Subnets, so we'll use... you get the idea.

Some form of AlphaNet has always existed in Alpha Complex. Afterall, it's where The Computer lives. Without a connection of networks, The Computer wouldn't exist beyond the room where its CompNode was located. However, the notion of a interconnected network where citizens and service groups could share data is relatively new.

Because information in Alpha Complex has always been protected and available on a need-

to-prove-loyalty basis, The Computer originally was the only resident on the network. Its nodes and subsystems barely communicated lest a Commie virus attack and destroy it all, so most of the bandwidth was wasted. Service groups routinely used paper memos, phone calls, and runners to communicate with their various bits.

After the amount of typos, prank calls, and runner fatalities reduced work efficiency to unacceptable levels, service groups started asking The Computer to use some of that empty bandwidth. So The Computer allowed each group to create a Service Inter-Network, or SIN, using The Computer's own backbone lines as the foundation. That The Computer wanted to more readily monitor what each group was doing had nothing to do with the decision. These networks were little more than secure communication grids that relayed orders and messages, but the proverbial ball had started rolling.

This ball picked up some speed thanks to Armed Forces, when several generals began to worry that, in the event of a massive Communist attack, Armed Force units would not know when and where to show up for parades.

Parades are extremely important to Armed Forces and are considered vital to Alpha Complex morale (at least by Armed Forces generals). It's not just enough to have parades; you have to

show them to the entire Complex so the average clone knows how well protected they are from the Commie menace. Armed Forces decided to build a second network that would allow continued parades and their video transmissions even if the Commies got in a lucky strike. This network was called the Armed Forces Parade Announcement Network or AFPANET.

AFPANET worked by providing each squad with a really, really, long cable connected to the Armed Forces SIN. This way, squads could stay connected even if AFSIN wasn't in a particular area. Once enough high clearance citizens had tripped over these cables, The Computer authorized Armed Forces to use other service groups' SINs, providing Armed Force units a method of finding and broadcasting their parade routes no matter where they were.

This did not go over well. Besides the inherent jealousy and security concerns voiced by the other service groups, each SIN had its own network protocol that was incompatible with the other networks. When an Armed Forces general sent out a C-mail to its troops for the Scheisskopf-U Memorial Parade in MNM Sector, soldiers only received a confusing mess of brackets, periods, and ampersands.

The Computer wished to reduce the resources it expended constantly resending messages from



SERVICE, SERVICE! CLEARANCE ULTRAVIOLET

one group's network to another, so it set R&D on the task of creating one method of sharing data across all the networks. Thus was born the Between Services Protocol, or BS Protocol, which combined all eight service group networks into a single AlphaNet. To supplement the increased traffic, The Computer ordered the construction of Network Access Nodes, or NAN routers, to regulate data flow between the previously independent networks.

Finally, the parades could continue.

The revolution will be a low-res video download

AlphaNet revolutionized how service groups operate. For example, PLC used to keep paper inventories of its warehouses, forcing warehouses to close for as long as a week for inventory counting and locating missing items. Now that every packing crate contains a Radio Frequency Identification chip, the entire warehouse can be inventoried simply by walking down the aisles with a wand-like RFID reader. Finding the missing equipment is easy too. Just log on to AlphaNet and run a search for the missing crate. Area sensors pick up the RFID signal and show the crate's location on a map in realtime.

That's if the PLC workers used the correct RFID chip when the item was packaged. Oh, and the warehouse's RFID reader has to be online and free from other signals, such as PDC wireless signals. Plus, the RFID chip cannot have been crushed during loading, shipping, unloading. It also depends on the clearance of the person requesting the map. And sometimes traitors cut out the RFID tags and stick them on innocent passersby. ('I'm telling you, I am not a crate of missing chapstick caps!')

Still, each service group is quite happy with its new AlphaNet capabilities, and some of that happiness is real. Armed Forces grinned over using real-time crowd mapping software to better deploy squads. Central Processing just about wet their pants at all the new online forms they could create. HPD applauded at using C-Bay buying data to identify popular new trends. Internal Security gave a happy smile at reading everyone's 'personal' C-mails. PLC breathed a sigh of relief over updating high-clearance catering needs in real-time. Power Services gave a thumbs up over reading reactor power levels from the other side of the Complex. Research and Design jumped for joy over constant wireless feedback data on experimental devices. Technical Services ... well, they have a special reason for liking AlphaNet.

