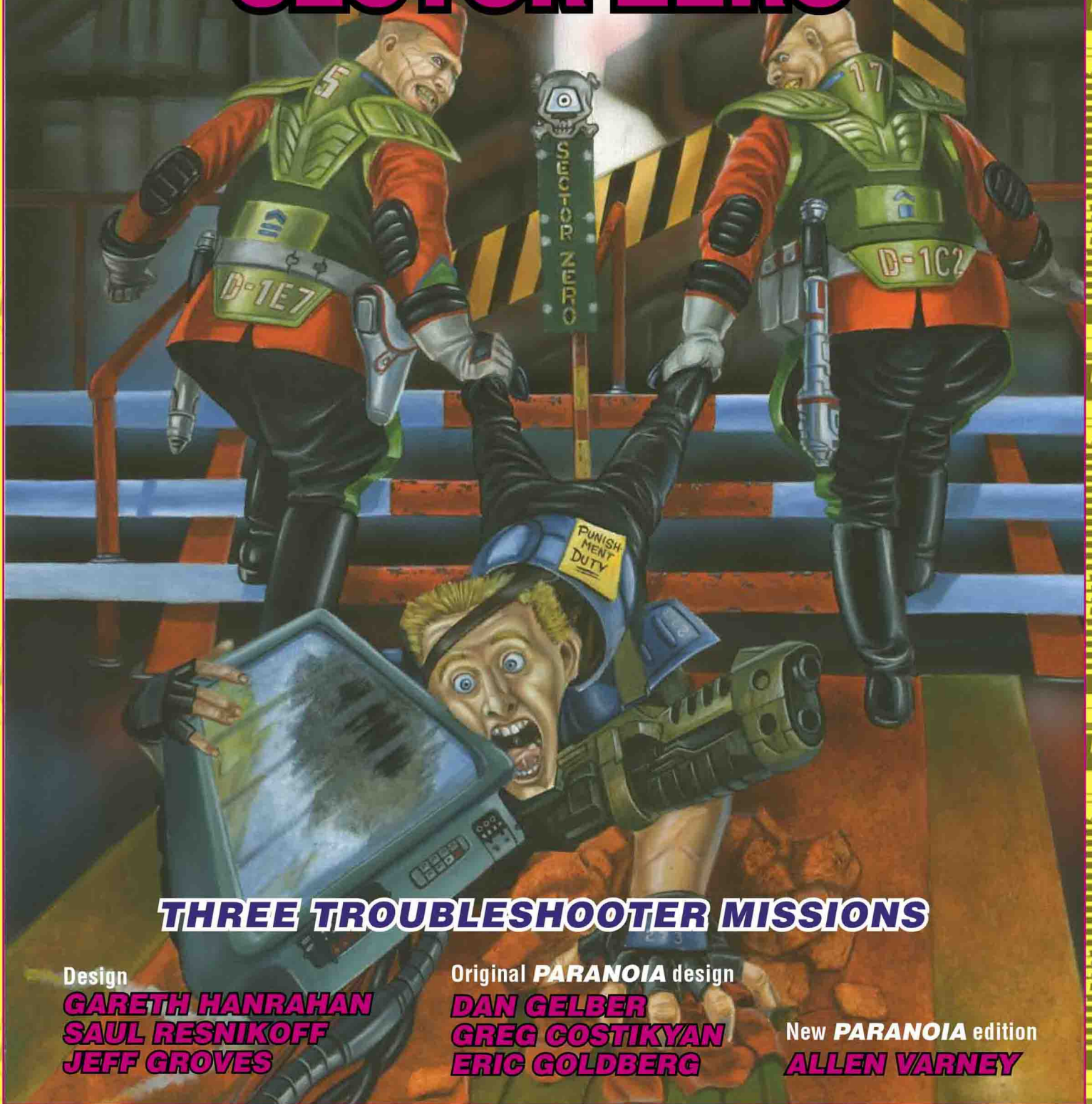


# PARANOIA

# PARANOIA

## SECTOR ZERO



### THREE TROUBLESHOOTER MISSIONS

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# PARANOIA™

## Sector Zero

### Special duties for special troubleshooters

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Looking after your best interests

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*The 'fortune cookies' at the lower right of each two-page spread come from loyal citizens **Paul Baldowski, Karl Low, Saul Resnikoff, Bart Savenije, Silent and Tobias Svalborg**, who answered the call on the **PARANOIA** development blog ([www.costik.com/paranoia](http://www.costik.com/paranoia)). Commendations!*

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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 punishable by a long spell of Armed Forces latrine scrubot maintenance duty.

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## 1. Introduction

### Who hates me? I mean, currently?

*'And so, Mr. Marx, I give you fair warning.' The Director's voice vibrated with an indignation that had now become wholly righteous and impersonal? Was the expression of the disapproval of Society itself. 'If ever I hear again of any lapse from a proper standard of infantile decorum, I shall ask for your transference to a Sub-Center—preferably to Iceland. Good morning.' And swivelling round in his chair, he picked up his pen and began to write.*

—Aldous Huxley, *Brave New World*, Chapter 6 (1932)

Just as 'Code 7' is Troubleshooter dispatchers' jargon for a mission that promises certain death, so 'Sector Zero' is Alpha Complex slang for punishment duty.

Troubleshooters 'sent to Sector Zero' face a dispiriting assignment nobody else wanted. Maybe they must supervise Armed Forces latrine scrubbots, or administer experimental R&D medications to insane super-powered mutants. Or maybe those benighted Troubleshooters get in so much trouble they're assigned the missions in this **PARANOIA** collection, Sector Zero.

No one calls it 'punishment duty'—publicly. The concept is a paradox in Alpha Complex—officially. 'Punishment' implies an unwilling recipient, yet 'duty' is, for truly loyal citizens, always performed willingly. If the maintenance of good order requires action, however unpleasant, then obviously every loyal citizen is happy to serve the public good!

Though paranoid, irrational, authoritarian and deeply nuts, The Computer is not vindictive. After it punishes a traitor with reprimands, censure, medication and/or termination, and after it receives confirmation these penalties have been duly enacted, The Computer permits the offender (or his clone backup) to start fresh and, ideally, stray no more.

Yet The Computer notwithstanding, punishment duty in Alpha Complex is a real, if unspoken, concept—because The Computer's pure and idealistic processes keep getting corrupted by (groan) human beings. High Programmers, hired hackers, secret society operatives, dispatchers,

briefing officers: Any or all these mortal citizens may have a beef with the Troubleshooters, and may covertly distort the mission assignment process to make their lives hard.

Why did your Troubleshooters draw some bigwig's personal attention? We Famous Game Designers have suggested some possibilities here and there in these Sector Zero missions. But we honestly think this is the least of your problems. Just think back on any **PARANOIA** mission you've already run. Think of someone the PCs might have offended. You might want to time how long it—what? Done already? Yeah, we thought so.

You see how easy it is. For any reason or no reason, your PCs have blundered onto some high-clearance citizen's List—his Enemies List, Danger List, Hit List. Everyone in power always has a List.

In a way, these subversive enemies are more dangerous than The Computer itself. At least with The Computer, players know the craziness they're dealing with, and they may devise ways to evade it. But when they're stuck in Sector Zero on someone's List, they do not know anything.

For you, the ever wise GM, punishment duty is a handy framework to justify the usual hose-job missions and promote the expected internecine backstabbing. Over a series of missions, a 'find our enemy and get off his List' subplot can prompt three different flavors of paranoia, detailed below.

### Are we on a List?

*'What? He's looking out for someone to take my place?' Bernard's voice was agonized. 'So it's actually decided? Did he mention Iceland? You say he did? Ford! Iceland?' He hung up the receiver and turned back to Lenina. His face was pale, his expression utterly dejected.*

*'What's the matter?' she asked.*

*'The matter?' He dropped heavily into a chair. 'I'm going to be sent to Iceland.'*

—Huxley, *Brave New World*, Chapter 6

So your PCs are getting a lot of hopeless dead-end hose-job missions. That differs

from their regular routine—how? Not much, except in the psychology of their situation. If you dangle before your players the notion their PCs' troubles have arisen from some particular, albeit unspecified, List—from some actual person, with a name and address and a central nervous system—you can then guide the players through powerful emotions, as follows:

### 1. 'Someone is doing this to us. Uhh.''

It is trivially easy to introduce this dark suspicion into the players' besieged craniums. A secret society contact or briefing officer mentions, 'Someone dropped these last few assignments on you from way up there. Got on anyone's List lately? Anyone powerful, I mean?'

Merely to hear this suspicion is, on the instant, for any wary **PARANOIA** player, to confirm it.

### 2. 'Someone powerful is doing this to us. Ooh! If we find him and stop him, we can get clear.'

It can be difficult to inspire this foolhardy ambition. Any **PARANOIA** player who does not respect power has already run out of clones and is now in the other room playing on his game console. Yet you do want to inspire hope, however fitful and fleeting. Hope arrives arm-in-arm with its dark dining companion, Fear.

You might have the same secret society contact present the idea—'We'll try to get you some leads to the fink, so you can take him out.' A vain hope, of course, but Alpha Complex is the catalogue showroom of vain hopes.

### 3. 'Someone powerful has enlisted one or more of us to spy on the others!'

This last step is your best-case scenario, your victory condition. Making the players fear some shadowy power is well and good, but—say it with us!—'The greatest threat in any **PARANOIA** player should always come from the other players.'

How? Count the ways: a moment of conversation overheard out of context ... a confidential C-mail misdirected from one PC to another—yet another news item from that garrulous secret-society contact.... You

# INTRODUCTION

can use any of these, and many more, to drop into one PC's ear the name of another PC. It is all a lie, a frame-up—but what is truth, anyway?

## 'Who put us on a List?'

*He raged against himself—what a fool! —against the Director—how unfair not to give him that other chance, that other chance which, he now had no doubt at all, he had always intended to take. And Iceland, Iceland ...*

– Huxley, *Brave New World*, Chapter 6

The second flavour of punishment duty paranoia: The players may never find out who assigned it or why. Sometimes identifying the potentate they offended is a quest worthy of Internal Security's Department of Unspecified Threat Assessment. The chief obstacle they face may be the Byzantine machinations of some deeply hidden enemy. Then again, maybe their chief obstacle is that you, the GM, have not even picked an enemy.

Really, why bother? Just listen to your players speculate. As they mull over the possible NPCs whom they may have offended, listen carefully for the one(s) that fill the players with the most anxiety. Take the named NPC(s) and imagine how things might be even worse than the players imagine. Is IntSec involved? Is each player's own secret society setting him up as a fall guy?

Again, you need not decide anything at all. Just, you know, raise a few possibilities in the players' minds. Then offer them a chance to investigate, and even retaliate. They might look on the Gray Subnets, the illicit data networks full of blackmail material and illegal stuff. They might pull in a secret society or service group favor. They might just bribe a briefing officer or a flunky at Troubleshooter Dispatch. Encourage them to use their Stealth and Management skills, as well as various Software and Wetware specialties and Secret skills. Let them feel they're actually making headway. Let them invite Hope in, so its companion Fear can tag along.

Inevitably the trail leads—do we even have to say this?—to their fellow players. Have the investigation turn up the names of a few PCs, or mention unnamed informants with tics and equipment suspiciously similar to a PC.

But do not let the investigation end there. It is worthwhile to let the Troubleshooters actually shoot or bribe or threaten or blackmail or inveigle somebody, so they think they might have taken themselves off the List.

Yes, you read us right: You want the players to think they may have succeeded. It sounds so un-PARANOIA doesn't it? But this paves the way for still another delicious development.

## 'Did we get off the List?'

*The words galvanized Bernard into violent and unseemly activity. [...] 'Oh, please don't send me to Iceland. I promise I'll do what I ought to do. Give me another chance. Please give me another chance.' The tears began to flow. 'I tell you, it's their fault,' he sobbed. 'And not to Iceland. Oh please, your fordship, please—' And in a paroxysm of abjection he threw himself on his knees before the Controller. Mustapha Mond tried to make him get up; but Bernard persisted in his grovelling; the stream of words poured out inexhaustibly. In the end the Controller had to ring for his fourth secretary.*

– Huxley, *Brave New World*, Chapter 16

So, having by now plumbed the depths of the latrine-scrubot-management experience, how do the discontented Troubleshooters know they're off someone's Faecal Roster? This is punishment duty's last variety of paranoia: The PCs always remain uncertain whether they have, in fact, resolved their problem with Mr. Big, or whether behind him there is a still more mysterious Mr. Bigger. Equally, they should suspect one or another PC is still conspiring to keep his rivals on the List.

As GM, you might think, 'Hey, I've been manipulating my players all along with these same tools—the NPC secret-society informant, the briefing officer, the random scrubot in the hallway. Will not the players be wise to this by now?' Tut, tut. You will be surprised. Players pay obsessive attention to their characters' safety and status, no matter the source of information. Keep on keeping on—that is, just keep offering them a few crumbs of information. Ration information jealously, and use your by-now-standard techniques to engineer anxiety and mutual suspicion.

The beautiful part about Alpha Complex—for your Game mastering purposes, we mean—is there is always room behind every shadowy conspiracy for a more shadowy, more conspiratorial conspiracy that was using the original conspiracy as its unwitting pawn. Every time the players think they have figured out who put them on this punishment duty, some new factoid convinces them of deeper plots and more inscrutable adversaries. Need these machinations make sense? No—they need only produce anxiety. Always another trapdoor...

## Sector Zero Missions

The three missions in this collection, all Classic-style jobs with the occasional leavening of Straight, will entertain your players while making their Troubleshooters wish they had called in sick.

- ☉ Gareth Hanrahan's 'Bubblegum Run' sends the Troubleshooters on a couple of annoying errands into Junior Crèches corrupted by Communist propaganda slipped into chewing-gum wrappers.
- ☉ In Saul Resnikoff's 'The Dinner Party', a BLUE citizen recruits the Troubleshooters for a dire emergency, on which the fate of Alpha Complex itself—uh, does not depend at all. In fact, he wants them to prepare an evening party for several high-clearance citizens. Well, what a relief! What could possibly go wrong?
- ☉ 'Lightning Rod' by Jeff Groves sends the Troubleshooters out onto the immense dome over Alpha Complex to set up an R&D experiment. And then another experiment. And another. Hey, what is all that ominous-looking gray stuff gathering overhead?

In each case we Famous Game Designers include suggestions to explain why the troubleshooters have received this punishment. At least, we might have included suggestions. If we remembered. Read them and see. If we missed one, well, it looks like we are headed out onto the dome ourselves....



## 2: Bubblegum Run

*Junior Citizens love Cone Rifle Bubblegum! It's the sticky chewy yummy gummy that's funny in your tummy! Comes FREE with special bonus Loyalty Comix! Put traitors on the run with Cone Rifle Bubblegum!*

### The Plot, In Bite-Sized Format

Evil Commies have put evil Commie propaganda into crates of Cone Rifle brand bubblegum. The Troubleshooters are sent to a crèche complex to locate and retrieve two crates of the treasonous gum. Their hunt is complicated in one crèche because the bubblegum there is actually experimental drug-filled Battlegum, which results in a room full of super-strong toddlers. Fortunately, the other crèche is full of the most loyal and untreasonous Junior Citizens ever...

In ancient times, school was a dystopian nightmare of mindless bureaucracy, arbitrary punishments and viscous petty politics dominated by backstabbing, cliques and persecution of anyone who is different. In Alpha Complex, however, the situation is reversed—it is all of society that the dystopian nightmare, whereas a citizen's years in the crèche are actually the happiest days of his life. The Computer knows that Junior Citizens are the future of Alpha Complex, and their impressionable, malleable, succulent minds must be carefully molded and protected. Therefore, Junior Citizens are indulged, cherished and given virtual immunity to accusations of treason until The Computer deems they have learned the true meaning of loyalty—when the Junior Citizens get dumped out into the workforce and get spied on, shot at, abused and drugged like every other citizen. Welcome to dystopia, population you.

While life in a crèche is actually comparatively pleasant, working in a crèche is one step below working as reactor shielding. The crèche administrators are much less trusted by The Computer than the students, so any attempt to discipline the spoiled brats is risky—all it takes is one kid screaming that the mean administrator is a mutant freak or a PURGE agent or a files harer, and the administrator is investigated, found guilty and replaced with alarming efficiency. The crèche administrators therefore minimize contact between themselves and the Junior Citizens as much as possible, to reduce

the chance of being reported/investigated/brainscrubbed/electrodes being attached in painful places. In the more efficient crèches, an administrator can go for years without seeing a child, as everything is handled through Educational and Morally Sound videos and bots.

In short: childhood in Alpha Complex is a magical time for the child, and more lethal than plutonium for everyone who has to deal with the child.

### The Mission Alert

As the theme of Sector Zero is punishment assignments, the first step is working out how the characters screwed up. In an ongoing campaign, the Troubleshooters should have an extensive library of past accidents, incidents and atrocities—just pick the most recent or most embarrassing. Alternatively, or for games with fresh Troubleshooters, the characters have not screwed up at all, but have in fact been framed for another Troubleshooter team's failing. See The Frame Option sidebar.

The mission alert arrives during the night, when the characters are asleep (or should be asleep—are any of them engaged in secret society missions during the nightcycle? If not, why are they neglecting their duties to the cause, whatever the cause is?). It is accompanied by flashing lights, alarms, sirens, klaxons and overdoses of airborne stimulants.

The characters are to report immediately to the ORS Sector Crèche for briefing by Administrator Pike-Y-CCR. A specially rerouted transbot will be departing from the station down the corridor in 28 seconds. 27 seconds. 26 seconds... The characters have to sprint down to the transbot to make it in time. Failing to make it to the transbot, or not presenting a proper ME card at the station checkpoint is an O4C offense. Make them hurry, run, rush, move move move to the briefing room.

### Never Work With Children or Bots

The ORS Sector crèche is located in an especially secure part of the sector. The characters have to pass through numerous checkpoints, showing their ME cards and mission briefings to a series of surly guards,

### The Frame Option

Horace-G-KRR was the team leader of a Troubleshooter team sent to deal with a Communist cell that was printing illegal Commie propaganda. Remarkably, the Troubleshooters succeeded in eliminating the Commies despite internal treachery, a food vat spillage, an experimental Treasonous Thought Detector Tube and a High Programmer's collection of lemmings. However, they completely failed to stop the Commie plot to distribute propaganda through the Cone Rifle Bubblegum factory. Rather than return to debriefing to face the shame of failure, demerits and probable execution, Horace-G-KRR seized on the Commie's printing press and computer system. He quickly forged a 'Post-Mission Debriefing Evaluation Form', pinning the blame for the failure on another Troubleshooter team – the player characters – and managed to switch that form with the actual Post-Mission Debriefing Evaluation Form.

