

PARANOIA ^{xp}

PARANOIA

CRASH PRIORITY



Brought to you by
THE TRAITOR
RECYCLING STUDIO

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PARANOIATM XP

Crash Priority!

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Has never Crashed and don't
you forget it

BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE TRAITOR RECYCLING STUDIO

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Security Clearance ULTRAVIOLET
WARNING:

Knowledge or possession of this information by any citizen
of Security Clearance VIOLET or lower constitutes treason
punishable by summary execution and a good talking-to.

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Published by Mongoose Publishing, Ltd. Publication MGP 6632. Published September 2004. First printing November 2004.



Crashing is our priority—no, wait...

Attention, Alpha Complex citizens! For your protection, your friend The Computer has instituted new transbot station security procedures. After you complete the existing routine of ME Card inspection, loyalty record inspection, mandatory waiting period, metal detection, plastic explosive detection, bioweapon detection, thoughtscan and random strip search, friendly HPD&MC service firm screeners will ask you a few simple questions:

- 1) Have your possessions been out of your sight or in the custody of persons unknown to you at any time, ever?
- 2) Are you aware that interfering with the operation of, impeding the movements or the expeditious performance of duties by the assigned workers of, defacing, sabotaging or destroying an Alpha Complex transbot is considered treason under CPU directive 214.08.17.146/TB44f?
- 3) Are you aware anyone and everyone around you may be plotting treason of any or all of the types described in the aforesaid directive?
- 4) Given this directive, do you yourself plan to perform any of said treasonous acts on this trip?

The Computer assures you these new measures will improve every loyal citizen's sense of safety. And fear not! The Computer assures you Technical Services is even now revising all transbot schedules to accommodate the short delays imposed by these new procedures. Expect no more than 62 to 74 minutes of additional transit time per trip.

Missions for every style

Mongoose Publishing's XP edition of **PARANOIA** tries hard to broaden the range of experiences players associate with the game. This mission book, *Crash Priority*, gets so broad we should have printed it as a poster.

This collection of missions supports all three play styles listed in the rulebook: Classic (the fast-moving slapstick style that made **PARANOIA** popular), Straight (a dark, satiric mode emphasizing tension and Kafkaesque anxiety) and Zap (nonstop frenetic mayhem). Each mission is particularly suited to one of the three play styles, though you can easily adapt most of them to any style. These are mini-missions: condensed storylines for you, the esteemed Gamemaster, to flesh out with your own devious imaginings. Really, every **PARANOIA** Gamemaster creates his own style anyway, which may resemble one of the rulebook styles or, just as likely, veers off into

wild uniqueness. Sure, this all sounds like mealy-mouthed shuffling off of our responsibility as Famous Game Designers. Of course it does; it is. By now our mealy-mouthed shuffling-off no longer surprises you. In time we're sure it will become endearing.

If you'd like inspiration in filling out the structure of these missions—the mission alert, briefing, outfitting, service services and debriefing—check out the 'mission blender' tables included with the **PARANOIA** XP Gamemaster Screen. (Certainly our shameless plugola has never surprised you. It, too, may someday seem endearing. Take it as a challenge.)

A quick summary of the missions in *Crash Priority*:

- ③ 'Stealth Train' by Dan Curtis Johnson, a Straight mission, involves a high-tech train so incredibly undetectable it has achieved total nonexistence. Of course the Troubleshooters must guard it.
- ③ 'Traitor Backup' by Beth Fischel and Allen Varney, a really dark Straight mission, puts the Troubleshooters on drink-serving duty at a termination center.
- ③ 'Patch Job' sends the Troubleshooters to a transtube station taken over by a mutant—except wait, that guy's not a mutant! What is he? This mission works in either Straight or Classic style.
- ③ 'Random Access Mission' by Andy Fitzpatrick (a.k.a. 'Jazzer', mastermind of www.Paranoia-Live.net) takes the Classic mission structure of briefing-outfitting-service service-mission-debriefing and turns it inside out. The PCs must stop an Old Reckoning software virus from wreaking havoc, but the steps of their mission are totally scrambled.
- ③ 'Nyuk Nyuk Nyuk': Three Troubleshooters who bear a strong resemblance to an Old Reckoning comedy trio guard a warehouse. What happens? Well, it's a Zap mission—what do you think?