The Computer requests that each service group maintain their part of AlphaNet, the individual

SINs. This means each service has to fix broken wires, defrag the drives on the servers, and ensure DXRTML sites are free from unauthorized viruses and spyware. That means some GREEN IntSec goon has to put down his neural whip and try navigating through a server's help file for instructions on how to reconfigure a firewall to allow file transfer.

Right.

Most groups outsource these duties to Tech Services, which has the manpower, tools, and expertise needed to do the job. This gives Tech Serv a lot of prestige and credits from the other groups, but it does create problems too. Since Tech Serv has to worry about their own network, there's a long backlog of repair and maintenance requests. This gives other groups two options: one, try and fix the problem themselves, or two, ignore the problem and plan on blaming Tech Serv for not putting their request on the priority list. You can guess which option is usually chosen.

This means AlphaNet Support is the fastest growing service firm in Technical Services, and all citizens have run into them at some point in their lives (unless the life was brief even by Alpha Complex standards). This firm combines the long waits and confusing instructions of Customer Support centers, the fast speech and haughty attitudes of telemarketers, and the trustworthiness and underhanded ripoffs of an auto mechanic.

AN Support: Thank you for calling! Your call is important to us. Please stay on the line, and a friendly support citizen will be with you shortly.

[Four hours later.]

AN Support: Your call may be monitored [click] my name is Jack-R can I have your name and clearance please.

Kelly-R: Wha—? Oh, a real person? Yes, yes. I'm Kelly-R-GTT-3 and I'm RED Clearance.

AN Support: Thank you one moment.

[One hour later.]

AN Support: Okay, what is your problem, please?

Kelly-R: You're back? My problem, right. I'm trying to read my C-mail on my PDC but all I get is a blank screen.

AN Support: What version of Spelunker Plus are you using?

Kelly-R: What?

AN Support: What ... ver ... sion ... of ... Spel ... lun ... ker ... Plus

Kelly-R: Version 7.2! I think.

AN Support: Right. You need to update to version 7.22. Go to <http://RED.spelunker.ins.cdt/spelupdate> and

voice-click on the 'Update 7.2 to 7.22' link then download the patch to your C-mail server in your home sector then download a second copy to your PDC extract them both using IntZip install them into the HTTP folder on both drives then do a cold boot then do a hot boot then rotate your PDC 360 degrees and you'll be able to read your C-mail again. Don't forget to digitally sign a C-mail authorization before downloading the update thank you for calling.

Kelly-R: No, wait! What's a voice-click? Hello?

And you thought *bathrooms* were under surveillance

Surveillance is a fact of life in Alpha Complex. It's openly accepted and secretly hated, avoided, and disabled. This is because citizens know it's there; it's hard *not* to spot the cameras that follow you around the cafeteria, and you expect hidden microphones in the dormitories. Need to slip a little fizz-wizz into someone's B3? Everyone knows you must first disable or block the security cameras.

It's not so easy on AlphaNet. Digital surveillance is cheap and easy, making it much harder to find such surveillance, never mind trying to disable it. For example, here's what happens when Frank-R-DGG, who works for Power Services and is currently in GDF Sector, sends an email to a PLC employee named Sarah-R-WBG:

- ☉ Frank-R types the C-mail on his PDC and clicks 'Send.'
- ☉ A copy is forwarded to Bill-R's folder on the Power Serv RED C-mail Server in DGG Sector.
- ☉ The C-mail is uploaded into the GDF Sector Power Serv SIN (Service Inter-Network).
- ☉ That SIN forwards the C-mail to the GDF NAN router.
- ☉ That NAN sends the C-mail to WBG Sector's NAN router.
- ☉ This second NAN sends the C-mail to WBG Sector's PLC SIN C-mail server.
- ☉ This server sends the C-mail to Sarah-R's folder on the PLC RED C-mail server in WBG Sector.