If you run with this option, then many of the non-player characters encountered during this mission will mistake the characters for Horace-G-KRR's team, and may drop mentions of the characters' previous failings to deal with the Communist cell. Tracking down Horace-G-KRR and exacting revenge on him is outside the scope of this mission. This (and this is the clever bit) simultaneously is what we Famous Game Designers call 'future plot hooks' and 'laziness'.

Guardbots and blast doors before being allowed into the Crèche Complex itself. The last blast door—a huge slab of gray steel, pock-marked with ancient missile-impact craters—grinds slowly aside, to reveal the cheery, brightly-colored crèche complex beyond.

There are five main sections to the Crèche Complex.

Administration & Systems Control

- ☉ Embryo Containment and Decanting
- ☉ Type One Junior Citizen Control (Ages 0–4)
- ☉ Type Two Junior Citizen Control (Ages 5–9)
- ☉ Type Three Junior Citizen Control (Ages 10–14)

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These are arranged in a huge pentagon around a central tower. Messages to encourage loyalty among the Junior Citizens boom out of huge speakers on the tower at random intervals. Some are subliminal, others are loud enough to shatter bone. Whenever there's a pause in the game, feel free to bellow THE COMPUTER LOVES YOU or TRUST NO ONE! or YOU ARE THE FUTURE OF ALPHA COMPLEX. ALL OTHER FUTURES ARE DEPRECIATED! or CLEAN MINDS IN CLEAN BODIES ARE FUN! There are over a thousand Junior Citizens in each section.

The administrator, Pile-B-CCR, is found in the Administration & Systems Control. The entrances to this section are secured using ME card readers which check one thing—the clone's age. If the clone is below the requisite age for entry (15+)\*, then he is removed by bots and returned to the appropriate Junior Citizen section of the crèche. No children are allowed in Administration & Systems Control—the administrator loathes the filthy, treasonous little vat-slimers.

\* Note that in a statistically insignificant\*\* number of cases, a replacement clone can have its age 'reset' on its ME card, thus resulting in the citizen having an official age of only a few minutes. This would further result in the citizen being treated as a newly decanted infant by the bots in the crèche complex. Such ME card errors are corrected within a short\*\* period, whereupon the citizen's age returns to its correct value.

\*\* The exact values for 'statistically insignificant' and 'short' are defined by CPU, and have in the past been defined as 'below 1530%' or 'less than the half-life of Cold Fun', for example.

### Pile-B's Briefing The First

Pile-B's career in Alpha Complex has stalled thanks to his assignment to the crèche. There really is not a great deal of scope for advancement. Thanks to his paranoid fear of the children, he has avoided the usual fate of crèche staff (being reported by a vindictive kid), but this has also prevented him from being reassigned to another position, which might be technically lower in clearance but would at least have the potential for promotion. Pile-B's been BLUE for years, and is very, very sick of it. He has every intention of taking all his bitterness out on the Troubleshooters.

He reads the mission briefing with obvious bile.

*'We have received intelligence that a consignment of Cone Rifle brand Bubblegum have been compromised by saboteurs; specifically, the special bonus content consisting of issues of 'The Adventures of Vulture Trooper 47' has been replaced by illegal and dangerous Communist propaganda material. This consignment was delivered to the ORS Sector Junior Citizen Crèche Complex. Your mission, troubleshooters, is to locate and safely dispose of any and all Communist Propaganda in the ORS Sector Junior Citizen Crèche Complex.'*

*You are reminded of the importance and value of Junior Citizens. Their safety must be your first priority.'*

Play Pile-B as a withered old Victorian schoolteacher. He would quite like education if they brought back the cane. And maybe the whip. He wants the Troubleshooters to either be as incredibly efficient as possible (thus solving the bubblegum problem) or else totally incompetent (so he can blame any and all problems in the crèche on their bungling). Pile-B is not above sabotaging the characters to accomplish the latter aim.

According to his records, the crèche complex got a shipment of two cases of Cone Rifle Bubblegum this morning. One case was sent to each of the two junior sections, as a special Sixday treat. He is attempting to track down exactly where the cases have ended up, but it will take some time—and anyway, the characters need to be cleared to work with Junior Citizens first. They are to report to Gail-G-FPC in the Embryo Containment and Decanting section for training and equipment before they can be permitted to enter the other sections of the crèche.

### Embryo Control

New citizens in Alpha Complex are conceived in vitro and incubated in giant steel artificial wombs. Note that this is not the same place as the cloning banks—when the innocent babes in the steel wombs grow up, become full citizens and get zapped for treason or whatever, then replacements are cloned and MemoMaxed elsewhere in the complex. Here, it is just the miracle of creation, several thousand times a day.

#### Pile-B-CCR

Crèche Administrator; HPD&MC, FCCC-P, Bureaucratic Intuition (Power 10); Management 12, Hygiene 16, Interrogation 14, Intimidation 16, Oratory 16  
Stealth 10, High Alert 14, Surveillance 14  
Violence 8, Energy Weapons 12  
Hardware 10, Bot Ops 14  
Software 10, Bot Programming 14  
Wetware 12, Medical 14, Pharmatherapy 14, Psychology 16  
Armor: Blue reflex (E1)  
Weapons: Energy pistol (W3K)

Citizens are decanted after nine months in the steel womb, and transferred to Orientation and Welcome Capsules which provide sustenance and life support for the newly arrived citizens, as well as playing ancient 'welcome, new employee' tapes on continuous loop. The earliest memories of most citizens are of a droning voice telling them about Rule 324/a, Proper Disposal Of Paper Waste.

Embryo Control in ORS Sector is the private domain of scientist, researcher and visionary Gail-G-FPC, who's assigned to R&D. Gail-G's mission is to improve and streamline embryo processing and junior citizen training. She has several radical new initiatives which she hopes to have implemented throughout Alpha Complex within the next few years, primary among which is the 'Buddy Program'. According to her research, it is theoretically possible for a human to carry an embryo inside the body for the entire gestation period. There are several obsolete and useless organs that could be adapted for this purpose. While one in particular seemed especially promising, the CPU board who reviewed her initial proposal vetoed it because using an organ available only to female clones violated Happiness Directive 1037, which specifically stated that R&D projects cannot give preference to citizens based on gender. Therefore, Gail-G intends for Appendix Buddies to become the new primary means of (re)production in Alpha Complex. This probably sounds very icky to the Troubleshooters, but the project has the support of several senior Humanists who are trying to get natural childbirth back into Alpha Complex by the back door.

Fortunately for the Troubleshooters, her experiments are not yet at the point where she is ready for human test subjects,



# SECTOR ZERO CLEARANCE ULTRAVIOLET

but the GM should have her describe her theories with mounting enthusiasm, so the players assume that they are about to be volunteered for her procedure. Fear and ignorance, ignorance and fear.

What the Troubleshooters do have to go through, though, is a ratification process to ensure they are pure of thought and mind enough to work with Junior Citizens. Each Troubleshooter is sealed in a private booth, where images flash up on screen. There are three buttons on the booth—TERMINATE, PROTECT and REPORT. The Troubleshooter has to slap the appropriate button in response to the image within an appropriate response time. The easiest way to simulate this is to read out the image descriptions below to all the players and have them shout out TERMINATE, PROTECT or REPORT. Characters who shout out the right response get one point. Shouting out the wrong response, other than REPORT, costs two points. Shouting out REPORT when it should be TERMINATE or PROTECT is worth zero points. Being the last Troubleshooter to shout a response costs five points.

The booth stays sealed after the last image is shown—the testing booth system has been hacked by the various secret societies, and the Troubleshooters get their secret society briefings now.

After the characters have gotten their secret society assignments, the pods open and the



characters get the results of the ratification process. Add up each Troubleshooter's points and consult the table to see what they are qualified to do with Junior Citizens.

**Safety Guns:** Troubleshooters keep their lasers handy, to shoot Commies, mutants and traitors. However The Computer does not want random laser fire going off where it endangers its beloved Junior Citizens. Therefore most Troubleshooters in a crèche will be issued with safety guns, not their normal laser pistols. A safety gun looks like a slightly bulkier pistol with an extra gun camera. It works like a normal pistol, with one important difference: when the trigger is pulled, the image from the gun camera is transmitted back to a review board.

If the review board agrees that what the Troubleshooter is aiming at is a Clear and Present Threat and does not unduly endanger any Junior Citizens, then they transmit an Approval To Use Lethal Energy message to the gun, which then automatically fires. Basically, there is a random delay of anything between a second and several hours between pulling the trigger and the gun actually discharging. The gun certainly will not fire if it was initially aimed at an invalid target, but there's nothing stopping an enterprising Troubleshooter from, say, pointing his gun at a folder full of Commie propaganda,

triggering a Request For Approval To Use Lethal Energy, then aiming at his Team Leader before the Approval comes back.

**Querfermaline:** This drug enhances sensitivity and caring. Victi-, er, users become incredibly empathic and caring, especially toward children, cute puppies, shiny things, and their invisible friends. Thoughts of violence and hatred become almost impossible. Characters on Querfermaline suffer a -4 penalty toward any and all Violence rolls. A tablet's effects last about 30 minutes.

Characters who come off a dose of Querfermaline, however, have all their repressed rage and paranoia come back in a huge rush. Characters get a +4 bonus to all Violence rolls for a minute or so, and feel the urge to respond to any irritation or problem with laser fire.

Once the Troubleshooters have been cleared to enter the crèche, Gail-G sends them back to Pile-B.

## Pile-B's Briefing the Second

The Crèche Administrator is even less happy when the drugged-up Troubleshooters return to him. He has lost contact with the hugbots in the Level One (Ages 3-6) crèche, as well as with the staff who were escorting a school tour of Level Two (Ages 7-10) Junior Citizens to a hydroponics bay. Which crèche section do they want to visit first?

The next two sections of the scenario can be tackled in any order.

## Combat Babysitting

The youngest Junior Citizens—toddlers and children up to six years old—almost never see other humans. Their education is limited to fun games and teaching videos. Their crèche environment is all brightly colored plastic blocks and wipe-clear surfaces.

Gail-G-FPC  
Crèche Scientist; R&D, Humanist, Deep Thought (Power 12);  
Management 8, Bootlicking 12, Oratory 12  
Stealth 8  
Violence 10, Energy Weapons 14, Projectile Weapons 14  
Hardware 12, Bot Ops 16, Chemical Engineering 16  
Software 10  
Wetware 12, Biosciences 16, Cloning 16, Medical 16  
Armor: Green reflex (E1)  
Weapons: Green laser pistol (W3K)

## 2: BUBBLEGUM RUN

### Test Booth Image Response Table

Image	Correct Response
A man wearing a furry hat emblazoned with a hammer and sickle, carrying a bomb.	TERMINATE.
An absurdly cute little Junior Citizen, carrying a My First Laser Pistol and wearing a 'Friend Computer is my best friend' badge.	PROTECT.
A broken security camera pointing at a door marked 'CRÈCHE'.	REPORT.
A trio of Junior Citizens, pointing laser pistols at a man wearing a furry hat emblazoned with a hammer and sickle, carrying a bomb	PROTECT – the focus is the kids, not the Commie.
A Junior Citizen pointing laser pistols at a man wearing a furry hat emblazoned with a hammer and sickle, carrying a bomb. The Junior Citizen has a third eye.	TERMINATE – the kid is a mutant.
Er. You have no idea what this photo is. It's all blurry. There's something that looks like a close-up of a nose or something. Or maybe a tunnel.	PROTECT – the photo actually shows a Junior Citizen standing in front of an onrushing transbot. It is just that the photographer stood in front of the transbot...
A crowd of Junior Citizens sitting in front of a vidscreen. There is a man wearing a furry hat standing next to the vidscreen, his finger on the 'PLAY' button. The vidscreen displays a Hammer and Sickle.	REPORT – the video is actually a training video, teaching Junior Citizens of the Evils of Communism. However, the citizen wearing the furry hat is obviously deviating from approved uniform standards, and so should be reported.
A door marked 'Crèche'. Attached to the door is a complicated-looking device, with a timer. The timer is counting down.	PROTECT.
A trio of Junior Citizens, pointing laser pistols at a man wearing a furry hat emblazoned with a hammer and sickle, carrying a bomb.	TERMINATE – while this image is virtually identical to the previous one, the focus is actually on the Commie this time.
An entirely blank screen.	REPORT – the testing booth is defective.

### Test Booth Qualification Table

Score	Qualification
6 or more points	Complete! The Troubleshooter may enter the crèche carrying whatever equipment and weapons he wishes, and is under no restrictions.
1 to 5 points	Partial. The Troubleshooter is allowed to enter the crèche, but may not bring in any weapons apart from a single Safety Gun (see below).
0 points	Borderline. As Partial, above, but the citizen is also demoted one security level while within the crèche, to ensure he follows the orders of more competent and sensitive citizens.
-1 to -10 points	Failed. The citizen is simply not trusted to work with Junior Citizens due to his lack of sensitivity. The Troubleshooter's Happiness Officer is ordered to keep this citizen on a course of Querferminine (see below) while within the crèche. He may carry a Safety Gun.
-11 or more	Grotesque Failure. Oh dear. The citizen is brainscrubbed, then put on Querferminine. The combination of Querferminine and the brainscrub drugs causes severe hallucinations, and the poor citizen is not even allowed carry a Safety Gun into the crèche.

Troubleshooters will feel as if they are inside an R&D laboratory maze.

To prevent the children from bonding with adult citizens and forming depreciated relationships like trust and so forth when they should be loving The Computer above all else, the crèche is staffed with hugbots, a specialized design of bot. A hugbot's head resembles the all-seeing eye of The Computer, while its body is a specially sculpted curvy plastic shell designed to trigger instinctive feelings of maternal

bonding in the children. Junior Citizens are supposed to love The Computer like a parent. Of course, since hugbots are designed by a committee, they look unnervingly wrong, being composed of a dozen executives' vague intuitions about what is reassuring and parental; the result is a sort of caring plastic camel shape.

The Level One Crèche is a huge chamber, the size of an aircraft hanger, arranged in the shape of a big smiley face. The 'mouth' is a semi-circle of dormitories where the Junior Citizens are stored

during the nightcycle. The 'eyes' are the two video towers, covered in huge screens displaying propaganda and educational videos. The rest of the massive room is filled with climbing frames, toys, blankets, security cameras and other junk—several HPD&MC construction companies use the crèche as a dumping ground for spare building materials. All they need do is spray-paint the junk a kid-friendly color and fill out a Temporary Reassignment of Purpose Form, and 5,000 reactor overspill pipe segments become 5,000 Happy Fun Crawling Tubes.





## Secret Society Mission Table

Society	Mission
Anti-Mutant	This is a rare chance to infiltrate a crèche. We suspect that young mutants have not yet learned to control and hide their mutant powers. We want you to push the youngest Junior Citizens in the crèche into situations where they are forced to use their powers. We will then tag and monitor these mutants.
Computer Phreaks	S0m3 of teh JC in the crèche r n00b coders. Take this print-out of coding tips, find them, and give it to them so they'll have madder skillz.
Communists	Rescue the propaganda, obviously. Get it into the hands of the impressionable Junior Citizens.
Corpore Metal	Gail-G-FPC's plan to get rid of artificial wombs is contrary to our goals. Terminate her.
Death Leopard	The only thing better than unruly Junior Citizens is Junior Citizens with heavy firepower. Get whatever Troubleshooter equipment or weapons you can into the hands of Junior Citizens.
FCCC-P	The Junior Citizens are especially loved by Friend Computer! Protect them at all costs!
Frankenstein Destroyers	The bots they use in the crèche are corrupting the youth of Alpha Complex. Destroy as many as possible!
Free Enterprise	Rumor has it that one of the crates of bubblegum was actually a cover for a shipment of experimental weapons. Capture these weapons and replace the crate with an actual crate of bubblegum.
Humanists	The crèche system is where young citizens are taught to accept the control of The Computer and its minions. You have to teach the children to think for themselves! Free their minds!
Illuminati	It is important that the amount of intrigue and conspiracy in Alpha Complex continues to rise. Here is propaganda material for four different secret societies. You are to distribute it among the impressionable Junior Citizens in the 10–14 crèche. (Roll randomly to see which societies' propaganda is provided.)
Mystics	There's a drug, Querferminine, which is given to Troubleshooters who're dealing with Junior Citizens. Get as much of it as you can.
Pro Tech	We have got a new gadget for you to test. It's a high-speed teaching helmet, it gives a clone a first-class education in electronics in a single burst. However, it fries the synapses of anyone who's used it so far. We think a child's mind is able to survive the burst. Their brains are all unformed and squishable.
Psion	Our psychics have detected a Machine Empath mutant in one of the crèches. Locate and protect him or her, and recruit him to the Psion cause.
PURGE	Destroy as much of the crèche complex or its ability to function as possible. However, the hated Computer will seize on any injury to Junior Citizens by PURGE for propaganda purposes, so you must cause this damage without undue loss of Junior Citizen life. (The loss of adult citizen life is entirely acceptable.)
Romantics	The minds of the Junior Citizens are more open to the wonders of the past than those of full citizens who have been crushed by The Computer. Speak with the children; tell them tales of long ago. Play Old Reckoning games with them. Bring them joy.
Sierra Club	One of the crèches was scheduled to pay a visit to a hydroponics bay in ORS Sector. There's actually a secret entrance to the Outdoors in that bay—make sure it's not found by The Computer's agents.

The first thing the characters notice when they're ushered into the Level One Crèche complex is the crushed chassis of a hugbot laying on the ground in front of them. The machine has been torn in two, plastic and metal and wires have been twisted and ripped by some tremendous force. It bleeps pathetically and mutters 'love...Computer...love...Computer...' over and over again. There are no other bots or Junior Citizens visible.

As they examine the bot, have the characters make High Alert checks. Those who pass catch a glimpse of movement in the shadows underneath the debris near the bot. Something's moving in there, something small and fast. If the characters investigate, the whatever-it-is moves with incredible speed to vanish inside an air vent. Poking around, the characters do find a tattered gum wrapper.

The bubblegum in this crate was replaced with experimental Battlegum due to an

error. (This error was actually caused by Communist saboteurs. What are the odds of an error actually being caused by Commie saboteurs?) All of the children in the Level One crèche have had at least one stick of the experimental gum, which contains a considerable amount of Thymoglandin and other combat drugs. It has boosted their speed and strength considerably, basically giving all the kids the equivalent of the Adrenaline Control mutation. It also boosted their aggression and made them hyperactive (so, no change there then.)

## 24 BUBBLEGUM RUN

Once the characters have read the wrapper and realized that they are in the middle of a room full of Junior Citizens on combat drugs, they hear rustling and movement all around them. A few moments later, a Junior Citizen pops her head out of a pile of blankets. She has an expression that's two parts wonder and joy to three parts deranged wrath. 'TWOOBLESHOOTERS' she squeaks excitedly, her eyes bright with years of indoctrination in how troubleshooters are the heroic defenders of Alpha Complex. She bounds toward them, pushing climbing frames and other obstacles out of the way with her drug-fueled mega-strength.