Six-shooters

Most published **PARANOIA** missions furnish six pregenerated Troubleshooter player characters. The PCs have secret society missions related to the main mission, and—more important—inbuilt reasons to distrust, dismay, discommode and dis-troy each other.

Such ready-made conflicts are a godsend to you, the harried Gamemaster. They make it much easier to set the players at each other's throats. (Remember, the greatest threat to any Troubleshooter should come from his teammates.) But the published mission-specific Troubleshooter characters don't really translate

well to a different mission, or to one you create from scratch. For these situations we provide *six-shooters*.

Each six-shooter pack comprises a complete, integral team of six prefab Troubleshooters, all ready to hand out to your players regardless of the mission awaiting them. Right out of the book, or the photocopier, these groups have plenty of reasons to suspect and/or kill one another. Use them to bring new players up to speed fast, or to kickstart a new **PARANOIA** series.

Like the mini-missions, each of the three six-shooter packs in *Crash Priority* is keyed to one of the three play styles. You can probably use each pack with any mission with some minor fixing, but listen: **Don't mix and match characters** from different packs! Use the Classic PCs only with other Classic PCs, use Zaps only with other Zaps, and so on. Otherwise you'll screw up the chosen tone of your game, and your players won't know how to behave. Trust us on this, okay?

The PCs in each six-shooter pack are numbered, 1–6. Give them to your players in **numerical order**. That is, if you only have four players, give them PCs #1–4, and leave out #5 and #6; if you have five players, use PCs #1–5 but skip #6. In each pack, characters #1–4 have rivalries with other specific, named characters in that pack; if you don't use all four, some players won't have anyone to mistrust. Characters #5–6 are more generic targets, making them ideal to give to latecoming players. (And while you're at it, slap them with a treason point for being late, the bastards.)

Each six-shooter pack includes not only the actual PCs you actually hand out to your actual players, but also secret GM-only notes about the characters. You'll find these notes at the beginning of the six-shooter section.

Traitor Recycling Studio

Many talented designers helped create *Crash Priority*. We recruited most of them through the net, and in particular through a Web-based game we ran in spring and summer 2004, while working up the **PARANOIA** XP rulebook. We used a 'Wiki', a collection of editable Web pages and the rules for Lexicon, designed by Neel Krishnaswami.

Posting to the Wiki twice a week for two months, nearly two dozen High Programmer players wrote entries in an alphabetical glossary, a report to The Computer on the complex and far-ranging Toothpaste Disaster. (Find the Lexicon rules at www.paranoia.allen-varney.com/index.cgi/ParanoiaLexicon, and read the complete report at www.paranoia.allenvarney.com.)

Many Lexicon players have joined an informal team called the **Traitor Recycling Studio**. Studio traitors are now writing several **PARANOIA** XP supplements collaboratively, using a new Wiki.



STEALTH TRAIN

DAN CURTIS JOHNSON

GM AND 4-6 PLAYERS
PLAYING TIME 1-2 SESSIONS
(4-6 HOURS)

Summary

The Troubleshooters are called to guard and test a new R&D project that combines the military function of zero-observability with the civic necessity of mass transit: the Stealth Train! The problem is...how do you guard something you can't see or, in fact, detect in any way? Even worse...how do you demonstrate an invention you're not even certain exists?

Mission background

Normally we'd explain what's really going on behind the scenes and how the Troubleshooters have ended up as patsies for someone else's cunning, traitorous plan. This time around, we think it'll be more fun to leave the big questions completely unanswered. Is there actually a real Stealth Train somewhere, or has this all just been some High Programmer's clever way of siphoning off the project's budget? The truth is what you make of it.

I know what a shift is; what's a 'graveyard'...?

The Troubleshooters have just put in two long shifts in a row—a hectic morning shift spent tracking down a cyborged Computer Phreaker whose new virus hopelessly snarled autocar traffic across the sector, creating massive traffic jams and resulting in several serious accidents, followed by an evening shift of overtime at their respective service firms helping to catch up lost productivity caused by the morning traffic problems. They ended up getting to their

scheduled dinnertime too late for anything but the last dregs of mashed foamatoes, and they missed tonight's new episode of Teela-O. So they're understandably cranky when they finally drag themselves into their shared apartment and collapse in their bunks for some well-deserved rest, no Sandallathon (Sleepy-Sleepy pills) required.