So far, so good. Now let's toss in a few security mandates and see what else happens to that C-mail:

- ☉ Each NAN router runs the C-mail through a treason detection filter. If any suspicious words or phrases are flagged, the C-mail is rerouted to IntSec's Digital Treason Detectors service firm and never reaches Sarah-R.
- ☉ DGG Sector's IntSec office has tapped the wires leading to the NAN router and pours over any C-mails sent from their sector for evidence that fits a host of old, unsolved crimes. WBG Sector's IntSec does the same, and both Frank-R and Sarah-R might have to answer questions about a stolen cone rifle shipment from two yearcycles ago.
- ☉ Power Service's RED C-mail server also runs the C-mail through a filter but forwards a copy of any suspicious C-mails to Power Serv's C-mail Abuse Preventioners service firm instead of IntSec so they can go after 'one of their own' before IntSec does. Also, citizens are only allotted so many C-mails each monthcycle and either citizen could be heavily fined for going over their minutes.
- ☉ PLC's RED C-mail server does the same to get at Sarah-R before IntSec does and to ensure she's not going over her minutes.
- ☉ IntSec's Interservice Monitors firm has tapped into the SINs of both Power Service and PLC, and secretly downloads a copy of all C-mails to make sure neither service group is covering up treason by one of its own. If Frank-R convinces Power Services that he's not doing anything treasonous, he still has to convince the boys down at IntServMon.
- ☉ IntSec's We Watch The Watchers firm has tapped into the SIN of DGG Sector IntSec, WBG Sector IntSec, and Interservice Monitors to provide the necessary oversight of intelligence operations. They usually follow up with the both citizens to make sure they were well treated by IntSec's other firms.

All this is only the *official* monitoring and does not take into account Computer Phreak malware rerouting the message, Free Enterprise putting advertisements in the body of the C-mail, FCCC-P attaching a "prayer virus", Anti-Mutant monitoring for pro-mutant phrases, or either character's secret society copying the C-mail to their servers to search for that Illuminati double agent.

Still want to C-mail your secret society contact before the mission?

The entire Complex would be behind bars

That said, there is simply too much data for The Computer and its minions to accurately monitor. They cannot look at every byte, so most of it gets saved for 'future data mining' and forgotten until it's time to reformat the storage.

A citizen can usually get away with small acts of treason over AlphaNet—complaining about his job, making fun of his supervisor—both because it's hard to detect such insignificant acts and because it's not worth the time and effort of those who stumble across it. Just remember: There's no statute of limitations on treason.

IntSec goon: Citizen Janice-R! Did you send a C-mail to PLC on Threeday, Week 32?

Janice-R: Um ... maybe. That was five months ago.

Goon: Still, care to explain why you requested five additional RED laser barrels?

Janice-R: I was on a Troubleshooter mission! Against Commies!

Goon: I see. Your mission alert please. For proof that you were on a mission.

Janice-R: You can't be serious?

Goon: No alert, eh? That tells me you never were on a mission.

Janice-R: Wait! Check with Troubleshooter HQ! They'll have a record of my mission.

Goon: THQ deletes records every week to free up drive space. Come along.

Even filesharing, which threatens ULTRAVIOLETS' ability to earn millions of credits from other people's artistic efforts, is usually punishable only by probation. However, rules is rules; established acts of treason do not receive a lesser penalty simply because they were committed digitally. Falsely accusing a higher-clearance citizen by C-mail carries the same fines and punishments as falsely accusing in person.

GMs still rule like vengeful gods, but digitally

A good GM rule in *PARANOIA* is not to kill a character outright. Instead, give that character enough rope to hang himself, or get strung up by other players.

Think of AlphaNet as a large coil of rope.

Don't let your players tell you which sites they want to find. If a PC is going to search AlphaNet, ask for a set of search words and use your

discretion to determine which site comes up. For example, a player is looking for a transtube timetable and uses the words 'transtube, schedule, BFF Sector' in an AlphaNet search. If you are feeling gracious, give the player 'BFF Sector Transtube Departure/Arrival Times.' If the player is relying too much on AlphaNet and not enough on his own creativity, give the player 'Mike-O's Blog: Transbot Spotting in BFF.'

And if the player deserves a good slap, infect his PDC with some unauthorized malware and give him 'CommieVista: Derailing Transbots For Fun And Profit.' (Hey, *he's* the one who gave you the search words. It's not *your* fault.)

The pervasive digital nature of Alpha Complex makes malware powerful. For example, laser barrels include miniature cameras that send video data across AlphaNet to an IntSec server. If a virus infects that server, it can spread across the network and place a backdoor in the gun's operating system. When the trigger is next pulled, no laser shoots out to kill the mutant. Instead, the gun projects on the mutant's stomach a ten-second PURGE recruitment video.