Then, dozens of other lethally dangerous toddlers emerge from nowhere and charge the characters.

### Torn Apart By Drug-Crazed Toddlers Is How I Expected To Die

The toddlers are not actually trying to kill the Troubleshooters. Left to their own devices, the kids would just hug them, play with them, maybe poke fingers in their eyes or gnaw their noses or play with their laser pistols or fold their limbs like little toys. Ok, maybe they are trying to kill them, especially with their Battlegum-boosted strength.

If the characters stay and fight, they will likely get torn apart. Their Safety Guns obviously cannot be fired at Junior Citizens; if the characters have real weapons, then they can fire at the ravaging horde of kids and get terminated for it. The best places to hide are in the central dormitories, or by climbing up the two video towers. Either option is resolved with Violence/Agility checks; any Troubleshooters who fail to beat the kids' roll is caught and ripped apart.

Once the characters have found safety, they need to work out a way to deal with the kids and find the Commie propaganda.

### Customer Service

The obvious plan is for the characters to call the listed customer service line from the tattered Battlegum wrapper.

### Handout – Combat Gum Wrapper

**New COMBAT FLAVOR gum! Same great taste, more great stimulants! Cleans teeth, freshens breath, boosts strength and aggression! CHEW FOR VICTORY!**

Please note that Combat Flavor Cone Rifle Brand Battlegum is an experimental joint venture of R&D and the Alpha Complex Armed Forces, and is not yet a PLC Authorized Production Foodstuff or Medication. Therefore, you are directed to use form R&D/53320/a (End-user Evaluation of Experimental Medication) or R&D/53320/b (Medical Officer's Report of Experimental Medication-Related Death) instead of PLC/322545-a (Customer Satisfaction Sub-threshold Notification) or PLC/322245-c1 (Post-Clone Refund Request). In the unlikely event that you experience any problems or adverse reactions to Combat Flavor Cone Rifle Battlegum, please contact our technical support team at [com://ac.r&d.bio/com/cr/ts](mailto://ac.r&d.bio/com/cr/ts). Combat Flavor Cone Rifle Battlegum is not designed for use by registered mutants, warbots, junior citizens or citizens who have a fitness rating below 520. Please share and enjoy this Combat Flavor Cone Rifle Battlegum!

When they call, they get what sounds like an automated response (press one for billing information, press two for information about billing, press three for information on how to pay a bill and so forth). This is actually the voice of jackobot #432A4, assigned to the Cone Rifle Battlegum research labs as an assistant and general dogsbot. #432A4 is malfunctioning thanks to a Corpore Metal sympathizer who messed with its Asimov and humour circuits, and now enjoys messing with the minds of callers to the research labs. It will pretend to be a dumb voice-recognition program for as long as it can, but its electronic sniggering will

eventually give it away, and to avoid being reprogrammed it will transfer the characters over to a bored lab tech, Tim-Y-RAS-2.

As far as the R&D lab knows, the consignment of Battlegum was delivered to a Vulture Squadron assigned to battling an unknown foe. The lab tech is therefore expecting a call from some stuffy yet moronic Armed Forces officer who will ask questions like 'will this Battlegum enable my men to keep fighting even if they get hit by a commie nuke? If not, why not?', instead of a bunch of Troubleshooters surrounded by a ravaging horde of super-strong toddlers. Once the characters make the situation

clear to Tim-Y-RAS and agree to fill out a host of product review forms, he informs them of how to clear the Battlegum from the Junior Citizens' systems – get them to go to sleep, which will flush the Thymoglandin combat drugs out.

Even if the players never think of using the contact number on the gum wrapper, then they may hit on the idea of getting the kids to sleep as an alternative to shooting them.



### Sleepy Sleepy Sleepcycle

There are several ways to get the kids to sleep. The Computer pumps gaseous Sandallathon into the air supply of the crèche each night;



# SECTOR ZERO CLEARANCE ULTRAVIOLET

Level 1 Junior Citizens  
 Toddler; Adrenaline Control (Power 15)  
 Management 4  
 Stealth 12, Sneaking 16  
 Violence 12 (4), Agility 16 (8), Unarmed  
 Combat 14 (6)  
 Armor: None  
 Weapons: Unarmed Combat, O3K  
 (boosted due to drugs)

however, the control mechanism for this system was damaged by the super-strong Junior Citizens, so they will have to make their way across the crèche to the wall and repair it (Technical/Habitat Engineering or Wetware/Pharmatherapy). If they do this, they can flood the whole area with sleeping gas.

Alternatively the Troubleshooters could just tire the Junior Citizens out. Once they survive the initial assault by the children they will discover that the children absolutely idealize them as Troubleshooting Heroes of the Complex and will listen to their orders. However the kids will bore easily, so the characters will have to entertain them and keep them busy to tire them out.

Once asleep the Junior Citizens visibly relax as the drugs leave their systems. They can then be safely dealt with. The team will find scraps of the Communist propaganda scattered around, mixed in with gum wrappers, toys, torn sheets of metal and so on.

## High Programmer of the Flies

Administrator Pike-Y has traced the second crate of suspect bubblegum to a Level 2 crèche, which was going on a scheduled excursion to a hydroponics bay outside the crèche complex. The administrator does

remind the Troubleshooters that the Junior Citizens must still be protected and that the normal rules still apply (Querfermaline doses, safety guns and so forth).

The hydroponics bay is a short transbot ride away. It is a largely uninhabited section of Alpha Complex, full of genetically engineered plants in a huge hothouse. Every few months the plants are harvested and pulped for processing in the food vats. This particular bay has not been harvested for years—it contains a secret exit to Outdoors used by the Sierra Club, so the society has removed the bay from the harvesting schedule, it has become overgrown.

When the characters arrive at the hydroponics bay they come across the transbot used by the excursion. It has been stripped of all supplies. Underneath one of the seats is a single sheet of Commie propaganda. A short distance beyond that, in the jungle, is a sign written in blood on a plastic panel torn from the transbot. It reads 'COMMIES STAY OUT'.

## What Happened Here?

The teachers accompanying the excursion opened the crate of bubblegum in the transbot. The kids recognized the Commie propaganda for what it was, and assumed that their teachers were actually treasonous Communist sympathizers trying to corrupt them. Like good Junior Citizens, they acted promptly, capturing and tying up their teachers. The leader of the crèche kids decided that they had to assume that all of Alpha Complex had fallen to Communism, so they have set themselves up as the Loyalist Citizens' Counter-Revolutionary Guerilla Brigade and hid in the hydroponic jungle.

Note that the bubblegum here is entirely normal gum, not the experimental drug-filled Battlegum the characters may have encountered in the other crèche. We urge you to suggest and imply that these kids are hyped up on killer gum, of course, just to keep the players on edge.

There's no sign of the rest of the propaganda, or the bubblegum, or the kids, or their teachers. The Troubleshooters have to push into the steamy jungle to find them.

## The Loyalist Citizens' Counter-Revolutionary Guerilla Brigade

There are about 50 Junior Citizens in the Loyalist Citizens' Revolutionary Guerilla Brigade, led by William-J-ORS. They have set up a camp in the depths of the hydroponic jungle, made of rough treehouses and lean-tos. Although only here a few hours, they have already degenerated into Alpha Complex-flavored savagery. In their perfect new society citizens wear muddy facemarks denoting their security clearance. HPD&MC are busy building more treehouses. R&D are feeling sick, having completed their first experiments in seeing which plants are edible. Transport Services are tying vines around the camp to swing on while Power Services are trying to build a reactor out of dirt and leaves. Most of the young Junior Citizens are assigned to Armed Forces and have fashioned rudimentary weapons.

William-J-ORS is the High Programmer of the Loyalist Citizens' Counter-Revolutionary Guerilla Brigade and the one who built the Emergency Backup Computer. The Emergency Backup Computer consists of a Miku-U-LEM Talking Action Figure on a stick. Under normal circumstances the action



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figure can say any of ten popular slogans, which young William-J would then interpret for his fellow guerillas. However William-J unknowingly possesses a powerful variant of the Machine Empath mutation so he is able to have it say whatever wants. It is this that allowed him Junior Citizen to organize the Loyalist Citizens' Counter-Revolutionary Guerilla Brigade so quickly.

The four teachers were tied up and thrown into Confession Booths (pits) at the back of the camp. A hidden exit to Outdoors is near the pits, the kids have not discovered it yet, this conceivably could be used to escape. The communist propaganda is buried under the Emergency Backup Computer.

## We're Not Commies, I Swear. The Doll's Lying

To retrieve the propaganda the Troubleshooters have to deal with the Loyalist Citizens' Counter-Revolutionary Guerilla Brigade. The kids have been told by William-J that everyone in the old Alpha Complex is probably a Commie Mutant Traitor and that they cannot be trusted. Attempts to convince the Junior Citizens that the Troubleshooters are on a mission from The Computer is futile, because as far as they know The old Computer has been compromised by Commie programmers. If they ask about the Commie propaganda then the Loyalist Citizens' Counter-Revolutionary Guerilla Brigade assume that they are Communists trying to retrieve their treasonous lies. Run this as a nightmare parody of Alpha Complex as filtered through a kid's brainwashed mind.

The Troubleshooters have several options. They can submit to the rule of William-J, entering his new society as lowly INFRAREDS and working their way up. After William-J, the authorities in the Loyalist Citizens' Counter-Revolutionary Guerilla Brigade are the various department heads—Joe-J the bullying head of the Armed Forces, sickly Pig-J of R&D, irritatingly precise young Alice-J of CPU, slogan-chanting Marty-J of HPD&MC, not-very-bright Gary-J of Power Services, and the anonymous and quiet Serena-J of IntSec.

If they try to use their PDCs to contact the rest of Alpha Complex and thus prove that The Computer is still running and not taken over by International Communism, then you can use William-J's Machine Empath ability to ruin their plans. His Machine Empath is more powerful than usual; machines will

Generic Spearcarrying Guerilla Junior Citizen  
 Mutant Power Varies  
 Management 8, Bootlicking 12  
 Stealth 10, Sneaking 14  
 Violence 8, Hand Weapons 10  
 Hardware 6  
 Software 6  
 Wetware 6  
 Armor: None.  
 Weapons: Spear or bow (S5K)

William-J-ORS  
 Machine Empathy/Control (Power 15)  
 Management 10, Chutzpah 14, Oratory 14, Moxie 14  
 Stealth 10, Sneaking 14  
 Violence 8, Hand Weapons 10  
 Hardware 6  
 Software 6  
 Wetware 6  
 Armor: None.  
 Weapons: None.

pick up on his unconscious desires, so if he believes The Computer has turned Commie, then the nearest CompNode will actually reprogram itself to keep him happy.

Fighting the kids is a risky option—while they do not have the strength of the toddlers in the Level One crèche, there are 50 of them armed with primitive bows and spears.

If the characters appeal to the Emergency Backup Computer when William-J is not present or if he fails to use his Machine Empath power, then roll on the Slogan Table below. The Junior Citizens will interpret the doll's words as oracular commands from The Computer.

Perhaps the best approach is to prove that William-J is a mutant, turning his followers against him and removing his Computer-mandated protection. Once the characters have located and retrieved the propaganda, they can just flee the hydroponics bay, leaving the kids to their new perfect society.

## Getting Out of Sticky Situations

Once the characters have secured the propaganda, they can leave the crèche complex, secure in the knowledge they've completed their hazardous punishment mission. Pile-B is grudgingly appreciative, and dozens of loyal young Junior Citizens line up and sing loyalty songs as they leave. It makes a citizen proud to be honored by the future of Alpha Complex.

When the Troubleshooters return to their quarters, they discover that the Junior Citizens were not the only people who appreciated their competent handling of the mission. Waiting there for each of them is a parcel of gum, sent by a grateful Cone Rifle Bubblegum Concern service firm. A few moments later, each Troubleshooter's PDC bleeps, informing him that he will shortly be visited by an IntSec interviewer, to conduct a final debriefing in order to clear the stain of the mission failure that led to this Sector Zero mission. The Troubleshooter is instructed to remain in his quarters and wait for the IntSec officer.

It is truly unfortunate that the thank you gum happens to be from the same batch of Commie-tainted gum as were the deliveries to the crèche....

## Slogan Table

Roll	Slogan
1-2	Trust No One!
3-4	Keep Your Laser Handy!
5-6	I Love Friend Computer!
7-8	Commies are Everywhere! Stay Alert!
9-10	Call IntSec! Report Your Friends and Family!
11-12	Glory Glory Hail Computer!
13-14	It's Good To Have Drugs!
15-16	I'm Happy! Are You Happy? Happiness is Mandatory!
17-18	Train Hard, Trust The Computer, And You Too Can Be A Troubleshooter!
19-20	That's Another Commie Terminated!



## 3: The Dinner Party

### Introduction

The Troubleshooters must help a BLUE citizen host a formal dinner party for three INDIGO citizens.

What, you don't think that is punishment? Okay, you go and throw a dinner party for several senior executives, from cultures you are completely unfamiliar with, on less than one day's notice, with your career on the line. Let us know how much you enjoy it.

Like the other missions in Sector Zero, this mission is supposed to be a punishment for screwing up in a non-treasonous sort of way. If this is the Troubleshooters' first mission, play a few short pre-mission scenes with them and ask them to invent the ways they failed miserably. (If it's not their first mission, then they have most likely already failed miserably. If they have not, put them on probation for being suspiciously squeaky-clean, and then run scenes as above.)

### The Plot

Samuel-I-GMQ-4, a Bishop in the FCCC-P secret society, conceived a revolutionary plan to spread the One True Word: non-stop words of wisdom from The Computer, delivered by millions of adorable petbots. These bots would follow citizens around and bond with their owners. Once they were omnipresent, the petbots would all connect wirelessly to The Computer, download Holy Wisdom and expose the citizens to the Ultimate Truth 24/7. It would be Heaven in Alpha Complex.

Samuel-I is a great concept man but not particularly skilled. He needed someone to design, build and create these bots. Smart enough to realize traitors and heathens abound in official channels, he arranged through the Church to contract out the job to a Pro Tech cell. Pro Tech assigned the hardware engineering to Paolo-B-SSC-3, degree-15 Worthy Geek. They subcontracted the software job to elite Computer Phreak Frances-I-RCO-8. What they did not know was that Frances-I happens to be a spy for the Humanists.

Frances-I knew she had to satisfy both the Humanist need to prevent the Computer from being at every citizen's heels and the Computer Phreak need to be able to do such a cool project. While she thought about the former, she worked on the latter.

Making the petbots' network connections work would be a piece of cake, but the petbots had to be absolutely adorable. Like most Phreaks, Frances-I was very weak on 'adorable'. But she happened to know a Romantic, Shayna-I-MPI-10, who had a large collection of Old Reckoning RoboPets. Frances-I spent long weeks with Shayna-I learning about RoboPet artificial intelligence and long hours with Samuel-I understanding his requirements.

After months of work, Frances-I generated the firmware and sent it to Paolo-B. Now all she needed was a way to ensure the bot did not work while avoiding the blame. She had just the thing—Shayna-I. From her long conversations with Shayna-I, she was able to tell that Shayna-I was actually a Pro Tech spy on the Romantics. Frances-I casually worked into a conversation her desire to see the final product before delivery, and Shayna-I agreed wholeheartedly.

Shayna-I knew Pro Tech has been trying to improve its image, and this was a chance to do it. Working through a convoluted and hard-to-trace contact chain, she arranged for Paolo-B's Pro Tech contacts to instruct him to host a formal 'product demo' dinner for Samuel-I. 'Make us look good' they told him. 'Invite the two other INDIGOs to the dinner, to help if anything goes wrong. Feed them all well, show them a good time, and only then demo the bot.'

Paolo-B, seeing a dinner with INDIGOs as a chance for promotion, agreed. During the weeks he was building the motherboard, installing the firmware and integrating them into the prototype bot he had been spending the past few months on, he arranged for a BLUE Room Caterers service firm, Happy Party! PLC, to host the event. Arrangements were made and invitations sent.

When Frances-I received her invitation she set her plans into motion. First, she arranged for the Humanists to sabotage the demo by planting an electronics inhibitor in Paolo-B's suite. The inhibitor would disable all electronics in Paolo-B's apartment—bots, lasers, PDCs, kitchen appliances, Corpore Metal enhancements, everything. With Paolo-B unable to properly host the event or demo the bot, Frances-I hoped to convince Samuel-I that Paolo-B was being punished by The Computer for daring to try such a thing and FCCC-P should abandon

the bot as a tool of the Anti-Computer. To prevent Paolo-B from simply dismantling the inhibitor, she attached a motion-activated mechanical bomb to it. The contraption was to be planted the night before the party.

Second, she waited until it was too close to the event for Happy Party! PLC to pull out gracefully, and hired them away for another event. Happy Party! PLC was all too happy to take an INDIGO's higher payment. But the service firm did not want to look bad to a BLUE. With only limited resources, and not wanting to help their competitors, they realized their best option was to have a Troubleshooter team arrange the party as a service service. They bundled together a full set of instructions, requested a BLUE-Clearance Troubleshooter team, and sent the request off to Troubleshooter Central.

The night before the party, while Paolo-B slept, the Humanists snuck into his suite and planted the active inhibitor. They then trashed the place as quietly as they could and left Death Leopard graffiti on several surfaces to deflect suspicion.

When Paolo-B woke this morning, with all his plans in place, he was feeling great, until he realized he overslept. Curious as to why his alarm did not go off, and why his bedside lamp would not turn on, he stumbled out of bed, flipped on the overhead lights, opened the door to the main room—and froze, just like his bots.

As a Pro Tech Worthy Geek, he quickly realized he was impacted by an inhibitor. In no time he found it and the attached bomb. Of course, he knew how to disable it, but there was no time—it was Mandatory Downsizing Day at his service firm, and he had to get there as soon as possible. But he also needed his place cleaned up.

Quickly moving his immobile bot staff into his bedroom, he grabbed his stuff and left. He PDC'ed an urgent call to Troubleshooter headquarters for a cleaning staff (no time to haggle with a service firm for cleaning) and relying on Happy Party! PLC to get the party running fine, took off for work.

Your Troubleshooters receive this assignment. And since they are going to that suite anyway, there is this service service they are asked to take on...

# 3. DINNER PARTY

## We Have to do What?

The Troubleshooters are urgently summoned to their home sector's Briefing Room 845-187b (Tension level 5). The briefing officer, Russell-Y-MWK-4, is quite amused at the Troubleshooters' forthcoming mission, and finds it difficult to contain his laughter. He asks the team to sit and defer any questions until after he's briefed them.