One hour and 17 minutes later, having completed the Minimum Sleep Interval specified by Health & Hygiene codes, a Mission Alert spitting noisily from their apartment's line printer awakens the PCs:

'Troubleshooters! Congratulations on being chosen to assist The Computer in a research matter of critical importance. Your past record of dedication, patience, focus, obedience and, above all, discretion

indicates you are the best-suited team for this duty. Said duty consists of providing one shift of security and defense for classified research project ST700, the prototype All-Aspects Unobservable Multicar Mass Transit System. You are designated as Security Outfit 353006/C. You are to report to Tubeway Station SC44, Level 8, Platform A/B, where you will relieve Security Outfit 353006/B by taking over security and defense of the ST700 from 00:00 hour until 08:00 hour. Upon relieving 353006/B, your team leader must contact your mission handler at Troubleshooter Central.'

It's about 23:40; the PCs have 20 minutes to get to station SC44. Station SC44 is officially marked as 'abandoned' in all the transit-related databases because The Computer has turned it over to R&D for use as a lab. Any attempt to hop onto a transit system (transbot, etc.) and ask to be taken to SC44 results in the automated response: 'That is not a valid destination.' Clearly

Playing it Straight

The missions in this section are intended for the **Straight** play style. If your players have much experience with 'old school' **PARANOIA**, they're probably pretty comfortable with the Classic or Zap styles of play. As Gamemaster, work hard to rein in their instincts, such as the instinct to shoot first and gather evidence later. Subtle treason is in season; a firefight should never go unnoticed. If someone uses a weapon—on a fellow player or NPC, traitorous or not, or even just shooting in the air—they'll be contacted on their PDC by Troubleshooter Central, inquiring after the weapons use they detected. ('Did you file a C44-202/A Request for Permission to Discharge Weapon? No? Oh, you saw someone engaged in treason so you shot them. And you'd already filed a properly-countersigned M303/644-D5 Formal Accusation of Treason? Why not?') Then levy fines—or heavier penalties if needed. If they keep at it, an Internal Security Confession Squad shows up and carries them off; their next clones arrive later in Medicated condition.

Also, deny your players their usual easy access to the Computer. The Computer is not at the beck and call of RED clearance Troubleshooters—quite the opposite! All through the mission, they must deal with an entire string of bureaucrats between them and the Big C. Any time they want information, or just want to tattle, they can only get in touch with someone one or two rungs up the clearance ladder... someone who probably has his own ideas about what's important. Your players may want to sass, accuse or otherwise be confrontational with these higher-clearance people; penalize them appropriately (see above). Insubordination to almost any higher clearance citizen is a fineable offense. In fact, you should probably make photocopies of the Treason and Insubordination charts in the main rulebook and keep them in sight of the players at all times. We especially point out items H, J, M, P, FF, II, OO and VV.



the Troubleshooters have to find a way there on their own.

They might try looking up a schematic of the tubeway system (Software/Data Search roll); success simply indicates that no such station is currently listed on the RED-Clearance version of the map. Gaining treasonous access to a higher-clearance schematic (Software/Hacking roll) shows where SC44 used to be before it was closed; if the roll is successful by a wide margin, it might indicate that the station was sold to R&D. To determine whether the PCs' research was noticed, treat the hacking attempt as a Tension 6 situation whether the roll succeeds or not.

The Troubleshooters might also try calling in on their PDCs to inquire about the station. They reach Troubleshooter Central and the evening-shift mission handler, **Errol-O-CVC-2**. Errol-O is scheduled to be off at midnight (i.e., in 20 minutes) and officially he has no idea who these guys calling in are, though he can guess pretty easily since he's handling the security team currently assigned the duty. But that's a graveyard-shift mission, to be handled by whoever relieves him in 20 minutes. As a result, he feigns both ignorance and suspicion.

Team: Hi! We need route information to tubeway station SC44.

Errol-O: Oh, really? And you are...?

Team: Security operation 353006/C.

Errol-O: I don't have any record of that team designation being valid.

Team: We're supposed to be guarding the ST700 starting at midnight.

Errol-O: Oh, that's next shift. You need to talk to the next shift's mission handler.

Team: But by the time she's on shift, we'll be late!

Errol-O: Gosh, fellas, if only there were some way I could help you out here.

There is, in fact, some way Errol-O could help them out, but the PCs must use a combination of Management-skill sweet-talking (through Bootlicking or possibly Con Games) and cash bribery (see sidebar) to get him there. With a little money transferred to his PDC and/or his ego appropriately massaged, Errol-O is happy to tell them how to walk to SC44. Turns out it's just a couple hundred meters away.