That said, let characters use AlphaNet with *some* success. If a character gets a computer virus every time he connects, then no one will ever use AlphaNet and a potentially fun tool is rendered worthless. The successes make the failures that much more fun, and they raise the paranoia level a few notches:

Player: I search AlphaNet for: directions, 'Troubleshooter, briefing room, GGX Sector.'

GM: Okay. You get a page called 'Halley-O's Big Guide To Briefing Rooms'.

Player: ...I do?

GM: Yep. It has a special section for RED Troubleshooter briefing rooms by sector.

Player: ...It does?

GM: And it has a link to get directions from your present location to any of the rooms.

Player: But I don't know where my character is.

GM: No problem. The site triangulated your location using your PDC's wireless signal.

Player: Really?

GM: Do you click on the button labeled 'Get Directions To Your Room'?

Player: No! This is a Commie trick! I think...

AlphaNet is like any other part of the *PARANOIA* setting. It's potentially useful, often dangerous and riddled with opportunities to commit treason and catch others committing treason.



Appendix 2: Service firm tables

These service group tables incorporate all the service firms introduced in both the *PARANOIA* rulebook and this book. Firms new to this book are marked with an asterisk (*). When your players create new characters—either Troubleshooters or (if you're using the *Extreme PARANOIA* rules supplement) other non-Troubleshooter types—have them use these tables in place of the original service firm tables on page 22 of the *PARANOIA* rulebook.

Service group

Roll 1d20 to determine your service group. Then, unless instructed otherwise, consult the table for your group to find your service firm type. The GM will tell you about your specific firm before play begins.

- 1 Armed Forces (group)*
- 2-3 Armed Forces (service firm)
- 4-5 Central Processing Unit
- 6-8 HPD & Mind Control
- 9 Internal Security**
- 10 Internal Security (service firm)
- 11-13 Production, Logistics & Commissary
- 14-15 Power Services
- 16-17 Research & Design
- 18-19 Technical Services
- 20 Industrial spy or saboteur***

* You serve in the Armed Forces proper, not as an outsourced civilian contractor. Don't roll for a service firm. Workers in Armed Forces service firms are civilians, but often held early stints as Armed Forces grunts before their current assignment.

** Write 'Internal Security' on the back of your character sheet. Roll again for another service group. You are a spy for Internal Security in that group. The second group is your 'cover,' the group everyone thinks you work for. You learn a service firm specialty from Internal Security, not your cover group.

*** You've been assigned to spy on or sabotage another service firm in your group. Roll again to determine your group, then roll twice on its firm table to get two service firm types. Your first roll determines who you're spying for, the second whom you're spying on. (If you roll the same firm type both times, you're spying on a direct rival.) You learn a service firm specialty from your original group, not your cover group. You'll collect a salary from both firms, assuming you survive a month.

Armed Forces

- 1 Ammunition Fresheners
- 2 Armed Forces Entertainers *
- 3 Armed Forces Friends Network
- 4 Bodyguard Comm. Liaisons
- 5 Blast Shield Maintenance
- 6 Crowd Control (Armed Forces)
- 7 Fitness Enhancers *
- 8 Fuel & Munitions Transport *
- 9 Historical Battle Reenactors *
- 10 Memorial Maintenance *
- 11 Military Counseling *
- 12 Military Parade Organizers *
- 13 Post-Strategic Faulters *
- 14 Sensitivity Trainers
- 15 Threat Assessors (Armed Forces)
- 16 Tool & Die Works
- 17 Very Special Forces *
- 18 Vulture Squadron Recruiters
- 19 Weapons Effect. Assessors (AF)*
- 20 Other (see GM for details)

* Introduced in this book

Central Processing Unit (CPU)

- 1 116 Emergency Systems
- 2 Credit License Checkers
- 3 Env. Effect Experimenters *
- 4 E-Data / Hard Copy Printers *
- 5 Facility Surveillance Control
- 6 Form Disposal Advisors
- 7 Form Facilitators
- 8 Form Gap Analysts *
- 9 Form Inventory Officers
- 10 Human Resource Outfitters *
- 11 Information Archivists *
- 12 Liability Limiters *
- 13 Mandatory Break Monitors *
- 14 Personal Legal Defense *
- 15 Pocket Protector Refurbishers
- 16 Security System Installers
- 17 Summary Providers *
- 18 Venture Capital Consultants
- 19 Volunteer Collection Agencies
- 20 Other (see GM for details)