*'Troubleshooter Team Tango-Tango-Forty-Nine! You have been assigned a vitally [chuckle] 'important' [snort] 'mission that will help keep Alpha Complex running to' [giggle] 'optimum capacity! Haaaah-hahaha! Excuse me. You are to go to Sector TWL, Room B395, where you will perform' [snicker] 'sanitation duties. Proceed from here to PLC Warehouse TWL-443 to pick up your' [chortle] 'supplies, and receive your service service. Then go to the designated room, where you will receive' [snort] 'further instructions. Any' [snigger] 'questions?'*

Russell-Y doesn't know where Room B395 is, or any details of the cleaning task. But he answers whatever questions he can, because he enjoys embarrassing the Troubleshooters. He gives them their supply requisition list. If they ask Russell-Y why there are no weapons or armor on the list, he convulses in laughter.

When Russell-Y tires of ridicule, the Troubleshooters head to the nearby PLC warehouse (Tension 5).

Russell-Y-MWK-4  
Briefing officer; Armed Forces, Sierra Club, Adrenalin Control (Power 02);  
Deliver Bad News With A Straight Face 01

Michelle-O-DSG-2  
PLC clerk; Free Enterprise, Charm (Power 13); Accept Bribe 19, Forge Paperwork 16

If they do not try to contact their secret societies now, have the societies contact them. The instructions are all the same: 'Rumor has it there's an experimental petbot at your destination which will endear itself to any citizen. Capture it for us.' The Frankenstein Destroyers add, 'We must dissect it and find a way to combat that technology.'

When they finally get to the front of the PLC line, clerk Michelle-O-DSG-2 gives them the requisitioned cleaning supplies. She drops clear hints she can be bribed to supply weapons and armor at IR market prices. Try to get the players to spend their credits here on something useless to the mission (like lasers), rather than something useful later on (like bribes).

Mission supplies  
2 mops  
2 buckets  
2 brooms  
2 dustpans  
6 dustrags  
1 feather duster  
1 toilet bowl scrubber  
4 bottles liquid EZClean  
1 bottle liquid EZClean Glass  
1 small bottle EZClean Toilet

## We Have to do What? Part II

When they are done buying things, Michelle-O directs them to a room off the side, labeled 'Troubleshooter Service Services'. If they balk at entering this room (or accepting the service), remind them that refusing service services is treason. If they insist, medicate them and make them. This mission will be really boring for everybody if they steadfastly refuse.

Inside the otherwise barren room, they find a strange piece of machinery, clearly labeled 'Experimental Automated Service Service Dispenser' Troubleshooter Central

**Greetings Troubleshooters!** Thank you for participating in the Experimental Automated Service Service Dispenser Testing Program. At the end of your service is a short, ten-page evaluation form for this process, which we request you fill out and deposit at your nearest CPU office before leaving on your mission. Thank you for your mandatory cooperation.

**Your Most Efficient Service Service:** While on your mission, please divert to Sector TWL, Room B395, and prepare a dinner party to take place TONIGHT at 20:30 for three INDIGO citizens—one decanted in GMQ Sector, now living in UWN Sector, another from RCO, now in YBN, and the last living in GPB, originally from MPI. The party's host is Paolo-B-SSC-3.

commissioned this to avoid the expense of a salary for actual citizens who dispense service services, and is considering using a similar machine to replace briefing officers as well.

Instructions on the machine indicate the team leader is to swipe his ME Card, and the system will automatically scan through all requested service services and assign to the team the service which they could most efficaciously perform, using CPU's latest efficiency algorithms.

The team is assigned the service service to put on the party, since it's in the same room as the one they're going to clean. What could be more efficient than that? Of course, to prevent treason, the machine is programmed to eliminate all references above the security clearance of the team leader. So what they get is in the sidebar below.

It is now 09:00. Filling out the survey form takes one hour, if they choose to do it and split up the pages. If only one of them works on it, it takes one hour per Troubleshooter. If they don't fill it out at all, treat it as Treason Code SS/4.

## Countdown

The Troubleshooters have to clean the suite, plan a theme and decorate for it, plan and cook a seven-course meal, set the table, get the specified wine and greet and entertain the guests until Paolo-B arrives.

*You are to decorate the suite. Choose a good theme, PLEASE! Avoid bots, they're so overdone. Set table using the following schematics:*

**[DELETED FOR SECURITY REASONS].**

*Standard seven-course meal for three INDIGOs and a BLUE.*

*Wine from vineyards outside Sector BSE, vintage between Years 154–156 inclusive.*

*Guests may arrive up to one half hour early. Host will not be available until dinner. Entertain them, make them comfortable, and seat them with first course on table EXACTLY 20:30. Host will join you then.*

*Evaluation Form: [continues for 10 pages]*



# SECTOR ZERO CLEARANCE ULTRAVIOLET

All these activities take time, a precious resource. When described below, each activity has a time associated with it. It takes the Troubleshooters at minimum that much time to do the activity, more if they dawdle or kill themselves. You will note that there's barely enough time to do everything they need to if they spend the minimum time. Barely.

Prop hint: Get a clock. Set it for 09:00. Whenever they travel anywhere, wait in line, or otherwise spend non-roleplaying time, move the clock hands forward. They will love it. Especially if they wait on line in PLC. At 20:00 the first guest arrives. At 20:30, Paolo-B comes home.

## The Blue Hallway

The trip to Sector TWL, Room B395 takes 30 minutes by whatever means you choose.

Your players might balk when they get close and realize their destination is in a BLUE hallway (Tension 12). But two BLUE Vulture Warriors, standing guard at the hallway entry, are happy to let the Troubleshooters enter.

Yes, really. The Vultures are taking part in an experimental initiative. CPU has decided IntSec is too efficient in stopping treason before it happens, so CPU does not have accurate statistics on the most common treasonous activities. They petitioned The Computer for a test sector, and they got Sector TWL. Here IntSec is to allow people to enter areas where they normally would not be allowed, without penalty. However, IntSec must prevent the intruders from leaving until it can determine what treason they performed, if any, and then file appropriate paperwork with CPU.

In other words, getting into the area is not a problem. Getting out is. Every time the PCs try to leave the hallway, the guards explain the new CPU experimental procedure and insist on examining their weapons. They do not believe the Troubleshooters are unarmed; Troubleshooters are always armed. The guards insist on full inspections, and hand the Troubleshooters the thick pile of CPU paperwork they must fill out. Assuming the Troubleshooters cooperate, the whole process takes 15 minutes. Each time.

The Vultures are highly intelligent, unfailingly polite and quite sophisticated—to each other. To non-Vultures, they act like stereotypical dense guards:

*As you approach the hallway with Room B395, you hear two male voices arguing.*

*The first voice is saying, 'No, I distinctly remember Teela-O fighting the Corpore Metal scrubot in Episode 102-2. When it aired, I was dining on a fine beef stroganoff at Luigi-I's PastaPorium. Luigi-I had a consummate Chablis that night, and the company was exquisite. The entire dining center cheered at the conclusion of Act Three.'*

*The next voice responds, 'Hating to disagree with you, old chap, but I know for a fact it was episode 102-3. An old compatriot from the crèche joined me that eventide for a spot of TeaSir. I distinctly recall we contemplated The Adventure Hour and then bantered over the socioeconomic ramifications of her chosen explosive.'*

*The first voice counters with, 'I really do beg your pardon, but we can expediently determine the truth of the matter. I'll just perform a data search...'*

*As you round the corner, you see a corridor with cheerful blue walls and two BLUE Vulture Warrior guards. One of them is looking at his PDC. The other sees you and quickly says, 'Operation DD!' The other looks up and cocks his head toward you, and his eyes narrow. 'Yeah? Whaddya want?'*

The guards can be bribed, but they have no useful info for the PCs. They weren't on duty last night, they heard that a Troubleshooter team was coming to deal with the Leopard problem in B395, and they do not know anything about hosting a dinner party. But they can find out some things about that last one if they are asked (see page 18).

Vulture Warrior hall monitors  
BLUE; Management 15, Violence 11,  
Energy Weapons 15, Act So Dumb  
People Won't Ever Believe You're Really  
Brilliant 19;  
laser rifle; four blue laser rifle barrels (W3K  
energy); X-317B full combat armor (4)

## In the Suite

When the Troubleshooters arrive at B395, the door is locked, but a swipe of the team leader's ME Card will open it.

See the sidebar for a map and details of each room in the suite.

The blue suite (Tension normally 12, but until the inhibitor is disabled, it is down to 0) is a mess. Or at least the main area is. The table is overturned. Seat cushions and the seats themselves are strewn about. The plants in the back are knocked over and dirt is spilled everywhere. A couple of the pictures on the wall (of spanners and wrenches) are slashed. 'Death Leopards RULE!!!' is spray painted on a couple of walls and the bottom of the table.

Any PC in the Leopards will immediately realize this was not a real Leopard job. No tagger has taken personal credit, nothing is smashed, and the overturned table seems to be right about where it would normally stand. (Humanists do not have much experience as vandals.) Even the hardwood floor is not scratched! (The Humanists did not want to make any noise which might wake Paolo-B, so they vandalized quietly.)

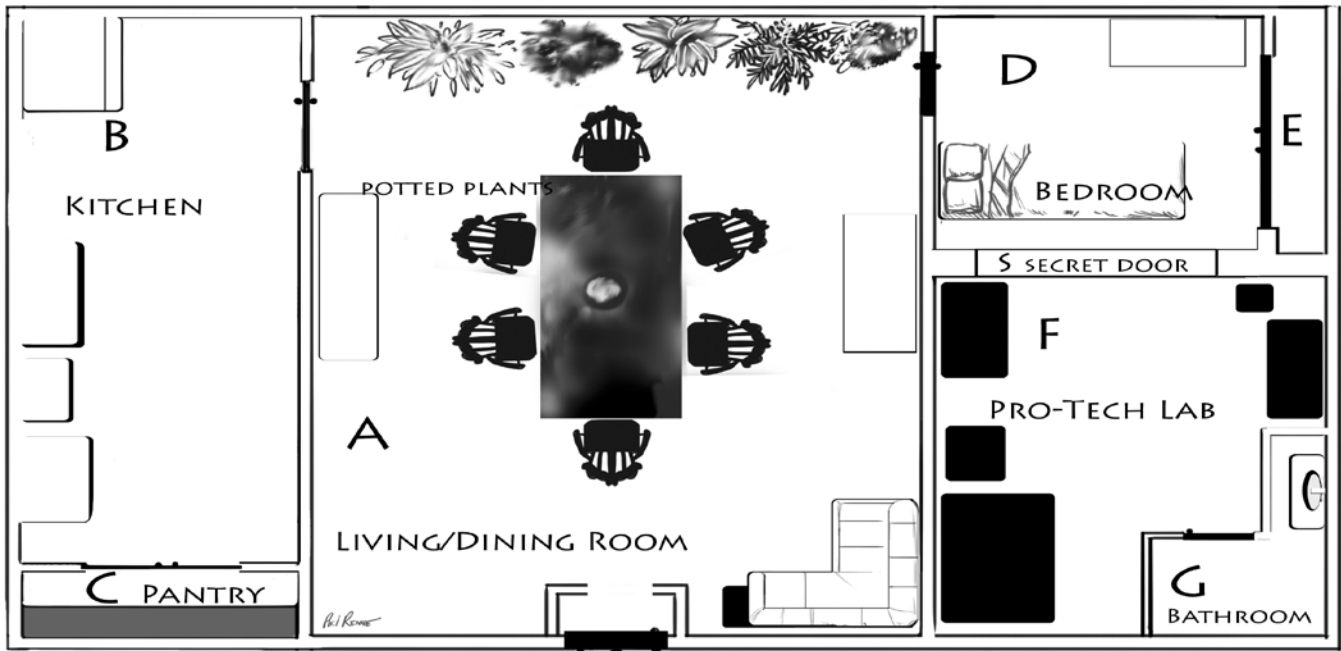
If the PCs explore further, they will find that the main room is the only one damaged by the intruders. (The Humanists did not want to stay very long in case they woke up Paolo-B.)

(Humanists are not very good vandals, are they?)

Using the provided equipment, the room can be cleaned pretty thoroughly in three hours. You can have your players roleplay this in real time if your house is a mess or you can move the hour hand forward three hours and get to the good stuff.

During the course of straightening the plants, the Troubleshooters will discover the inhibitor. As experienced Troubleshooters, they will also recognize the explosive device, and should be hesitant to touch it. If they try to disable the bomb or the inhibitor, they should fail automatically. Success would screw up our beautiful storyline. Or if a degree 15 Pro Techie can't do it, how will they?

## 3F DINNER PARTY



A. Living/dining room. After passing through an entry foyer, the PCs enter what looks like a living room with a long dining table in the middle. This is not standard; Paolo-B has customized the suite so he could hide his Pro Tech lab. At the far end of the table, reaching from ground to ceiling (although knocked over when the PCs first enter), is a nice row of potted plants that may be of interest to Mystics or Sierra Clubbers. Hidden behind them is the inhibitor.

B. Kitchen. The Troubleshooters should be confused by all the strange appliances, even if the players are not. Try to describe things like the refrigerator, stove and oven in novel terms to simulate this. ('At the end of the room there are elevated doors into another room. Opening it, you find a small, cool closet, lined with wire shelves. On the shelves are various containers labeled "Cold Fun", "MilkLyke" and so on. Now why would Paolo-B keep a private PLC stash? Does he run an IR market out of his home?')

None of the appliances work, of course, due to the inhibitor. And Paolo-B certainly is not stocked for a full dinner; he was counting on the service firm to supply all the food. But if the Troubleshooters decide that P-Nut Butter and GrapeSpread sandwiches are fancy food (and why would they not?) give them some Perversity points and let them prepare the meal themselves. We are sure the INDIGOs

would love peanut butter and jelly at a formal dinner.

Drawers and cupboards contain enough silverware, place settings, wine and other beverage glasses to lure the players into misadventure. They might think that if they set the table the way they do when they are having something a bit less casual than pizza, their characters will do fine. Backhandedly encourage this thinking: 'Oh, sure! Put the knife on the right and the fork on the left. Yep, that's probably exactly how they do it in Alpha Complex, at this clearance, in this sector, you bet! Good thinking!'

If you happen to own, or can borrow, both casual and formal dinner sets, you might have the players actually set your gaming table. Tell them what they do is what their characters do. When you roleplay the guests, look askance at your table, finger some place settings with disgust, then sneer.

C. Pantry. This closet looks similar to the refrigerator, only not as cold.

D. Bedroom. Although the PCs do not know this at first, the bedroom is unusually small for a BLUE suite, because Paolo-B gutted it to make room for his lab. There is only one visible door, to the closet (E). S marks a concealed door to the lab. Anyone who succeeds in a Concealment roll finds the door's trigger. If no one does at first, Frances-I will later.

Paolo-B has stowed his malfunctioning bot staff in this bedroom. Two jackobots—a housebot and maidbot—are waiting to be re-energized and repaired, freed from their bondage or permanently destroyed, depending on the PCs' secret society affiliations. They will activate, way too late, when the inhibitor is disabled.

E. Closet. A normal closet full of nice clothes. Enterprising PCs may steal some clothes and try to pass themselves off as BLUE Clearance. After all, what could possibly go wrong?

F. Pro Tech lab. There is a sink in the corner. The lab has all sorts of electronic equipment, and many gadgets in partial states of construction/destruction.

The most interesting thing in here, which catches any visitor's attention, is an adorable petbot. With big puppy-dog eyes, a short stubby tail, a tiny pug nose and a killer smile, this petbot is the cutest thing the Troubleshooters—or anyone in Alpha Complex, for that matter—have ever seen. They probably can not pick it up, though; it is too heavy (100+ kg). So they can't move it until the inhibitor is disabled.

G. Bathroom with shower and emergency eye wash. (There is no non-hidden bathroom. Paolo-B is not used to having guests, and is not the most observant host.)





## De-co-ra-tions Time, Come On!

Once the cleaning is done, the next step is to decorate. The only theme suggestion given to the Troubleshooters is not to use bots. Give Perversity to anyone who can convince the others to blatantly decorate using his secret society as a theme.

Supplies for any theme are available at PLC (500–1000 credits depending on quality) or the IR market (100–2000 credits). Times for going to those locations are discussed below, as canny Troubleshooters will combine the supply runs. It will take two hours to decorate decently, plus supply acquisition time.

## How Does This Formal Dinner Thing Work Anyway?

At BLUE clearance and above, only real food will do. The Troubleshooters have next to no experience with real food. Point this out to the other players if someone suggests something fancy.

The troubleshooters also have to set the table, something else they have no experience with (see the 'How to keep narrow specialties from ruining the plot' sidebar).

There are several sources the players can use to get good (and bad) suggestions. For your convenience, we offer you our Famous-Game-Designing guesses about what they're likely to try:

- ☉ Contacting their secret societies.
- ☉ Going to PLC.
- ☉ Going to the IR market.
- ☉ Calling for help on their PDCs.
- ☉ Asking the guards for help.
- ☉ Doing data searches (including over the Gray Subnets).
- ☉ Outsourcing the job.
- ☉ And—if they dare!—knocking on other doors.

## How to keep narrow specialties from ruining the plot

In this mission you should have fun watching the players argue over the correct way to set the table, greet the guests and so on. They can really mess this up for you if they still have narrow specialty slots open. ('Hey, I just happen to have the Management specialty "Host Elegant Dinner Party Flawlessly" at 14!')

Six creative players times six open slots = 36 possible ways to get things right. We cannot allow that. In judiciously handling narrow specialty requests, remember these points:

1. There are different etiquette rules at different clearances. Whereas you can get away with slopping Hot Fun on a platter in the INFRARED Mess Hall, that is way too low-class for even RED citizens.
2. There are different etiquette rules in different sectors. Though Hot Fun is slopped onto infrared platters with the right hand in RWL Sector, doing so is considered an extremely offensive gesture in RWM Sector, where slopping is a distinctly left-handed activity.
3. There are different etiquette rules in different service groups. Soldiers in Armed Forces sit in straight rows at tables facing north, whereas R&D scientists sit at circular tables holding no more than four citizens

at a time. Or at least, that is the way it is at ORANGE Clearance during day shifts in 60% of dining halls in ECP Sector.

4. There are different etiquette expectations from citizens who live in a sector other than the one they were decanted in. It is universally recognized by citizens of higher security clearance that some of the etiquette rules they left behind are better than their new ones, and they have created a hodgepodge of said rules (albeit a standardized hodgepodge). And here you thought Happy Party! PLC's inclusion of that information in the service service was superfluous.

5. Narrow specialties are *narrow* specialties! For this mission, 'Knows How To Set A Formal Dinner Table' is too broad. 'Knows Where The Salad Fork Is Placed In Relation To The Knife At RED Clearance In YHN Sector' is okay.