Another possible route to SC44 would be searching for it themselves. Perhaps have them make some Access rolls; if they roll well and/or you're feeling generous, they find the station entrance in the nick of time, or even know where it is already; otherwise, they don't find it until they're already late, despite the fact that it was just around a corner the whole time. They might also try finding people in the area to ask about SC44, but seeing as it's nearly midnight, the halls and public rooms are pretty empty, and the only folks they're likely to encounter are secret society contacts skulking in the shadows, unconscious citizens who didn't make it to their bunks before

Errol-O-CVC-2

CPU (actually spying for HPD&MC), Free Enterprise (degree 4), Adrenalin Control (Power 06); Management 11, Bootlicking 15, Bribery 15, Take Bribes Without Appearing To 17; Stealth 08, High Alert 12; Violence 7, Energy Weapons 11; other skills 07; laser pistol (no barrel), orange reflex (E1)

their Sandallathon dose kicked in and IntSec goons wondering why a Troubleshooter team is just wandering around the halls. (The secret society contacts, at least, can tell them how to get to SC44 in exchange for, you know, a future favor or two....)

Speaking of secret societies

In the short time they have, some players may want to sneak off to contact their secret society. Even if they don't, everyone should learn something about the project they are going to guard.

Take each player aside to tell him what he knows; something like: 'This Unobservable Transit System sounds a lot like something some of your buddies in <secret society> were talking about the other day—something called the "stealth train". Then, depending on their secret society, continue with something like this:

① **Anti-Mutants:** 'The stealth field was engineered from mutant genetics. As a result, mutants aren't hidden by it. Maybe you can use it to flush out secret muties on your team.'

② **Communists:** 'It allows High Programmers freedom to have wild, decadent parties without detection. This ultimate tool of capitalist greed must be destroyed, Comrade!'

③ **Computer Phreaks:** 'They say the control console is the most sophisticated portable system ever designed. It would be the ultimate hack to take control of that, huh?'

④ **Corpore Metal:** 'The train has a new kind of AI guidance system that merges with human intelligence. If you have a chance to experience that, you must try it!'

⑤ **Death Leopard:** 'An invisible train that can go anywhere in Alpha Complex? Sounds like an awesome joyride. You totally want to see how fast it can go.'

⑥ **FCCC-P:** 'It sounds like the best hope for peace and security and killing Communists yet. The project must succeed!'

Bribery

A simple bribe can affect many social (Management-skill) situations. In general, PCs can improve Bootlicking, Con Games, Chutzpah, Interrogation and Oratory through bribery, but they can't improve Intimidation, Moxie and Hygiene. As always, though, it's up to the sometimes beneficent Gamemaster to approve a sufficiently clever approach to the problem. You may also decide bribery affects other sorts of rolls, such as Access, on a case-by-case basis. Treat bribes as effectively buying Perversity on the spot for use in that one roll. Each point of this faux-Perversity costs some number of credits; the amount depends on the security clearance of the citizen being bribed:

RED:	5 credits per point
ORANGE:	10 credits per point
YELLOW:	20 credits per point
GREEN:	50 credits per point
BLUE:	100 credits per point
INDIGO:	250 credits per point
VIOLET:	500 credits per point

⑦ **Frankenstein Destroyers:** 'It has a horrific new generation of bot brain that must be destroyed at all costs, before it is put to wider use.'

⑧ **Free Enterprise:** 'The stealth technology would be worth a fortune to any number of buyers. If you can figure out how to steal its secret, this mission could make you RICH!'

⑨ **Humanists:** 'Everyone is pretty sure there's no actual train...it's a cover for something worse. If that's so, you need to find out what is really going on and EXPOSE it.'

⑩ **Illuminati:** 'There is no train. It's a scam. For reasons that need not concern you, the deception must *not* be exposed.'

⑪ **Mystics:** 'A sufficiently...heightened... mind should be able to pierce the stealth veil. If you take something that enlightens you enough to see it, bring some back for us.'

⑫ **Pro Tech:** 'Our guys would love to make a human-portable version of the stealth technology. Try to, you know, "liberate" its stealth generator for Pro Tech analysis.'

⑬ **Psion:** 'The train is meant to be used to take all mutants—even the registered ones—to disintegration camps. It must be prevented from ever working!'