* Introduced in this book

HPD & Mind Control

- 1 Alpha Complex Charities *
- 2 Celebrity Emulators *
- 3 Celeb. Lifestyle Documenters *
- 4 Comprssd Housing Recyclers *
- 5 Entertainment Scouting Agencies
- 6 External Border Expanders *
- 7 History Purifiers
- 8 Invalid Care Providers *
- 9 Junior Happytime Prod. *
- 10 Media Prod & Approval *
- 11 News Services
- 12 Public Hating Coordination
- 13 Registered Mutant Relations *
- 14 Sector Expansion Surveyors
- 15 Semantics Control
- 16 Singalong Agents
- 17 Subliminals Police
- 18 Temp. Inforest. Dmg Obfuscation *
- 19 Trend Identifiers
- 20 Other (see GM for details)

* Introduced in this book

Internal Security

- 1 Border Control *
- 2 Conspicuous Surv. Initiative *
- 3 Corridor Patrol Agents *
- 4 Crowd Control (IntSec)
- 5 Encryption Breakers *
- 6 External Security *
- 7 Forensic Analysis
- 8 Glee Quota Adjutants
- 9 Gray Ops *
- 10 Infiltration Consultants *
- 11 Physical Fitness Assessors *
- 12 Public Relations Improvers *
- 13 Re-Educ. Client Procurement
- 14 Surveillance Operatives
- 15 Termination Center Janitorial
- 16 Thought Surveyors
- 17 Threat Assessors (IntSec)
- 18 Treason Scene Cleanup
- 19 Unique ID Archivists *
- 20 Other (see GM for details)

* Introduced in this book

Production, Logistics & Commissary (PLC)

- 1 Armored Autocar Escorts
- 2 Artisan Unions *
- 3 BLUE Room Caterers
- 4 Enforced Reclam. & Recyc. *
- 5 Equipment Assembly Control
- 6 Field Logistics Advisors
- 7 Food Vat Control
- 8 Free Market Food Consortia *
- 9 Geological Resrce Procurement *
- 10 Hydroponic Gardeners *
- 11 Inventory System Updaters
- 12 Micro-Warehousing Auditors *
- 13 Obsolescence Enforcers *
- 14 Package Delivery Services *
- 15 Printing Office Field Checkers
- 16 Quality Control Inspectors *
- 17 Rec. Surplus Specialists *
- 18 Storage Media Integrity
- 19 Warehouse System Inspectors
- 20 Other (see GM for details)

* Introduced in this book

Power Services

- 1 Alternative Energy Consortia *
- 2 Battery Backup
- 3 Burn Radius Assessors
- 4 Circuit Maintenance
- 5 Executive Power Chauffeurs *
- 6 Fuel Cell Replenishmt (Power)
- 7 Fuel Rod Disposal Consultants
- 8 Latent Power Accumulation *
- 9 Odor Fresheners
- 10 Pwr Oscillation Professionals
- 11 Power Plant Protectors *
- 12 Reactor Maintenance *
- 13 Rout. Redundacy Regulators *
- 14 Safe Atoms Initiative
- 15 Sewage Reclamation *
- 16 Temperature Enforcers (Pwr) *
- 17 Transcendent Motive Energy *
- 18 Transit Services (Power) *
- 19 Wire Supply Checkers
- 20 Other (see GM for details)

* Introduced in this book

Research & Design

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| 1 Agricultural Upgrade Engineering * | 11 Object Combinators * |
| 2 Biological Niceness Indexers | 12 Peripheral Optimization Assessors * |
| 3 Bot Processing (R&D) | 13 Perpetual Motion * |
| 4 Cryptography Developers * | 14 RoboPsych Auditing |
| 5 Death Ray Mapping * | 15 Scientist Sanity Checkers |
| 6 Drug Interaction Testers | 16 Singularity & Dimensional Portal Disposal * |
| 7 Explosive Formulation * | 17 Test Subject Trainers * |
| 8 Field Data Collectors | 18 Vehicle Therapists |
| 9 Goo Cleanup | 19 Weapon Effectiveness Assessors (R&D) |
| 10 Mutation Suppression * | 20 Other (see GM for details) |