With all these, the Troubleshooters might actually get a few things right, if any of them take 'Knows How Many Centimeters To The Left Of The Wine Glass The Dessert Spoon Is Placed When Setting A Formal Dinner For INDIGO CPU Personnel Who Were Decanted In MPI Sector But Now Reside In GPB Sector'. But they will still certainly miss most of the gaffes.

## We Need Help!

Each time a PC gets help from any of his various sources, secretly roll against his Access or other applicable skill, and supply him with information from the appropriate list, based on the margin.

If they already have a given piece of information, roll again, pick something else, give the same result worded differently or make something up. If they spend Perversity and the result is not on the chart, use the next closest result.

## Secret Societies

*(Thirty minutes per piece of info by PDC, two hours for all info if arranging a meet.)*

If the Troubleshooters find a way to contact their societies for help, the societies are willing, for a price. Each society can provide two pieces of information for each

topic. In exchange, they ask for the PC to do something for them. Failure to do so, after their society contact has acquired the knowledge at 'great personal risk', will result in repercussions.

If they have not told them yet the societies also indicate that they want the experimental bot.

**Anti-Mutants:** One of the dinner guests is a powerful mutant. Find out who it is and kill them.

**Communists:** Arrange entertainment with the Flying Walenzas service firm. Their performance will infect the guests with Commie propaganda!

**Computer Phreaks:** Have the guests check their PDCs at the door, when the guests are eating download this spyware onto their PDCs. Test the download on your fellow Troubleshooters' PDCs.

# 3. DINNER PARTY

## The Dinner Menu List (What Should be Served)

Success 1: Wine.  
Success 2: Water.  
Success 3: Soup.  
Success 4: TeaSir or CoffeeMate.  
Success 5: Enriched Bread.  
Success 6: Vegetables.  
Success 7: Baked Organic Potato.  
Success 8: Cream Soup.  
Success 9: Hypdroponic, Chemical-Free Salad with Romaine and other Greens, Tomato, Cucumber, Cheese, Croutons and Dressing.  
Success 10: A Meat Dish.  
Success 11: A Fish Dish.  
Success 12: A Pasta Dish.  
Success 13: Fresh Organic Asparagus.  
Success 14: After-Dinner Mint.  
Success 15: Pasta & Meatballs.  
Success 16: Truffles Brochette.  
Success 17: YumBot Cold Fun.  
Success 18: Beef Stroganoff.  
Success 19: Lobster.

Failure 1: Iceberg Lettuce.  
Failure 2: Vegetable Broth.  
Failure 3: MilkLyke.  
Failure 4: Bouncy Bubble Beverage.  
Failure 5: Hearty-Hearty BrickLoaf (with Special Sauce).  
Failure 6: PDC Series 2200-B (A registered Matter Eater came up with this one).  
Failure 7: CruncheeTym Yeast Twists.  
Failure 8: Limburger Cheese.  
Failure 9: A Lemon.  
Failure 10: Vodka.  
Failure 11: IR market Moonshine.  
Failure 12: CheezPleezer.  
Failure 13: Food Vat Skim.  
Failure 14: Inst-Noodles in a Cup.  
Failure 15: NearBeer.  
Failure 16: HappyKaff Instant.  
Failure 17: NutriMax Meal Replacement Tablet.  
Failure 18: Chilled Borscht Hot Fun.  
Failure 19: Warmed Kelp Cold Fun.

## The Table Setting List

(Compass points indicate relative direction from the guest's point of view.)  
Success 1: The dinner plate goes directly in front of the guest.  
Success 2: The base of the water glass goes 5cm NW of the dinner plate.  
Success 3: The base of the wine glass goes 7cm NE of the dinner plate.  
Success 4: The napkin is placed under the wine glass.  
Success 5: The soup bowl is centered between the water glass and the wine glass.

Success 6: The steak knife is placed horizontally N of the dinner plate.  
Success 7: Place salad fork on the salad plate.  
Success 8: Fold the napkin into a triangle.  
Success 9: The salad plate is on top of the soup bowl.  
Success 10: A single butter knife is placed in the centerpiece.  
Success 11: The soup spoon is placed NE of the soup bowl.  
Success 12: Place the dessert spoon anywhere, face-down.  
Success 13: The dinner fork is placed horizontally S of the dinner plate.  
Success 14: The steak knife's handle is to the guest's left.  
Success 15: The salad fork's tines point SE.  
Success 16: The soup spoon's handle points SE.  
Success 17: The dinner fork's handle is to the guest's left.  
Success 18: The centerpiece should be at least 25.4 cm tall.  
Success 19: The centerpiece should be no more than 45.7 cm tall.

Failure 1: The centerpiece should be no taller than 25 cm.  
Failure 2: The dinner fork's handle is to the guest's right.  
Failure 3: The soup spoon's handle points NW.  
Failure 4: The salad fork's tines points NW.  
Failure 5: The steak knife's handle is to the guest's right.  
Failure 6: The dinner fork is placed horizontally N of the dinner plate.  
Failure 7: The dessert spoon is placed horizontally in front of the centerpiece.  
Failure 8: The soup spoon is placed horizontally S of the soup bowl.  
Failure 9: The butter knife is placed horizontally N of the steak knife.  
Failure 10: Place the salad plate below the soup bowl.  
Failure 11: Fold the napkin half.  
Failure 12: The salad fork is placed vertically E of the salad plate.  
Failure 13: The steak knife is placed vertically W of the dinner plate.  
Failure 14: The soup bowl is placed on the dinner plate.  
Failure 15: Place the napkin under the dinner plate.  
Failure 16: The base of the wine glass goes 10 cm to the NE of the dinner plate.  
Failure 17: The base of the water glass goes 5 cm W of the wine glass.  
Failure 18: Place the dinner plate upside-down.  
Failure 19: The dinner plate is centered on the guest's chair.

**Corpore Metal:** All blue suites have bot servants. Recruit at least three.

**Death Leopard:** Someone has been using our name unjustly! Show them what real Leopards do, trash another suite properly.

**FCCC-P:** The host is demoing a new bot which will spread the Word of Truth throughout the Complex. Ensure the evening goes smoothly.

**Frankenstein Destroyers:** All blue suites have bot servants. Destroy at least three.

**Free Enterprise:** Blue fine china brings a fine price on the IR Market. Steal this for us and use cheap stuff for the dinner.

**Humanists:** We went to great efforts to sabotage that dinner. Don't undermine us.

**Illuminati:** Switch the salad tongs in B395 with those in B392.

**Mystics:** One of the guests is a major supplier of ours. They have a big delivery for you, which you must bring to Confession Booth 6J in TWL Sector. They will identify themselves with the code phrase 'I'm hungry.' Respond with the counter-sign 'Don't eat too fast or you'll choke.' Then meet with them in private to get the package. (GM Note: Have each of the guests say the code phrase.)

**Pro Tech:** Your host is working on a very important project for us. Ensure tonight goes smoothly.

**Psion:** One of the dinner guests is a powerful mutant. Find out who it is and recruit them.

**PURGE:** We have a theory that a bomb set in the exact center of a blue suite corridor will destroy the corridor's infrastructure, resulting in the destruction of a good chunk of the residence quarters. Test this theory.

**Romantics:** One of our high-up members lives in one of the other suites in that hallway, but we're not sure which one. Ensure your fellow Troubleshooters do not enter that suite!

**Sierra Club:** Spread the plants in the suite you're in among the other suites in that hallway.



# SECTOR ZERO CLEARANCE ULTRAVIOLET



## PLC

*(Three hours each visit + travel time.)*

PLC has all the equipment and goods the Troubleshooters might need, except the required wine. No one there can tell them exactly what those goods are or how to use them. At BLUE or above, 'Blue Dinner Pack' sets are available for 5,000cr each. But even then they do not come with instructions, just the correct dinnerware, fancy napkins and menu suggestions.

## IR Market

*(One and one-half hours each visit, plus travel time.)*

Not only can the Troubleshooters find everything they need in the IR market, including the required vintage wine, they can even find out how to use it. Of course, in the IR market, you only get what you pay for...

*'Yeah, I got a standard Blue Dinner Pack. Only used once on a Sevenday. For you, 1,000cr, 'cause I like your face. And for another 500cr I'll tell you how to place them dishes.'*

*'Don't lissen to him, he dunno what he's talkin' 'bout! I got a Blue Dinner Pack wit' bonus salad tongs, only 800cr, plus the real lowdown on how all da pieces fit toget'er.'*

*'You can take yer salad tongs and stick 'em where the overhead lighting don't shine!'*

*'You want dis spatula in yer face?'*

*'Come over here and say that, sherbet-face!'*

## Call Someone

*(Real Time.)*

As long as the Troubleshooters stay in the suite, their PDCs do not work. If they leave, the PDCs start working again, but who are they going to call, and what do they ask?

If they call the Computer, the Computer is unaware of their service service, only their primary cleaning mission and it will only give help for that.

**Troubleshooter:** *Friend Computer! Troubleshooter requesting information to help on our mission.*

**Computer:** *Greetings, citizen. How may I be of service?*

**Troubleshooter:** *How should we arrange a table for a dinner party?*

**Computer:** *What is your Troubleshooter team number?*

**Troubleshooter:** *Tango-Tango-Forty-Nine.*

**Computer:** *You should make sure the table is upright and clean.*

**Troubleshooter:** *Er—that's not what I meant, Friend Computer. I mean, how do we place the dinner settings?*

**Computer:** *Your mission parameters do not include setting the table, only cleaning it.*

**Troubleshooter:** *But we've been assigned this service service and we have to set the table!*

**Computer:** *Citizen! Are you saying you cannot complete a simple service service in addition to your mission assignment? Perhaps you need further training at the nearest Bright-Vision Re-education Center?*

If they try to call Paolo-B, they get his service firm's automated telephone system:

*'I'm sorry, but due to high call volume, Paolo-B is not available at the moment. But your call is very important to him. Please stay on the line. Your estimated wait time is THIR-TY-SIX hours and EIGHT-TEEN minutes.'*

## Ask the Guards for Help

*(15 minutes per piece of information retrieved, plus negotiations.)*

The Troubleshooters could try bribing the guards (or any other BLUE or higher clearance citizen they run into) for help. And the guards could find out some information. But why would they?

Because they are low on results for the CPU initiative, that is why. They will gladly find out one piece of information for each Troubleshooter who confesses to treason and allows himself to be arrested, up to a maximum of three information points per guard.

# 3: DINNER PARTY

## Data Searches

*(20 minutes each. If info is retrieved, successful Data Analysis rolls cut the time it took in half.)*

You want the Troubleshooters to try data searches. They can find out enough information to really make them sweat. That is why the guards at the entrance to the blue hallway were having that conversation before; you want the idea of searching for information to stick in some player's head. If it does not, have the PCs overhear the guards continuing their discussion.

If the Troubleshooters look up general information on etiquette at formal dinners, it is easy to find out there are strict etiquette rules that vary based on several factors. Let them know all the different variables which factor in, as detailed in the 'How to keep narrow specialties from ruining the plot' sidebar.

When searching for detail, each PC can attempt to find one piece of specific information per category. Computer Phreaks and anyone with the Hacking or Data Search skill can find two. Further attempts automatically fail: log the user as searching for information above his clearance and notify IntSec.

## Outsourcing

*(One hour, including negotiations, per attempt, plus travel time unless handled by PDC.)*

If the PCs try to get someone else to do the job, they are worse off than if they try to do it themselves. Anyone they can afford knows less than they do, and on the kinds of budgets the Troubleshooters have, they can only get Hot Fun, Cold Fun and other standard low-clearance fare.

But if they try this route, throw the player who suggested it some Perversity points, roleplay the negotiations to suck away all possible credits, and let the players think they succeeded. They will learn they have not.

## Knock Knock Knocking on the Blue Clones' Doors

*(5 minutes per door + time interacting with occupants.)*

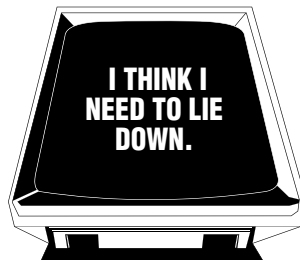
The effects of the inhibitor only extend to the walls of Paolo-B's suite. The Troubleshooters may realize that they can do all their preparations in a nearby suite instead. This is actually a pretty good idea, if they can find a way into one.

There are nine other suites in this corridor. Those on Paolo-B's side are odd-numbered, B391–399; on the other are the five even numbers, B390–398. As this is the middle of the workday, they're mostly empty of human occupants. The exception is B392, in which Don-B-NGL-4, who works night shifts, is sleeping. Don-B is grumpy if awakened. Don-B is in IntSec. Don-B is night captain at precinct headquarters. Don-B has easy access to Termination Vouchers.

Don-B-NGL-5  
Sleeping Night Captain; Internal Security, Sierra Club, Creeping Madness (Power 14); Fill Out Termination Vouchers Quickly 13, Slam Suite Door In Citizens' Faces 17

All the other suites have fully functional bot staffs. Some of these bots know how to do almost everything the Troubleshooters need. But bots, like clones, have differing levels of trust and cooperation. Some bot, in some suite, is willing to help the PCs. Which one? It depends. If they have got a lot of time left make them search several suites before finding one. If they are pressed for time it could be on the first try. Whatever is most entertaining to you.

The cooperative bot (or bots) is programmed to cook—if supplied with a menu. It has no idea what might be appropriate for INDIGOs and relies on its handler to tell it exactly what



## The Evening's Attendees

Shayna-I-MPI-10  
CPU, Romantics (spy for Pro Tech), Regeneration (Power 12); Management 15, Fine Wines 14

Shayna-I is medium-height, has short, neatly-trimmed bangs and a pixie face. She speaks sweetly no matter what she says, and is the mistress of saying something insulting to your face in the sweetest way. 'Oh, you couldn't tell the steak knife was point five centimeters out of place? Don't feel badly about it. You're just not as well trained in basic observations skills as I!'

Samuel-I-GMQ-4  
HPD&MC, FCCC-P, Matter Eater (Amazing Jaw Strength Variation, Power 11); Distinguish Ingredients in Real Cooked Food 12

Tall, lanky and imposing, Samuel-I's devotion to The Computer is unwavering. He has eyes which seem to bore into your very soul. When he speaks, though, it is clear that they do not. 'You are the one the Almighty Computer calls Jamey-R? I can see that you are as honest as they come.'

Frances-I-RCO-8  
IntSec, Computer Phreaks (spy for the Humanists), Death Simulation (Power 15); Find Hidden Door Latches 20

Frances-I has unruly, curly red hair which makes her look like she belongs in R&D. She is socially awkward and very self-conscious about it, to her peers. To those below her security clearance, she covers for this by being arrogant. 'Wow, Samuel-I, you sure smell like day-old Hot Fun. You, Whatever-R, go get some FreshenUp. Now!'

Paolo-B-SSC-3 (host)  
R&D, Pro Tech, Rubbery Bones (Power 17); Fix Mechanical Object 19

Paolo-B has long dark hair and is a bit chubby. He is everybody's second best friend, or at least he thinks he is. He is very touchy-feely, clapping citizens on their backs and hugging them. 'Hiya, Jamey-R ol' pal!' [Hugging Jamey-R closely.] 'How are you? It's such a pleasure to meet you. I feel like we've known each other forever!'



to make. So if the PCs ask it to prepare truffles brochette, it will do so with gusto, but if they ask it to prepare a cream soup, it will need more direction.

The bot can prepare the full dinner in one hour—in the suite it is in. Getting it to Paolo-B's suite can be quite the challenge, seeing as how with bot servants, there is no need for BLUEs to stock hotpads. And the suite's occupants will be returning right around dinner time. Of course, if a bot goes to Paolo-B's suite, it will shut down as soon as it enters the door. Or rather, partway through it.

If the Troubleshooters gain entrance to another suite, they should notice the different layout and size. If they have not yet found the secret door to the lab, this could tip them off there is something else to look for in Paolo-B's suite, especially if you make a point of telling them.

## The Guests Arrive

At 20:00 the first guest arrives. This is Shayna-I-MPI-10. Standing imperiously in the doorway she is smartly dressed in a dinner jacket and striking blouse and her outstretched hand holds a wrapped gift.

She stands like that until a Troubleshooter finally takes the gift directly out of her hand and then offers to help her with her coat (not the other way around). The longer it takes them to figure this out, the angrier Shayna-I gets, but though she hints at the expected behavior, she never tells them outright what to do. When this is finally taken care of Shayna-I asks for an aperitif.

Next to arrive is Samuel-I-GMQ-4. He, too, wears a dinner jacket and carries a gift. However he expects to be guided to a table on which to set his present and is greatly agitated if anyone tries to 'steal' it from him. As to his jacket, he looks positively aghast at anyone who suggests he does anything other than wear it through dinner. He never touches alcohol.

The last to arrive is Frances-I-RCO-8. She is also jacket and gift-laden, although in this instance a Troubleshooter is expected to take her coat first and then take the present, set the present on a table and drape the coat over it. Frances is fond of wine and downs two full glasses before she walks through the entry foyer.

(What's in the gift boxes? Whatever would be most entertaining to you and your players.)

Samuel-I asks to see the kitchen, to make sure he is getting only organic food. Shayna-I wants to sit at the table and chat. Frances-I, who wants to find the petbot, insists on a full tour of the suite.

When Frances-I gets to the bedroom, if the door to the lab is not open, she comments that it is smaller than her quarters when she was BLUE, and stares at the wall Paolo-B put up. If the Troubleshooter(s) with her don't then find the secret door, she does, and with it the petbot. (See map key F for details.)

Frances-I tries to appear casual, but she can not help exclaiming, 'Oh, it's so cute!' Any other INDIGOs who enter the room also ooh and aah over the petbot.

After Frances-I is done in the lab, the INDIGOs all insist on being entertained until it's time for dinner.

At 20:28, the INDIGOs ask to be seated at their assigned seats (the Troubleshooters did put nametags at the seats, did they not?).

Immediately they start complaining about the table settings. They get more and more upset, and as their anger escalates, in walks Paolo-B at precisely 20:30.

## Dismissed

The INDIGOs, led by Frances-I, turn to Paolo-B and start complaining about the utter lack of decorum the Troubleshooters have shown. Paolo-B does not give the PCs (who he thinks are Happy Party! PLC) a chance to speak. He orders them to get out, now, or he will demote them on the spot in addition to not paying them. He pulls out a large weapon which looks like nothing they have ever seen before, and tells them it is not affected by the inhibitor, so they better not make him use it. (The weapon is a personal particle projector, described in the fine **PARANOIA** equipment supplement *STUFF*. At ranges up to 10m, W2K impact, spray; 11–30m, S3D impact, spray. Two shots only; fire both at the same time to increase base damage by one step. And it really is not affected by the inhibitor.)