- **PURGE:** 'An invisible train that can go all over the Complex would be the ultimate tool of mayhem. Fake its destruction, but actually bring it to PURGE to be used.'
- **Romantics:** 'It's apparently a time machine from the future. You've seen movies about this sort of thing. Assassins from the future will come to retrieve it. Watch out!'
- **Sierra Club:** 'The train is how high-level citizens get in and out of the Outdoors without being detected. Verify its route so we can take control of it and use it instead.'
- **Spy for another Complex:** 'The train would be a fine prize in itself, but even better would be killing any high-level project personnel you meet. Or kidnapping them to take home.'

All around the underground

Regardless of how they find their way there, when they get to the entrance of Tubeway Station SC44, it's bolted over with a steel grating labeled **STATION CLOSED NO ENTRY** and **DANGER OF COLLAPSE** and **RADIATION HAZARD LEVEL 3 BEYOND**. To prevent unauthorized entrance, a single YELLOW-Clearance Armed Forces Vulture trooper with slugthrower, kevlar, belt of grenades, the works, stands guard (read: is doing pushups, maintaining his gun, otherwise 'training'). It's not obvious how one would open the bolted-down grating to go into the station; in fact, only the Vulture guard knows the procedure.

The Vulture assumes the PCs are unauthorized to be there until they show him their mission alert. If the team has arrived late, he points out they were supposed to already be down at Level 8 and implies he's going to have to report this. PCs must use Management skills and cash bribes to be let in without a report. If the team has arrived early, he points out they're not authorized to be in the lab before midnight, and goes back to 'training'. He will 'train' for about ten minutes, then inquire what the team wants, having pretty much already forgotten. Is it after midnight now? Gosh, they were supposed to be down at Level 8 already. If the team tries to interrupt his training, he'll point out interfering with Armed Forces training is a reportable offense. Again, Management rolls and bribes smooth things over.

The team might also try to figure out how to open the door themselves. If they've shown the Vulture their Mission Alert, he won't interfere in their attempts, but he won't help either. It takes a Hardware roll (no applicable specialty) to figure out the controls to open the door.

Beyond the secure door is a rundown, long-abandoned transit station, with turnstiles and

empty service kiosks in a central chamber and an array of tunnels leading off in all directions—most of them collapsed or barricaded partway down. Only one out of every three fluorescent bulbs still produces sporadic, flickering light. The maps on the walls are long since faded and torn, and what remains is covered with various kinds of graffiti—probably treasonous (and contagious) secret society propaganda. How closely does the team want to examine the maps? That's what we thought.

Fortunately, there's an elevator that looks... well, there are reassuring lights on its control panel. It probably works, even though it has the sort of rickety, rusty appearance that suggests a deathtrap. All of this, of course, is security by obscurity: the entire lab is well-maintained and this is just a carefully manufactured front. If Troubleshooters go poking their noses into the empty kiosks, they'll find very functional cameras hidden inside, recording their every move—alongside gleaming-new servo-mounted rotary autocannons. How long does the team want to putter about in this open chamber surrounded on all sides by robotic gun systems? That's what we thought.

The elevator has nine buttons, numbered 1 through 9 top to bottom; however, the original numbers are scratched out, and the numbers 0 through 8 are written over them in black ink. Whether the players decide to press the last or the next-to-last button to get to Level 8, take them to the next scene. (See the 'Other button' sidebar on the next page for an entertaining variation.) The elevator can carry six people comfortably, and eight people safely; if ten or more squeeze in, there could be serious trouble. Actually, every

YELLOW Vulture guard

Armed Forces, Frankenstein Destroyers (degree 3), Slippery Skin (Power 06); Management 06, Bootlicking 10, Con Games 01; Stealth 06, High Alert 10; Violence 10, Projectile Weapons 14, Thrown Weapons 14; other skills 05; slugthrower with solid and dum-dum ammo, yellow reflex (E1)

elevator is always serious trouble in **PARANOIA**, so forget we said anything.