* Introduced in this book

Technical Services

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1 Bedding Inspectors | 11 Paint Control |
| 2 Bot Processing (Tech) * | 12 Safety-Part Installers * |
| 3 Clone Tank Support | 13 Slime Identification |
| 4 Consolidated Motorized Transport (CMT) | 14 Tech Support |
| 5 Fuel Cell Replenishment (Tech) | 15 Temp. Optimization Enforcers (Tech) * |
| 6 Lighting Maintenance * | 16 Transit Services (Tech) * |
| 7 Maintenance Observation Teams * | 17 Vending Machine Outfitters * |
| 8 MemoMax Quality Assurance | 18 Vermin Terminators * |
| 9 Medical Services | 19 Waste Reduct. Monitors * |
| 10 Noise Poll. Preventers * | 20 Other (see GM) |

* Introduced in this book



Cumulative service firm index

This index lists all the service firms introduced in the *PARANOIA* rulebook and in this supplement, *Service, Service!* Page numbers from the original rulebook appear in **boldface**; page numbers from *Service, Service!* appear in regular type.

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Traitor Recycling Studio

The *PARANOIA* line's Famous Game Designers!

An informal gaggle of over a dozen *PARANOIA* writers, the Traitor Recycling Studio wrote *Crash Priority*, the *STUFF* equipment book, *WMD*, *Extreme PARANOIA*, and basically the entire upcoming *PARANOIA* support line. We collaborate online, sharing ideas and reviewing text. It's fun, productive and not even a little treasonous. We think. Check us out at www.TraitorRecycling.com.

Paul Baldowski ('Spurious Targets,' 'Both Sides Now,' huge numbers of service firms) works in an obscure branch of CPU and lives somewhere on the outskirts of Manchester, in the UK. Paul accepts full responsibility for the *Crash Priority* mission 'Patch Job', several chunks of the core rules and the *Gamemaster Screen* mission blender, and the odd piece of unique wisdom on his *PARANOIA* blog: www.omegacomplex.com.

Beth Fischi (editor of 'Spurious Targets', graphics) is a writer/editor based in Austin, Texas. Her last name rhymes with 'whiskey'. With her husband, Allen Varney, she's packaging the support line of *PARANOIA* products from Mongoose Publishing. The two wrote 'Traitor Backup' in *Crash Priority* and 'WMD' in, uh, *WMD*.

Jeff Groves ('Life in a service firm,' 'Nightcycle Shift' and some rumors) is a Computer Science major at Iowa State University. He also wrote 'Nyuk Nyuk Nyuk' in *Crash Priority* and 'Hot Potato' in *WMD*.

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Humza Kazmi (some rumors and mandates) is a student at the University of Maryland (College Park) and an RPG fiend. He came across the glory, wonder, and Hot Fun that is *PARANOIA* from reading old *DRAGON* magazines. He still plays non-fun RPGs, but it's really for Old Reckoning research purposes.

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Karl Low ('Going Postal,' miscellaneous rumors) contributed to the *PARANOIA* rulebook and *Extreme PARANOIA*. Karl lives in Calgary and divides his time between procrastinating and frantically trying to get stuff done. He's been having more luck with the former, lately.

Eric Minton ('Troublebots,' 'Nightcycle Shift,' service group relations, lots of mandates and personnel and firms) co-wrote the *PARANOIA* equipment book, *STUFF*, and contributed the vidstar rules to *Extreme PARANOIA*. He currently lives in New York City, where he

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Bill O'Dea ('Three Up, Three Down,' 'AlphaNet' and lots of firms and personnel) is Citizen Biggles on *Paranoia-Live.net*. He was born in New Jersey, moved to Florida, spent a summer in the UK, lived on a Pacific island and now resides in Chicago. Consequently, his accent is all over the place and it always sounds fake. He contributed 'Infohazard' to *WMD* and the 'Assistant retail sales managers' section to *Extreme PARANOIA*. He can be reached at biggles@FriendComputer.net.

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Blog: www.costik.com/paranoia

Eric Zawadzki ('Rockumentary,' lots of service firms and rumors) is a retirement services customer service supervisor for a mid-sized bank. He's learned a lot about bureaucracy and figures he'd probably be an ORANGE by now. In his free time, he roleplays, writes fantasy novels, and maintains a Web site, *Poet RPG*.

Home page: www.caligreen.com/

These and other notorious Traitors are even now preparing other *PARANOIA* products not yet available at your clearance. Get ready! Check out the latest news on the *PARANOIA* development blog (www.costik.com/paranoia), and join the forums at www.paranola-live.net, as well as Mongoose Publishing's own active forums at www.mongoosepublishing.com.

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PARANOIA

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