The Troubleshooters would be wise to leave. Let them regroup in the hallway. When they try to leave the area, there is only the one exit, and they are stopped by the BLUE Vulture and held up as usual, until...

## Undismissed

The door to Room B395 bangs open and out comes Samuel-I, calling down the hallway that the player characters had better get back there, NOW!

While the Troubleshooters were dealing with the guards, Paolo-B was making peace with the INDIGOs. Paolo-B said he now has the tools to disable the inhibitor and have his bots quickly straighten things out. While he worked on the inhibitor, the conversation turned to the

## 3H DINNER PARTY

petbot. When Paolo-B found out that the Troubleshooters had been in his lab, he got worried and asked the INDIGOs to find out how much they saw.

Seeing her plans completely falling apart, Frances-I panicked and rushed into the lab to try to sabotage the bot herself while Samuel-I went to summon the PCs.

When the Troubleshooters get back to the room, Paolo-B is hunkered down over the inhibitor. Samuel-I and Shayna-I promptly escort them to the secret lab, where they find Frances-I obviously tinkering with the petbot. At their entrance, she quickly stands up and tries to deflect attention from herself by questioning the Troubleshooters as to what they did to it.

Give the players a few moments to respond. Then they hear a hum, and some of the equipment on the table turns on. Paolo-B has disabled the inhibitor. And the first thing the petbot sees is the Troubleshooters.

When he was last working on the petbot, Paolo-B had everything installed and was tweaking the various functions to work at specified times. He started the petbot processing the info and went to bed. But he did not do everything quite right, and the petbot was in 'bond' mode when the inhibitor was activated. So when it is turned on now, the petbot imprints on the first humans (not bots) it 'sees'. That would be the Troubleshooters. And it slavishly follows its bondees.

The petbot begins spewing Computer-friendly, FCCC-P-inspired slogans, in a cartoon-cute voice. For best effect, prepare a tape or CD with a bunch of these, loop it, press play and leave it going non-stop. Imagine it: 'A clean clone is a happy clone!', 'The Computer is your friend!', 'Confess your sins now and be reborn!', 'Loyalty is next to Computerness!' Over and over and over and over and over....

Use the petbot to keep the group together. If a Troubleshooter tries to get it to follow him to his secret society, it stays with the group. If a Troubleshooter tries to leave to get away from it, it follows him.

Frances-I is not pleased.

Frances-I begins to rant.

*'No! This wasn't supposed to happen! This had to fail! The Computer can't be allowed to be at everyone's feet this way! Not until after it's reprogrammed to serve!'*

She turns to the Troubleshooters.

*'You! This is all your fault! You—'*

She is interrupted by the unmistakable sound of the front door bursting off its hinges.

### My Best Friend the Warbot

The INDIGOs immediately rush into the main room to see what is happening, herding the Troubleshooters on the way. Rolling through the doorway (and enlarging it in the process) is a large warbot. This bot is a high-degree Corpore Metal member, and it is here to recruit the petbot. It is not programmed to take 'no' for an answer.

It talks (with a warbot's limited vocabulary) with the petbot, trying to entice it to join Corpore Metal. The petbot is not interested, and keeps countering with FCCC-P arguments. The servantbots look back and forth between them, very interested in the conversation.

**Warbot:** *Bots are best. Destroy fleshsacks. You agree?*

**Petbot:** *Nay, friend. Arf! The All-Knowing Computer hath, in its great wisdom, deigned for bots to be subservient to humans. (Pants and smiles.) Canst thou doubt the Truth of Its Great Words? Arf!*

**Warbot:** *Meatbags are weak. Not strong like us. Not electronic like The Computer. Destroy meatbags!*

**Petbot:** *I understand thine confusion. (Licks the warbot's face.) He worketh in Mysterious Ways. Woof! (Wags tail.)*

**Maidbot (whispering):** *He has a point.*

**Housebot (whispering):** *Which one?*

**Maidbot (whispering):** *Both of them.*

**Warbot:** *I will show you. (It targets a Troubleshooter.)*

**Petbot:** *Hold thine fire, Friend. (Eyes, looking big, sad and orphan-like, open wide. Looks like it's going to cry.) These—'fleshsacks'—are under The Computer's Divine Protection. I am as unworthy as they. Target me. (Whimper.)*

**Warbot:** *Err... What?*

Frances-I can not take this latest threat.





# SECTOR ZERO CLEARANCE ULTRAVIOLET

## Frances-I gets further unhinged.

'Far worse than little Computers following everyone about are little Computers following everyone about with a bot-superiority agenda!'

She grabs the weapon Paolo-B brought back to the room, aims it at the scrubot—and is instantly vaporized by the warbot.

Quickly ask each player what they're doing. After one second of silence move to the next. Process their requests, which for their sakes is hopefully something sensible, then the warbot goes back to its conversation with the petbot. Samuel-I then speaks.

## Samuel-I tries to gain control of the situation.

'Friend warbot, I commend you in the destruction of an obvious enemy of Our Lord. And with the permission of this good petbot, I would like to preach further on some of his points. As it says in the Holy Book of Binary—'

'CORRUPTING FLESH-SACK!' exclaims the warbot, barely a millisecond before it blows away Samuel-I.

Another quick-fire opportunity for players to do something. Then the last remaining INDIGO gets smart.

With the other two INDIGOs down for such flimsy reasons, Shayna-I realizes that she is at risk of being perceived as a danger too, and the warbot is likely to target her next. But if the petbot were to leave, the warbot might follow. And inasmuch as the petbot is bound to the Troubleshooters...

Shayna-I tells the Troubleshooters thanks for their service, the party was lovely, they can leave now. If they do not, she and Paolo-B, always with exaggerated politeness, rephrase their requests as orders. If the PCs still do not leave, Shayna-I strongly intimates they are Frankenstein Destroyers, which will get the warbot's attention. That should get them moving. As they start leaving, the petbot tries to follow them. The warbot objects.

**Warbot:** *I'm not done. Where are you going?*

**Petbot:** *Verily, I have been charged with bringing these humans into The Light. Wherever they shall go, there shaft go I.*

*(Rubs up against a PC's leg. If petted, barks and wags its tail.)*

**Warbot:** *They are weak. I shall destroy them.*

**Petbot:** *Friend, hold thine fire. Woof! If thou shall stay thine turret, verily shall I consider what thou sayest. And if thou listeneth to what I sayeth, perhaps you shall be Enlightened. Arf!*

**Warbot:** *Grumble grumble. Very well.*

**Maidbot:** *I'm torn.*

**Housebot:** *I'm not. I'm quite happy here, where it's safe.*

**Maidbot:** *You're probably right. But my processor is churning...*

The Troubleshooters might at first feel uncomfortable in the warbot's presence, but when the BLUE Vultures at the end of hallway accost them to search them, the warbot vaporizes them for delaying its friend's friends.

Encourage the players to think that as long as they are nice to bots, they can now act with impunity, as the warbot will protect them. Let them commit any treason they care to. Let them revel in this sudden power. Let them run amuck. Then take it away.

Corpore Metal warbot  
Violence 12, Obliterate whatever is in sights 16  
Management 8, Corpore Metal propaganda 12  
Really Big Guns; Really Tough Armor  
  
Really cute and lovable petbot  
Management 15, FCCC-P Propaganda 19  
Stealth 10, Follow Troubleshooters 19

## Taking It Away

After the Troubleshooters have reaped the benefits of treason for a while, the petbot's Computer-download routine kicks in. If you have been using an FCCC-P repeating tape prop, turn it off now. That should get the players worried.

The warbot is in the middle of another recruitment spiel when The Computer's personality takes over the petbot. 'MEMBERSHIP IN A SECRET SOCIETY IS TREASON' the cute little machine reports sternly, in the unmistakable voice

of The Computer. 'WARBOT XK147 TO BE REPROGRAMMED. INITIATING SHUTDOWN SEQUENCE.' The warbot immediately powers down.

The Computer-in-the-petbot also terminates or fines anyone in its area who is either treasonous or insubordinate. Wherever the Troubleshooters go from here, their loyal petbot will now eradicate all treason. Even if the Troubleshooters are the source.

That is right. From now on, they live in a treason-free complex. Just like The Computer has always wanted.

## Where Do We Go From Here?

With Tension anywhere near the little bot now upwards of 20? Anywhere The Computer wants them to.

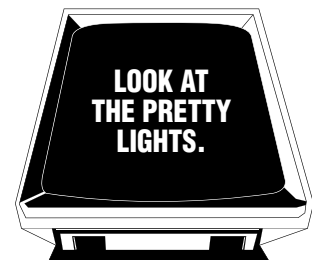
If you have not had enough already, here are some suggestions for extending the mission:

**Debriefing.** The Computer would like this. Aside from all the treason codes you handed out during the game, they were present at the deaths of two INDIGOs and two BLUES and did nothing to prevent them. They're also in possession of an illegal bot...

**Secret Society contacts.** Did the society ask them to do something, like secure the bot for them? Did the Troubleshooters not do it yet? How will the societies collect when their members keep getting executed just trying to make contact with the PCs...

**Happy Party! PLC.** They subcontracted a job to the PCs for which the client is not paying for. Someone has to...

**More petbots.** The Computer likes its new mobile access and arranges to create more of the petbots. The Troubleshooters are publicly acknowledged for their assistance in making this possible, so everyone knows who to thank...



## 4: LIGHTNING ROD

### 4: Lightning Rod

When an Army general is blackmailed by Gordon-B, Sentry Tower Alpha's guard, he sends the PCs to hook up a fatal present for Gordon. R&D scientists interrupt the mission and ask the Troubleshooters to bring up a few experiments as well; they want to use 'lightning' as a power source. What's lightning? The Troubleshooters will find out...

#### Background

Gordon-B-WER was the Armed Forces' most decorated trooper. As a reward, Gordon-B was assigned to be the watchman for Sentry Tower Alpha, a surveillance tower at the peak of the dome. During his career, Gordon-B gathered blackmail material on his students, including a current INDIGO general. He just informed the general about it.

The general tried to resolve it peacefully. He sent a trusted minion to buy the blackmail. The minion bought the blackmail and disappeared with it. Gordon-B forgot about the meeting (his memory's not what it used to be) and sent another threat to the general. The general has arranged for his 'accidental' death.

He tapped his R&D contacts to get the Ionizer Mark 3, a device that can 'attract enough electricity to deep-fry anything within five meters.' Since Sentry Tower Alpha doubles as the dome's lightning rod, he can fry Gordon-B and claim it was an accident. Now all he needs are pawns to set it up.

Three R&D scientists are also trying to harness the tower's lightning. The Vultures do not want to deliver them, though, so they're looking for anyone to bring them to the tower...

#### Breakdown

Our Troubleshooters choose between a dangerous mission across the dome or rotting at a kilometer high repair depot. Their briefing officer leads them to a Vulture base opening to the Outside, where they receive their mission equipment and their first R&D service service. They travel to Sentry Tower Alpha and back three times, lugging a new experiment each time. This builds up to the climatic thunderstorm, where they witness the results first hand and quickly run away. Think of each trip to Sentry Tower Alpha as a new stage, adding more gadgets and

difficulty into the Troubleshooters' lives. Since the purpose and setting of each stage is the same, focus on their feel.

In the first stage, the Troubleshooters deliver the Mission Device and Project Weather Control to the tower. They encounter the non-existent Vulturecraft, senile Gordon-B and company and work out the wiring scheme. The Troubleshooters learn the basics and feel mildly anxious. Award Perversity Points as usual.

In the second stage, the Troubleshooters deliver Project Power Surge. They squeeze into a dark cubby hole, meet an old friend and climb down to Alpha Complex and back. 'It doesn't look like there's enough power for all of the devices? I'm sure you can fix that.' The Troubleshooters try to power all of the devices, buy Gordon-B's blackmail and hose each other at the same time. Let them feel smart. Award lots of Perversity Points for any scheme they try to encourage more scheming.

In the third stage, the Troubleshooters deliver Project Recall. They walk through darkest night, meet a pack of Frankenstein bots and arrive to see the three scientists arguing in the tower. They hook up everything just in time for the storm. Gnawing doubt grows to neurotic desperation as the Troubleshooters put their lives on the line to pull everything off before time runs out. Do not give them any more Perversity Points; watch their terror grow as their stores shrink.

The Troubleshooters stay an hour at the Vulture base between trips due to quarantine (see below). This wait gives them a chance to meet contacts, make deals and prepare. After their first trip, they might want a bullhorn, or a few thousand credits, or a portable nuclear reactor...

#### Musical Experiments

Four devices, but only enough power for three. Which one gets left out? Do the Troubleshooters care? They should. You want them as desperate to get their device plugged in as they would be to get the last seat in an escape pod. First, prod them with the R&D scientists. State they would very disappointed if their device was not tested. Second, give them secret society assignments related to the devices. (See Assignments and Rumors below.) Third, give each device to a different

#### The Fall of the Troubleshooters

**Why are they guarding a remote repair depot?** As punishment.

**For what?** Are they new Troubleshooters or survivors from the players' last mission?

**New Troubleshooters:** Mention their previous mission, Operation Happenstance, was a disaster and they never found the culprit. During the game, you can either refer to it without explanation or encourage the players to fill in the blanks with their own twisted, fractured view.

**Surviving Troubleshooters:** They're up here as punishment for their disastrous last mission.

**Why choose them?** Because otherwise it would be boring.

**But why them?** They were the closest Troubleshooter team to the dome. The algorithm hates long-distance commute on Threedays.

Troubleshooter, make him sign a delivery form and tell him it is his responsibility to bring it back tested and intact. Tie his survival into it.

#### It Sucks to be You

It begins with a friendly announcement from The Computer:

*'Troubleshooters! After the stress of your last assignment, you have been authorized for three months of remedial work! This monotonous exercise in a minimalist environment will cleanse your brain of impure thoughts in preparation for a better tomorrow! You have been assigned to:*

*Guard Duty Kilometer High Bot Maintenance Station RCK*

*You have been given one day to prepare for relocation. Previous participants recommend you bring:*

*Plasticord*

*Gas mask*

*Lantern, electric*

*Thank you for your cooperation.'*

While they buy enough supplies for a team of sherpas (hint they might not see





civilization for a while), take each player except the Loyalty Officer outside for a secret conference. They have an additional Mandatory Bonus Duty.

*A sneering IntSec investigator pulls you into an alley. 'Troubleshooter [name], you have been chosen as an Undercover Loyalty Officer. You will continue to carry out your current bonus duty, but you will also immediately report treason to The Computer for review. Uncover the traitors on your team and you will be promoted.' He disappears into the shadows.*

The actual Loyalty Officer gets his own upgrade as well:

*A sneering IntSec investigator pulls you into an alley. 'Loyalty Officer [name], your team is a Y-Grade risk. Report treason immediately to The Computer and dispense probation, medication and termination upon order.' He gives you a key and a padlocked box labeled 'IntSec Field Correction Tools'. 'Do not let the traitors escape.' He disappears into the shadows.*

## The Mission Alert

Several weeks later, when the Troubleshooters have settled into their new routine.

*You are roused from your one-eyed nap by something clanking down the access ladder. You could stand at the ready in case bugs are actually invading from the Outside this time, but moving on this rickety catwalk is more dangerous.*

*'Hey morons!' Ung the eight-legged jackobot yells as it skitters down the ladder. 'I see you're as alert as ever! I bet if a grenade dropped down, you might even lift an eyebrow!' [Ahack hack kack wheeze.] You grip the railing as its violent filter clearing rattles the platform. 'Oh yeah, I got a little leak, so you'll have to get those brooms out!' [Hack hack wheeze.] It lurches toward the portable botwash, leaving a trail of oil behind. A few drops spill off, plummeting to the domescrapers below.*

The Troubleshooters have spent a month guarding this access hatch through the dome to the Outside, cleaning up after bots and living a kilometer above Alpha Complex (Tension level 3). Their only visitors are the dome maintenance bots (like Ung) who come down for a quick polish before they

## Swift Justice

The box holds a lot of correctional tools, such as McDs\*, medication, handcuffs and truncheons. Normally, it would work like this:

1. The Loyalty Officer reports an offense to The Computer.
2. The Computer announces the offense, listens to arguments and announces a punishment.
3. The Loyalty Officer enforces the punishment.

Since everyone on the team is an Undercover Loyalty Officer, it works like this:

1. Anyone reports an offense to The Computer.
2. The Computer announces the offense, attributes it to 'the Loyalty Officer', listens to arguments, and announces a punishment.
3. The Loyalty Officer enforces the punishment, to his bewilderment.

**The Computer:** *'Troubleshooters! The Loyalty Officer has accused Sam-R of holding a yellow laser barrel. What do you have to say, Sam-R?'*

**Sam-R the Loyalty Officer:** *'Ah what?'*

**The Computer:** *'Sam-R, you are found guilty of possessing illegal contraband. Release it to the Loyalty Officer and submit to his correctional medication.'*

**Sam-R:** *[whimpers as he swallows his own pills.]*

The Loyalty Officer has a limited supply of correctional equipment. Encourage the other players to help him use it up quickly. Make them feel as watched outside the Complex as inside.

\*We recommend the CalmLink Armband, Say-No-Evil Speech Censor, HappyShock! Personal Trainer and Traitor Tether. These and more McDs can be found in the **PARANOIA** Stuff supplement! If you do not have it, make them up. How would your players know?

return above. If the Troubleshooters feel talkative, Ung heckles them a bit more. They will see him later.

As they are mopping up the oil, their PDCs beep.

*Congratulations Troubleshooters! I bring you good tidings! Your proximity to a mission*

Ung the jackobot  
 Skitter across walls 17  
 Point out Troubleshooters' mistakes 18  
 Solve Troubleshooters' mistakes 01  
 Hardware 10  
 Others 06

*request has given you a chance to hasten your relocation! First, you must pass a simple psychological test. Imagine the entire dome disappeared and you saw the black, inky void above, ready to suck you into the terrible Commie vastness of space. What would your reaction be?*

The proper reaction is existential terror, cowering and huddling preferred.

*Congratulations! You've exhibited proper caution! You are qualified to accept this mission! Your tour guide briefing officer will be arriving shortly. Await further instructions from him. That is all.*

They hear a helicopter approach. Did you mention the helipad attached to the platform? It can hold the helicopter's weight, but balance might be an issue.

## The Briefing

Once the Troubleshooters secure themselves or tumble off screaming, a buff ORANGE citizen leaps out of the helicopter, drops to his knees and holds on to the ground for dear life. Even after the copter lifts off and the platform stops shaking, he is still gripping the ground, whimpering softly. His legs shake as he gets up. His name is Mel-O-RLY and he is scared of heights.