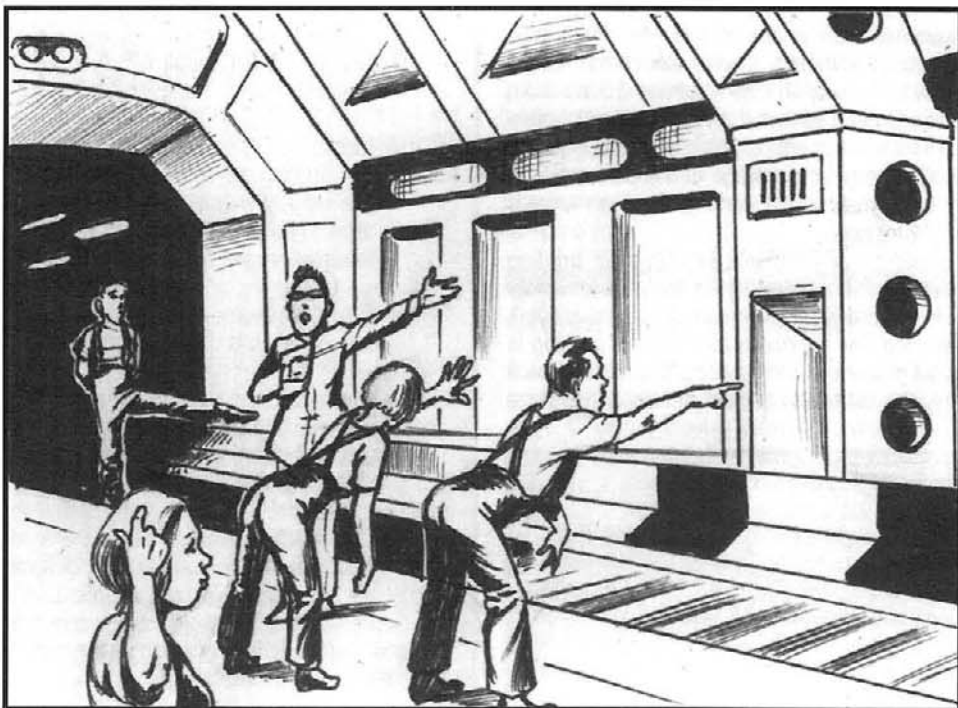
(For the record, there's an emergency staircase down to the platform, too, but it's locked, YELLOW Clearance, and the PCs can't locate it until they've already reached the platform. So there.)

So this is what a frying pan looks like

(Tension level 2)

The elevator takes the PCs down to the level they selected and opens to reveal a waiting-area platform, perhaps 75 meters long with a couple of benches on it, acting as an island between two tubeway tracks. One track is labeled A and the other is labeled B. This must be Platform A/B, no?

Both tracks appear to be entirely empty. Six ORANGE-Clearance Troubleshooters hang around the platform as well, looking bored but tough. This is Security Outfit 353006/B, a.k.a. Andrea-O's Avengers (see sidebar).



"Guard this with your life!"



They are eager to finish this stupid assignment and get some sleep. Andrea-O, team leader of the Avengers, looks the Troubleshooters over dismissively. 'REDs, huh? Well, it should be quiet enough for a few hours. I guess it won't hurt to leave it in the hands of some REDs for a while.' A few of her team members chuckle at this. The moment the team shows Andrea-O their mission alert, she makes a 'wrap it up' hand gesture to her team. 'We're outta here, fellas. Not a moment too soon, you ask me.' She gives the Troubleshooters' team leader a little salute that pretty obviously feigns respect. 'Good luck with the stealth train', she says sarcastically. One or two members of her team are unable to conceal their knowing smirks. Then they are out of there like a shot. Any attempt by the players to keep them here any longer will result in an icy stare from Andrea-O: 'You might want to oil yourself, RED; I thought I heard you squeak.' The message should be clear: the players have no authority over Andrea-O's Avengers, especially since the Avengers are no longer responsible for this platform or anything about it. If the team tries to get any information at all out of her about the so-called Stealth Train, she rolls her eyes and looks to her teammates with a shrug. 'Newbies', she says, and they all laugh as they leave.

Either way, the Troubleshooters should quickly find themselves alone on the platform with no evidence at all of the 'ST700' they're guarding. If they check around the tracks for any sort of vehicle, they won't find one, not even if they wander down the tracks into the four tunnels that each stretch into darkness. If they do this, though, be sure to describe the shifting airflow and the occasional distant sound of wheels on rails, implying that these tunnels connect to the rest of the subway and that something might come down this track at any minute. You might also point out that there's a highly electrified third rail ready to flash-fry anyone who runs around down here without a successful Violence/Agility roll.

There are a couple of basic cameras, but they don't have good coverage of the platform area and they may not be working; **Tension level** is only 2 for now.

When the PCs check in with their briefing officer via PDC, they reach **Molly-O-DLA-1**. Molly comes from a fairly typical CPU background, meaning her approach to mission handling is about procedure and process. The mission alert says the team is to contact her once they have

The other elevator button

At some point, one or more Troubleshooters may want to check out the other candidate for 'Level 8', the one they didn't go to initially, in the hopes it makes more sense than where they've been. When they step out of the elevator, however, make them realize no matter how screwed up their mission has been so far, they're happy to be there instead of here. This other level is almost totally dark, lit only by broken, sparking electrical cables and small fires. There is a lot of rubble and structural damage, as well as many dark... stains... on the ground and various walls. It smells foul.

A tubeway track runs alongside a single platform. On the platform crouches a huddled human figure dressed in the filthy remains of a YELLOW-Clearance R&D lab coat. If the team approaches him, something way down the track, in the

dark, shifts heavily—an almost subsonic noise the Troubleshooters can feel in their guts—and a wave of hot, fetid air rolls out of the tunnel. The little R&D figure turns and shuffles towards them, Igor-like. He appears to be gnawing on something that might have been a scrubot limb. Or a bone.

'Are you here to serve or be served?' he asks, his eyes rolling wildly. 'The *Massster* has need.' Drooling, he gestures them toward the dark, steaming tunnel. 'Come! Come! The *Massster* wants to see. The *Massster* will judge. Come!' Another deep noise—is it something alive? a machine?—and another wave of dark, foul air should send the Troubleshooters on their way back to the elevator without further investigation.

If it doesn't, kill the bastards. Or you could switch to a *Call of Cthulhu* adventure.

Andrea-O's Avengers

Andrea-O runs a tightly focused team, because she has skillfully maneuvered Troubleshooter Central into filling all positions with fellow FCCC-P loyalists from her Armed Forces unit. They work together for the team's mutual good—an offensive concept in **PARANOIA**, but permissible in this case because they're all NPCs. Sometimes the good of the team means doing a great job fulfilling the goals of The Computer, and sometimes it means acting in concert to commit neat little treasons to which they can all confess later for that great, just-absolved feeling.

The team members (all FCCC-P and Armed Forces):

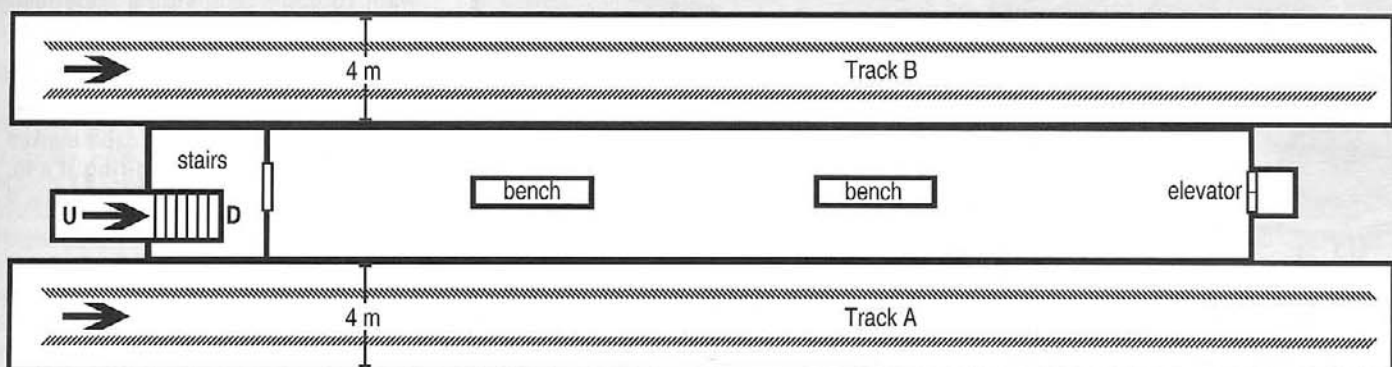
- ④ **Andrea-O-STR-4:** Pyrokinesis (Power 15), team leader. Tough and arrogant, she has no patience for RED upstarts who try to besmirch her team's reputation.
- ④ **Ryan-O-INT-2:** Invisibility (Power 15), hygiene officer. Almost Zen in his calm, unflappable in the face of any challenge, quick-witted and perceptive.
- ④ **Lily-O-WIS-1:** Telepathy (Power 15), loyalty officer. A great mediator and peacemaker; seems to know what everyone wants—because she reads their minds.
- ④ **Lucian-O-DEX-5:** Telekinesis (Power 15), equipment guy. Little guy, quick on his toes and good with his hands. Might use his TK to pick PC's pockets.
- ④ **Jack-O-CON-3:** Adrenalin Control (Power 15), recording officer. Big guy, serious, acts slower and dumber than he is. Gets absolutely *everything* on camera.
- ④ **Dale-O-CHA-2:** Charm (Power 15), happiness officer. Irresistible; he can convince you cold is hot, up is down and you should go have yourself terminated now.