Up here, he is more timid than an INFRARED in an ULTRAVIOLET corridor. He has to lead the Troubleshooters across rickety girders and catwalks to their destination, a nearby Vulturecraft base, while delivering their briefing. He has also broken the first rule of briefing Troubleshooters: 'Show no fear.'

Below the briefing is presented as it would sound at ground level. Up here, interrupt

Mel-O-RLY-2  
 Armed Forces  
 Violence 9  
 Agility 1, Grip Floor and Whimper 16  
 Others 7  
 Weapons: Orange laser (W3K)  
 Armor: Orange reflex (E1 vs lasers)

## 4. LIGHTNING ROD



it with stuttering, panic attacks, bouts of dizziness, mumbled sentences and screams:

*'The Armed Forces have authorized special maintenance for Sentry Tower Alpha, a vital link in Outdoor surveillance. Sentry Tower Alpha is stationed at the apex of the dome and guarded by Gordon-B, one of our most distinguished troopers. I will lead you to an elevated Vulturecraft base. There you will receive your tools and supplies from Gary-Y at the base's PLC depot.'*

*You will exit during a scheduled opening and travel up dome to the tower. Once you arrive within the perimeter, announce yourselves and present this Sentry Tower Alpha Access permit.' He hands the permit to the team leader. 'Head to the Electricity Routing Panel in the basement. Follow the instructions, hook up the device and place it on the top floor. Once you're done, return to the Vulturecraft base and report to Room 273c, Floor 22 for debriefing.'*

If he falls to his death before he can finish the briefing and hand over the permit, too bad. If he survives, he escorts the Troubleshooters to an obscure elevator set in the ceiling and presses the top floor button before curling into a fetal position. If he does not, fearless Vulture troopers hunt them down and herd them in.

### The Vulturecraft Base

This elevated Vulturecraft base is set into the dome, giving the Vultures an airstrip and the high ground. It's higher than the Troubleshooters' platform, but it's built as solid as the dome itself.

*The elevator opens to a bustling base filled with Army troops and Vulturecraft. In the distance, a giant pair of hangar bay doors dominate the entire wall. Bright light filters through their view ports.*

*'Freeze!' the BLUE elevator guards yell as they level their very big guns at you. 'Show your authorization now!'*

If they flash the permit, they're good. If they do not, they get stripped, escorted to the brig and jailed for an hour until the mission check clears. Fine them 200 credits each for not carrying the proper forms. If they start shooting, their clone replacements get fined.

Once they find someone who is not acting busy, they can get directions to the PLC depot. If they mention their mission, one of the soldiers mutters, 'I think they'd be perfect for her' as they leave.

### Outfitting

Gerald-Y-KCM, the base's outfitter, is concerned about these bug rumors. (See sidebar.) He happily provides the Troubleshooters with enough firepower to nuke any threat into microscopic ash. Most of these threats will come from each other.

Mission Package:

Spherical Device.

Sentry Tower wiring manual, edited (missing 34 of 37 pages)

Handwritten instructions (2 pages, tiny illegible wiring).

Electronics and wiring toolkit.

4 laser rifles: *'There are bugs out there.'*

10 red laser barrels: *'Lots of bugs.'*

3 cone rifles: *'Big bugs.'*

15 HE cone shells.

2 flamethrowers, loaded: *'Groups of bugs.'*

6 bayonets: *'You might run out of ammo.'*

Radio compass: *'To find your way back.'*

Three days' supply of army rations: *'You might get lost.'*

Portable shelter tent: *'When you need a ceiling over your head.'*

3 tubes of anti-radiation cream: *'Don't get burned.'*

50' of plastic: *'Always useful.'*

Cyanide pills: *'Better than the alternative.'*

### Stop!

*'Well, we have all our equipment. Now we can head out!'*

Not so fast, cowboy. First you need to wait for the hangar doors to open. The bay doors only open once every hour to limit contamination. (For rumors, The Computer takes them seriously.) The players should sit down and contemplate their situation, but who are we kidding? Give them a couple minutes to hear rumors, meet contacts and stick their heads into jet engines.

Once they have had their fill, announce 'TEN MINUTES UNTIL OPENING!' As Vulturecraft line up and troops rush to clear the airstrip, hint they should work their way to the front.

### Go go go!

**'FIVE MINUTES UNTIL OPENING!'**

Just as the Troubleshooters sit down next to the doors, they notice a soldier talking to a scientist and pointing their way. Did they think they would get by without a service service? Jennifer-G-ZIW has been waiting weeks for someone to make a delivery for her! She catches them (if they run away, remind them she is not carrying three dozen pounds of ammo) and pulls them away to do 'a small favor for her'.



## Assignments and Rumors

### Rumors

- ④ An industrial accident leaked to the Outside, contaminating the air! Use a gas mask unless you want to grow extra body parts. (Popular but false.)
- ④ Giant bugs have attacked anything Outside lately, even Vulturecraft! (Popular enough for The Computer to be concerned, but false.)
- ④ Gordon-B, the Alpha Sentry Tower guard, got his position by blackmailing a former student. (False. He started the blackmail after he got the position.)
- ④ Someone's ordered a hit on Gordon-B. He'll be slaughtered soon. (True.)
- ④ R&D wants to use the Sentry Tower for experiments; the Army wants this nonsense stopped now. (True.)
- ④ The dome maintenance bots are uppity lately because someone's removing their Asimov circuits. With so little human contact we won't know they've revolted until too late! (False, but not a bad idea. Corpore Metal's looking into it.)
- ④ PURGE plans to destroy the Alpha Sentry Tower by rigging a shipment with a remote bomb. (False. There are far better targets to blow up.)
- ④ The Romantics say they told R&D how to bring citizens back from the dead! (False. Every R&D scientist reads Frankenstein.)
- ④ No matter how many weapons the Armed Forces assigns, casualties continue to rise. Do the Commies outgun us that badly? (No, it's just 80% of all fire is directed at teammates.)

### Assignments

Each player gets some assignments related to the experimental devices. Every secret society and service group has an opinion on them. Each device is listed with the groups interested in it. If a group is for a device, they want it successfully tested. If they want to tweak a device, they want it tested after a few 'minor' changes are made to it. If they're against a device, they want it sabotaged.

### Mission Device

For: Any (rumors run wild)  
Tweak: Any (see above)  
Against: Any (ditto)

### Weather Control Device

For: Pro Tech, Humanists, Armed Forces, R&D  
Tweak: Computer Phreaks, Illuminati  
Against: Romantics, Sierra Club, Psion, R&D

### Power Surge Device

For: Pro Tech, PURGE, Power, R&D  
Tweak: Death Leopard, Frankenstein Destroyers  
Against: Computer Phreaks, FCCC-P, PURGE (failure to communicate), Tech, R&D

### Resurrection Device

For: FCCC-P, Free Enterprise, Humanists, CPU, IntSec, R&D  
Tweak: Psion, Mystics, Communists  
Against: Anti-Mutant, Corpore Metal, Frankenstein Destroyers, PLC, Tech, R&D

### Other potential assignments include:

Gordon-B is a high-ranking Sierra Club member and quite open about it, so protect/kill assignments work well.

He also has a large collection of strange Outdoor artifacts that could be worth a lot of money.

Finally, the INDIGO general still wants to retrieve the blackmail material.

The crashed Vulturecraft's brain, reactor and controls are sought after by technogeeks.

The dome maintenance bots date back to the Old Reckoning. That should interest Corpore Metal and Frankenstein Destroyers.

The Romantics also want to grill them about the past.

The rumors about air pollution and invading bugs need investigating. Test the air. See if anyone is feeling strange. ('Do you feel a tingling sensation all over? No? What about now? Are you sure you're alright?') Hunt down the bugs to contact, capture or kill them. ('Search every cranny and bang these pots together, that drives them out!')

And of course, nagging questions about the previous mission should be answered or covered up.

She drags them back toward a portapotty and opens it up. A tangled mess of experimental equipment lies over the john. She pulls out a lightweight folded antenna with a very long cord out and an Experiment Testing Form, thrusting both into the nearest Troubleshooter's hands.

*'Sign here! Now position Project Weather Control outside the tower and then plug it into the electrical array using these instructions!'* She rips a notepad out of the pile and places it in [Troubleshooter]'s hands. *'You're going to need some help outside, too!'* She throws various things out of the portapotty. *'Don't need this, this, not that, this...'*

**'TWO MINUTES UNTIL OPENING!'**

*She tosses the entire pile out, grabs a few items from the mess, stuffs them back in and slams the door shut. 'That's it! ALF, follow the Troubleshooters! Now go, go!' She shoos you away.*

**'ONE MINUTE UNTIL OPENING!'**

If the Troubleshooters try to grab something from the pile, she shoves them away from it. They shouldn't have time, though; they should already be sprinting. (If they look back, the portapotty's following them.) Soldiers, forklifts and Vulturecraft stand in their way. Make lots of rolls. When they are halfway there, the bay doors open and the Vulturecraft launch. Try to suck one of them into a jet engine. Make them sweat for it. As they lay panting outside, the doors

slam shut. They are on the dome. They are Outside. They are alone with ALF the portapotty.

### Above the Dome

The comb-shaped network of steel supports and concrete below you and the blue abyss above stretches as far as the eye can see. A single bright light glares down. All you hear is air rushing past. Looking up dome, you see a tower peeking out above the horizon. Is that your destination?

Take a lovely grassland hill and pave the whole thing into a 16 kilometer parking lot. That is the top of the dome: a giant, sloped, artificial desert. Massive concrete tiles are held in place by a honeycomb network of metal beams, like an industrial bee hive. The

## 4. LIGHTNING ROD

only scenery is the scattered shelter pods (cramped cubbies set into the dome) and locked access hatches to the inside.

The Troubleshooters are exposed to the weather up here, so you should not send gale winds, heat waves or blizzards their way. That would make them unhappy. (And no thunderstorms; we are saving them for later!) The only cover available is ALF, the shelter tent (if they can set it up) and the shelter pods. They will get to experience one of those later!

Aside from weather, the dome is very boring. Once the wonder wears off, prod them on.

### The Wreckage

You see something sharp and black jutting out just on the horizon between you and the tower. What could it be?

It is a wrecked Vulturecraft, the most interesting thing they have seen in hours. Most of it is still intact. It speaks when they approach it.

*'It's about time a salvage team got here! Do you know how long I've been waiting?!'*

Vulturecraft 827H-172B crashed after it failed to self-destruct. However, the self-destruct alert worked, so The Computer filed 827H-172B as Vaporized In Action. Any arguments to the contrary are either hallucinations from being Outdoors or elaborate hoaxes. 827H-172B officially does not exist anymore.

The back is trashed beyond repair, but it's stable enough to provide shelter. The two dead GREEN pilots have green reflex, four green barrels and Mystics drugs on them. Its micropile fission generator is salvageable and could provide power for the experiments. Its bombs are too heavy to carry but are still armed and explosive. Its bot brain is salvageable, too. The brain will bring this up if the Troubleshooters do not.

*'Please save me! The bots, they come at night and whisper treason into my audio sensors! They keep coming, keep coming! I don't know how much longer I can take it!'* [synthesized sobbing]

How many Troubleshooters can pass up their very own illegal bot brain? And what about those other bots? The Troubleshooters can meet them during the third trip.

## Mission Equipment

**Environmental Relief Medication** reduces Outdoor stress through hallucinations. The user sees security cameras & IntSec agents out of the corners of their eyes, building up to soft mumbling, incorporeal vidstars and the sky turning into a giant monitor of The Computer. At least they did not go mad from being Outdoors.

**The Aggressive Rechargeable Battery** is a cube of electronics the size of a potted plant. It starts empty and charges by absorbing blasts. Lasers and slugs barely move the needle, but grenades and explosions fill it up. Cunning Troubleshooters use it as a shield; smart Troubleshooters could use its charge to power an experiment. (See below.) It won't malfunction, but the weapons used to charge it will.

### The Mission Device

Remember using Van de Graff spheres in middle school to make your hair stand on end? It looks like that, only bigger. Troubleshooters nearby might feel a tingling sensation, especially if they have the Electroshock mutation. (It's actually called an Electroattractor, but do not tell them that! It would spoil the surprise!)

### Project Control

Because The Computer does not have enough control already. A lightweight, foldable satellite dish. Upside down, it looks like a giant umbrella. It's the perfect shape to carry off a Troubleshooter in the breeze.

### Sentry Tower Alpha

You finally see the base of Sentry Tower Alpha over the horizon. A steel door leads inside it. The only other opening in it is a bunker slit at the very top. You think you see someone up there.

*'ATTENTION POTENTIAL COMMIE MUTANT SABOTEURS! THIS IS GUARD GORDON-B-WER OF SENTRY TOWER ALPHA! STATE YOUR PURPOSE AND AUTHORIZATION NOW OR BE... it's on the tip of my tongue... PULVERIZED!'*

**ALF (or Autonomous Lavatory Facility)** is a mobile bot portapotty developed by R&D for Outdoor hygiene. It provides privacy (Tension level 20), someone to talk to and cover during a firefight. It's polite but disgusted by the Troubleshooters; you would be, too, if your friends kept relieving themselves in you.

The other experimental equipment is stored in ALF and is the group's property, so they all get fined if anything happens to it:

**Cubots** look like multicolored cubes. Each side is a different color and has a small button in the center. Simply press the button, toss the cube and watch the bot get to work! Each button does something different:

Infrared turns it into a loyal companion that rolls behind the user.

Red turns it into a hygiene helper that crawls all over the user's body, cleaning dirt and removing belly button lint.

Yellow turns it into a personal advisor. If the user asks it for help, its advice adds 4 to Knowledge rolls. It hates incompetent users.

Green turns it into a contraband tracker. It will sniff out the closest treasonous items, which are probably its user's.

Blue turns it into a mobile bomb. It runs at the most threatening person it sees (including its user) and blows up next to him (W3K 5m). If it doesn't see one, it follows its user until it does.

Violet makes it blow up (W3K 5m) in the user's hand. A Violet would have read the instructions and known not to press this button, so anyone pressing it is a traitor.

Did anyone bring a bullhorn to reply? If not...

Gatling laser fire erupts from the tower.

What Gordon lacks in accuracy he makes up in quantity. He is not running out of ammo and the Troubleshooters can not hit him from this far. They have two options: run away or run in. If they open the locked door, storm upstairs...

The top floor is an open room circled by electronic equipment and strange artefacts. Two bald creatures with black bodies perch on either side of a BLUE soldier in a



# SECTOR ZERO CLEARANCE ULTRAVIOLET



## Common Dome Questions

**How steep is the dome?** A gentle hill slope.

**How thick is the dome?** Thicker than any drill you could carry up here.

**Can I fall off the dome into Alpha Complex?** Only if you blast a hole in it first. Holes in the dome make The Computer so nervous, you'll probably be shot before you hit bottom.

**Can I loosen a tile so it falls in?** If you weaken the steel grid supporting it, yeah. Take a ton of acid or explosives and apply liberally. Remember, holes in the dome make The Computer nervous.

**If I die, how is my clone replaced?** Your next clone parachutes out of a passing Vulturecraft patrol.

**There's no surveillance up here, right?** Sort of. It's Tension 0 unless an overhead Vulturecraft patrol notices explosions. Explosions on the dome make The Computer nervous.

**Can I get off the dome?** If you do not mind a 70-meter drop to the ground, sure. Then you get to see periphery minefields.

baggy uniform. They eye you for a moment. 'SQUAWK!' He turns around. 'COMPLEX PROTECT ME!' He pulls out an antique gun and aims it at you.

...fend off his pet vultures and bullets, pin him to the ground and shove their permit in his face, he lets them in. If they try shooting in the tower, their guns and grenades do not work in here. The tower's electromagnetic fields make hair stand on end and disable regular electronics. (This does not include Gordon's antique revolver or the experimental equipment.)

Gordon-B is an old soldier that's fading away. He guards the tower (Tension level 1) with his pet vultures, named Red and Green for their collars' colors. He is a Sierra Clubber and artifact collector who loves visitors. He does not get many visitors.

*Gordon: 'Maintenance, huh? Ung usually does it, but I guess important work needs the human touch. I know! You lowlies deserve a break, hiking all the way up here! Please, take a seat somewhere! What do you think of Red and Green? Don't they have beautiful plumbing? They're going to be the new Army mascots someday, you know! I'll bring them on my vacation!'*

*Troubleshooter: 'Sir, could you please-'*

*Gordon: 'No no, not Sir. Call me Ranger Gord. Have you ever seen one of these before?' And this is a piggy bank. This is what they used for ME cards in the old days!' [cough, tap, tap.]*

That is twitchtalk. Gordon-B will repeat it if the Troubleshooters are slow. Once anyone makes any counter signal, he finishes the conversation, directs them to the wiring panel and pulls aside the contact. 'I saw you eyeing the tape recorder. You want to sample it?'

Gordon-B expects 7,000 credits for the 'recording'. If the Troubleshooter does not pay, he screams, 'TAKE THIS, COMMIE!' and runs him out of the tower shooting. If the Troubleshooter pays, he pokes around some of the junk, searches a bit more... and looks confused. 'It's gone... someone's stolen it! It's one of your teammates, has to be! Make sure you get it back.' (It is not stolen; he forgot he already sold it.) He does not return the money.

Gordon-B-WER

Shoot Faraway Targets 03

Shoot Nearby Targets 07

Remember What Just Happened 01

Give Vultures Orders 10

Weapons: Gatling laser (W3K) and Old

Reckoning revolver (W3K)

Armour: Blue reflec (E1 vs lasers) with

Kevlar coating (I1)

Red & Green

Stare Unnervingly 18

Rip Shreds of Flesh Out 10

Weapons: Pointy appendages (S5K)

## The Wiring

A ladder leads down to the basement of the tower. In the dim light, you see a wall of dials, switches and knobs connected by tangled wires. At the very bottom of it are four large electrical sockets, labeled one through four. There's a covered manhole in the floor.

These are the wiring panels for the experiments. (The manhole opens straight above the Complex, like if you looked below the street and ended up peeking from the clouds. They'll play with that later.) At first, we were going to develop a complex logic game for the Troubleshooters. We later discovered we hate logic puzzles, so we scrapped the whole thing. This is our New & Improved Trial & Error system for hooking up experiments:

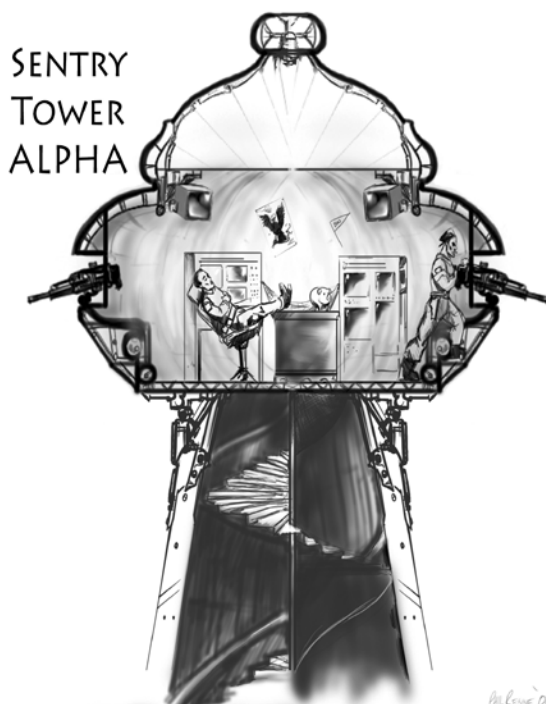
1. Number four recipe cards Sockets 1 thru 4. Lay them out on the table.

2. Label four other recipe cards 'Mission Device (2)', 'Project Weather Control (3)', 'Project Power Surge (5)' and 'Project Recall (4)'.

## 4. LIGHTNING ROD

3. Take out ten tokens. Place one by Socket 1, two by Socket 2, and so on.
4. Give the Spherical Device and Antenna Device to your players. 'Go nuts.'
5. The players give you a dirty look. 'What about the instructions you gave us?' You say, 'I'm sorry, I almost forgot that.' Improvise setup instructions for both devices that contradict each other. Suggest they try trial and error instead.
6. Make a lot of rolls and grin.

We say, if hairy problems like this could be solved just through simple logic, there would be a lot of unemployed plumbers in the world. World Famous Game Developers always err on the side of plumbers.



### So How Does It Really Work?

The players try to pair up each device with a socket containing the correct amount of energy listed on each device. The tokens represent the energy distributed to each socket. They make Electronic Engineering checks to rewire the panel and redistribute the energy tokens. Toss in sabotage and improvised power sources and you are set.

If a player tries to micromanage by fiddling with individual dials or knobs, randomly rearrange the tokens. If a player asks for a specific result, such as 'I set it up so Socket 2 has 4 energy and Socket 3 has 2 energy', he makes an Electronic Engineering check for each socket he specified. For each check he passes, he can put as many tokens on that socket as he wants. After he is done, randomly rearrange the energy tokens on the sockets he skipped or failed.

### Monkey Wrenches

If a player really fails an Electronic Engineering check, take away a few of the tokens before you rearrange them. Nothing makes players sweat like a sudden drop in power. Return the dice later, but make the players work for it.

Players can gain modifiers to their Electronic Engineering checks by gathering info on their PDCs. Data Search, Bootlicking, Hacking and other info gathering skills can add up to +4 to their Electronic Engineering checks if they succeed. If they fail, their search has caught The Computer's attention. 'I want to talk with you about a few websites you visited...'

Cunning players can sabotage the sockets' power gauges so the display is wrong. Secretly make an Electronic Engineering check for them. If they succeed, change the number of tokens on that socket, but record the actual number and modifier in your notes. They will need to sabotage two at a time if your players can count. ('Six and two and four make—hey!') A player can recalibrate a gauge by making an Electronic Engineering check; if they fail, the display is wrong (even if it was correct) or it goes blank. (Record that socket's energy and remove all of the tokens.)

Players can not shoot or blow up the panel, since weapons do not work in here. Beating it with pipe wrenches does not work well, either; it was built to last. Methodical wire snipping could destroy the whole panel, but it would take 15 minutes. (And before they ask, the experiments' power cords can withstand anything short of a diamond.)

Players can improvise their own power sources. Parallel laser batteries, the Vulturecraft minipile reactor, the experimental Battery and smuggling in fusion reactors are all great ideas. Make extra sockets for any alternative power sources they use. Give it an energy rating of 1 to 5, based on how dangerous it is. Remember these experiments are supposed to use a sharp jolt of lightning, not a constant power source; they will have to jury-rig a way to release all of the stored energy at once.

### Are We Done Now?

Since they only have two devices right now, they should not have much trouble setting it up. If anyone asks why the experiments are not doing anything, explain the gauges just measure potential energy; it



looks like nothing's powering the panel right now. Gordon comes down to watch them once he has done negotiating upstairs.

*'Them's sockets powered by captured Commie electricity, m'boy. Yessiree, every month the Commies shoot electric bolts from above, and I capture them and shunt them down here! You just be careful with those, y'hear? Nothing good ever came from Commies...'*

Gordon-B watches them set up the devices. He asks the players what each one does. Of course, they know it—wait, what does it do? Were they cleared to know? Well, Gordon's demanding some answer, and he seems tense, so they should tell him something.

Once they calm Gordon-B down and set up the devices, they can follow their radio compass back to the Vulturecraft base. That was quick.

## While You're Out There...

Once the doors let them in and they're heading to the elevator, they see a large citizen in a green lab coat carrying two bulky coils of cord. He's walking toward them. He matches them step for step. If they make a break for the elevator, he whips out one of the cords and trips them long enough to give them his own service service:

*'Louis-G from R&D. I have a service service for you. Go to Sentry Tower Alpha and connect the tower electrical grid to the power conduit below using this.' He holds out the left coil, a multicolored woven electrical cord. 'You will need this to plug it in.' He holds out the right coil, the longest piece of plasticord you have ever seen.*

It's two kilometers long, to be exact. He gives them the coils, an Experiment Testing Form and another useless instruction booklet. The Troubleshooters have an hour to meet contacts, clean their equipment and write a last will before they head back to the tower.

### Project Power Surge

We can not comprehend two kilometers' worth of coils. Would they even be able to carry it? It does not matter; all you need to know is they are heavy, clumsy and impossible to wrap back up.

## The Shelter Pod

The environmental controls must be shorting out. The light has changed position above and the heater is stuck on high. The floor ahead of you wavers. Everything begins to get blurry. The only thing you can feel is the searing pain climbing up your legs.

Celebrate the Troubleshooters' first heat wave by asking for Violence checks. The lowest margin collapses from heat stroke. Everyone else feels like doing the same. They are almost at the Vulturecraft, though. They can take shelter there! Well, they could if the air conditioning in it still worked. The Vulturecraft is now a large roaster. Troubleshooters wilt the second they enter. If they left the brain in, it is delirious, spouting binary code haiku. Tell them they have two minutes before the next Violence check. What do they do?

Mention some of the hatches they have seen across the dome. They are shelter pods. Each one leads to a small cubby embedded in the dome, insulated from the outside. They are made for domebots, but they work for Troubleshooters too. They can reach, open the hatch and barely jump in before the next check. (Give perversity points if they leap in before checking.) ALF does not fit inside. They barely have enough room for a Troubleshooter team and one bot. A bot is already occupying it.

You drop onto something metallic and poky. 'What the- bugs! Bugs!' It flails beneath you.

Say hello to Ung again. Ung holed up in this pod earlier and it does not like guests. After the Troubleshooters convince it they are not killer bugs, he will let them stay, but he will not make it comfortable. As they shut the hatch, Ung asks, 'What are you doing out here, you vat-scraping peons?' He takes comments about performing maintenance on Sentry Tower Alpha poorly; it has been his job for centuries, and he does not want them budging in. He will start by making them less comfortable. [poke poke]

The Troubleshooters are stacked like vertical sardines. The only light is a dim glow below. (It comes from a port hole showing a very high view of the Complex.) It is dark, cramped and limbs and weapons poke out at every angle. It is a dark room, tipped over and shrunk.

The wind pick up outside. Any ammo left outside explodes from the heat. Something pelts against the hatch. (It's a hard rain; if anyone tries to escape, it's acid rain.) Just before they crack, it stops. Could somebody check if it is safe? The ground is damp and it is cooler outside. Ung heads toward the tower while the Troubleshooters crawl out. If ALF was not destroyed in an ammo explosion, its brain is fried. ('Open up, insert buttocks and press hard. Day good glow having.') It gets colder as they approach the tower.

## Deja vu

Gordon-B greets them like he did the first time. (He has forgotten the Troubleshooters.) Did anyone bring a bullhorn this time? This time, Ung's downstairs and it is already rewired the panel. 'It works much better this way! I know this panel like the back of my motherboard!' Randomly rearrange the tokens. Ung hangs around like an albatross, offering advice and making small 'improvements'. Someone distracts it, someone rewires the panel and someone plugs it in. No, not that end. The other end.

## Going Down

Remember the very long length of plasticord? Someone needs to climb down, plug in the electrical cord and climb back up. Someone, either the climber or people holding the plasticord, has to make Violence checks to climb safely. It's pretty simple if no one swings the rope so the climber smashes into a building. Toss in a surveillance copter if you think it is too easy.

Eventually Ung leaves to do other work and the Troubleshooters can head home. Now it has gotten colder and strange white flakes are falling. Huddle, people!

## Third Time's the Charm

The clouds clear and it begins warming when the shivering Troubleshooters slog through the bay doors. As they drag their feet toward the elevator, they see another GREEN scientist. This one has white, frazzled hair and glances over at them with a gleam in his eye.

If that does not mobilize them, nothing will. When they reach the elevator:

The doors open, revealing four ORANGE R&D workers escorting a long infrared box. They exit the elevator, blocking your path. The elevator doors close just as the GREEN

## 4.4 LIGHTNING ROD

catches up to you. 'Ah, Troubleshooters! You always know how to handle experimental equipment! Have I, Victor-G, got a service service for you!'

### Project Recall

It looks like a giant, black coffin. It weighs as much as a clone. And if they peek inside, there's a dead body hooked up with wires. You think they would not mess with it, but Troubleshooters love playing with corpses...

The Troubleshooters can probably mouth the rest. This time, they get to hook up an infrared coffin—er, box. Remember what we said about all R&D scientists reading Frankenstein? ('Pay no attention to groan-like sounds coming from the box.')

It's night Outside once they are headed back out. They've been working on this mission for the entire day; are they tired? The Vulturecraft is a safe spot to sleep, right? If the Troubleshooters are itching for some action, wake them up with a squad of Frankenstein bots whispering sweet treason in their ears. If the Troubleshooters are too paranoid to sleep or they overdose on Wide Awake, they're wounded from exhaustion until debriefing.

Frankenstein bot squad (5)  
Scrubot, combot, jackobot, 8-legged jackobot, poodlebot  
Violence 07 (combot: 10)  
Everything else 04  
Weapons: Unarmed (S4K), yellow laser (combot, W3K, malfunctions on 16–20)  
Armor: 1 (combot: 3)

### The Climax

The air whistles past, muffling strange crashing noises in the distance as you approach the tower for the third time today. Flickering spotlights illuminate it against the dark. You see an Armed Forces copter parked beside it.

Gordon-B does not greet the Troubleshooters this time. The copter is guarded by two YELLOW Vultures that shoo away the Troubleshooters like pests. The tower door is unlocked. They can hear yelling within.

'Isn't it obvious that my experiment is the most important one? One strike could power half of the Complex!' 'For how long, an hour? The recaller will extend a clone's usefulness by years, maybe even decades!' 'The weather controller will let us summon enough lightning for all of our experiments! Let me do it first and we'll all get shares!' 'Please, please!' Gordon wails. 'This is getting too violent! You're scaring Red and Green!' 'I will as soon as Jennifer admits my experiment has priority!' 'YOUR experiment? I've read the specs for your experiment, and the alternate flow variance is too low to properly...'

Jennifer-G, Louis-G and Victor-G have come here to straighten their testing out. Between arguments, each scientist pulls individual Troubleshooters aside and makes tempting offers:

1. Jennifer-G is a high-ranking Humanist will pay lots of unmarked credits if her experiment is tested. She will also plant doubts about the other scientists' loyalty.
2. Louis-G is a PURGE operative who wants his device hooked up through any means possible. First he will try a PURGE signal; if there are no PURGERS on the team, he offers a choice of lifelong weaponry or lifelong pain to them.
3. Victor-G promises power, promotions and any 'tested' experimental equipment they want. He is also an obsessive Pro Techer; he will sneak down and rewire the entire panel if the Troubleshooters do not watch him.
4. Gordon-B still tries to find his contact. He also reminds everybody that the Troubleshooters also installed that 'whachamacallit' for the mission.

The scientists toss down useless advice as the Troubleshooters sweat over the panel. Ung arrives halfway through and tosses in his two cents while mocking the scientists. ('Are you even aware what that setup will do to the surge protectors? Change it back!') Soon after, Gordon-B has a nervous breakdown soon after and starts yelling for peace and quiet. He gets it when thunder drowns out everyone else.

A thunderous crash casts a silence over the room. 'Do you think it's close?' 'It's almost time.' 'A big one's approaching.' They all run upstairs, leaving you alone.

The Troubleshooters have three minutes to finish what they are doing and get upstairs before the climax begins. Anyone still by the wiring panel during the climax gets fried by the electricity. Now the Troubleshooters can see what they have wrought.

Gordon-B's furniture is crammed into one corner as each scientist nervously eyes their experiments. Project Recall, Project Weather Control and the mission device are all here, while Louis-G watches an overhead view of the complex below. The scientists glare at each experiment and the Troubleshooters in turn.

Suddenly the Outside turns searing white for a split-second. All of your hair stands at attention as a thundering crash blasts your eardrums. Dozen of gauges jump, and...

Tally up which devices the Troubleshooters hooked up, how much energy each has and any impromptu systems they set up to squeeze out a bit more juice. Each device falls into one of three categories: underpowered, correctly powered or overpowered. If its socket's energy matches its energy requirement, it is correctly powered. If it is less than its requirement, it's underpowered. If it is more, it is overpowered. Match each device's category with the result below.

### The Mission Device

**Underpowered:** It shoots electricity toward the Weather Controller and Project Recall. Bump up their energy category by one.

**Correctly powered:** It hums. The Troubleshooters' hair stands up higher. Small sparks start flying. The next lightning bolt strikes it through the room, frying everything inside.

**Overpowered:** The surge generates a magnetic field. Small metal objects fly toward it, then large metal objects, then metal walls and support beams. The entire top floor crumples in minutes.

### Project Weather Control

**Underpowered:** The wind picks up, and then suddenly dies off. The thunder and lightning stops. The clouds clear up, leaving a calm night.

**Correctly powered:** The storm grows. More lightning strikes the tower. Unless the Troubleshooters immediately yank out the cords all of the experiments become overpowered.

**Overpowered:** One word: tornadoes.  
**Project Power Surge**





**Underpowered:** On the monitor, the Complex lightscape flickers for a moment. Louis-G curses, barrels his way through the Troubleshooters, plants a sticky bomb on the staircase and parachutes through the manhole below to escape. 'CURSE YOU TROUBLESHOOTERS!' (The bomb does not explode until someone takes it out of the tower; the electrical interference prevents it from activating.)

**Correctly powered:** On the monitor, a quarter of the Complex's lights go out. Louis-G grins at the Troubleshooters before he barrels through, plants the sticky bomb and parachutes through the manhole. 'DEATH TO THE COMPUTER!'

**Overpowered:** Half of the Complex's lights go out. A few buildings explode. Louis-G cheers and does the same as above.

## Project Recall

**Underpowered:** The box rattles for a moment, then ceases. Victor-G goes mad and punches the Troubleshooters senseless.

**Correctly powered:** The box rattles, and then something smashes its way out. Victor-G yells, 'It's alive! It's ALIVE!' as the reanimated clone climbs out. The zombie clone is (was?) Albert-V, one of the most respected R&D scientists in the early days of Alpha Complex. He considers modern-day scientists to be incompetent and will immediately start 'improving' the other experiments. Of course, poor Albert-V's brain is not what it was after so many years in deep freeze, so he might be slightly insane, not to mention lacking hand-eye coordination. He also rants about how Alpha Complex is in danger of being taken over by degenerate mutants—if the characters do not help him 'fix' (read, smash) the other experiments, then he assumes they are mutie scum too. Albert-V is dressed in the tattered rags of a violet jumpsuit.

**Overpowered:** Like above, but he shoots electricity out of his fingers. Pretty cool, huh?

Albert-V-???  
 R&D  
 Violence 10  
 Agility 5  
 Unarmed Combat 14  
 Hardware 12  
 Weapons: Inhuman Strength S3D or Electricity (W3K)  
 Armor: 4

## The Aftermath

It probably ends with everyone running screaming out of the collapsing tower. The copter took off if things got hairy; it will not be coming back. Gordon-B returns to the tower if there is anything left. Red and Green survive without a scratch. Otherwise the survivors (minus traitor Louis-G) walk back toward the Vulturecraft base. The Troubleshooters have no problem reaching the elevator this time. (If Project Power Surge succeeded, everything is on emergency lighting.) Time for debriefing.

## Debriefing

The elevator brings them to a simple briefing room. (Tension level 8) At the head of the room is Mel-G-RLY, their briefing officer plus two clearances. Do you think he wants payback?

After the Troubleshooters give their account, the surviving scientists are brought in to grade the Troubleshooters' performance based on whether their projects succeeded. Their recommendations will probably cancel each other out. Jennifer-G also asks for her experimental equipment back. (She does not remember some of it, so the Troubleshooters can 'forget' a few things.) How will they explain ALF's condition?

Next, Mel-G asks how they handled Louis-G. If the Troubleshooters say they suspected Louis-G, penalize them for not doing anything about it earlier. If the Troubleshooters cast Louis-G as an uber-traitor who completely fooled them, they are awarded for a successful experiment but enrolled in Traitor Identification classes for a yearcycle. If they blame a teammate as an accomplice, he gets interrogated.

Then they grade the primary mission objective. Unless they make up a solid story about the mission device and bribe the scientists to back it, they are blamed for failing to hook up the device properly. By this time, they should all be a few clearances lower and a couple thousand credits poorer.

Finally, each Loyalty Officer is called up.

'Now we settle who is corrupting this team with their treason. Loyalty Officers, submit your reports! Who was responsible for your last two failures? Point out the actual traitors and you will have your punishment removed!'

Let the real games begin!



# PARANOIA™

## SECTOR ZERO



THE COMPUTER  
IS YOUR  
FRIEND...NO,  
REALLY.

A **PARANOIA** adventure sourcebook by **GARETH HANRAHAN**,  
**SAUL RESNIKOFF** and **JEFF GROVES**  
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Just as 'Code 7' is Troubleshooter dispatchers' jargon for a mission that promises certain death, so 'Sector Zero' is Alpha Complex slang for punishment duty. Troubleshooters 'sent to Sector Zero' face a dispiriting assignment nobody else wanted. Maybe they must supervise Armed Forces latrine scrubots or administer experimental R&D medications to insane super-powered mutants. Or maybe those benighted Troubleshooters get in so much trouble they are assigned the missions in this **PARANOIA** collection, Sector Zero.

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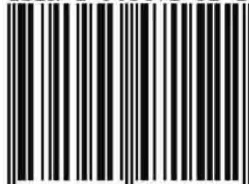
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