If, at any point, the players try to have the Avengers brought back to Platform A/B for a confrontation about the presence (or lack) of the Stealth Train, they eventually show up—escorted by Internal Security agents, R&D representatives and any one else you feel like bringing to put pressure on the situation. They then blandly demonstrate the presence and functionality of the Stealth Train by secretly using their mutant powers cooperatively, so that Lucian-O's telekinesis makes it look like Ryan-O has stepped up onto an invisible train, Ryan-O's invisibility makes it look like he's cloaked by the train, Andrea-O's pyrokinesis simulates use of the beta-ray projectors, etc. Oops! (Admittedly, their mutant powers are a little out of the Straight norm, but played subtly enough, it should work okay.) Andrea-O's Avengers are more skilled than the Troubleshooters (assume skill and specialty ratings two higher than any PC's rating), better armed and armored, and their word will trump the players in any appeal to higher authority.

Avenger stats

Each Avenger has Management 07, Chutzpah 11, Con Games 11, Intimidation 11; Stealth 07, High Alert 11; Violence 11, Energy Weapons 15, Thrown Weapons 15; other skills 08; laser pistol with three orange barrels (W3K energy), 3 concussion grenades, orange reflex (E1)

Tubeway Station SC44 Level 8 Platform A/B



Scale: 1 in = 15 meters (objects not to scale; tracks not to scale; actually, this entire map is kind of notional)

□ Door

dismissed the previous security detail, so if they try to contact her before they've relieved Andrea-O's Avengers, she'll get twitchy and insist they call her back after they've completed that aspect of their mission procedure. After they get back in touch with her, of course, she wants to talk to Andrea-O, to direct the Avengers to debriefing, and becomes even twitchier when she finds out the Avengers are already gone. (This is not the team's fault, of course; Andrea-O was told she would receive directions to debriefing from the next-shift mission handler, but she already knows which debriefing room it is. However, Molly-O can only take out her frustration on the PCs.)

Molly-O, in general, should become ever twitchier with each contact she has with the PCs. She speaks crisply, precisely, and with excessive attention to detail. If she is asked any question, she must consult one of her many binders for the correct procedure, taking several minutes. One of the first things the team will probably want to address is the presence (or lack) of any sort of train at the platform. This is where you're going to set the entire tone of the rest of the mission, so you should have Molly-O as focused and ready to go as you can.

Team: So, uh...this ST700. We're guarding it?

Molly-O: That depends. Are you at the proper platform?

Team: We...think so.

Molly-O-DLA

CPU, Anti-Mutant (degree 3), Rubbery Bones (Power 04); Management 11, Befuddling Bureaucracy 17, Stress You Out by Getting Stressed Out Herself 17; Violence 09, Energy Weapons 13; Software 10, Data Search 14; other skills 07; laser pistol with two indigo barrels (treasonous), orange reflex (E1)

Molly-O: Either you are or you aren't. You relieved 353006/B, did you not?

Team: Yeah...Okay, yeah, we're at the proper platform. You're right.

Molly-O: Well, that's where the ST700 is currently located, so you must be guarding it.

Team: Yeah, well, about the ST700 being located here...Uh, what does it look like?

Molly-O: I don't have those specs, as I am not part of the R&D effort.

Team: Well, we're not sure it's here.

Molly-O: Ridiculous. If it wasn't there, 353006/B would have reported a problem.

Team: Uh. Maybe they chose not to say anything?

Molly-O: Are you filing a formal accusation of treason against 353006/B?

Team: Uhh! Well, wait a second...

Molly-O: I'd hate to have to dispatch an Internal Security unit to your location. They get really grumpy sometimes.

Team: No! No, that won't be necessary. Maybe it was just a mistake on their part.

Molly-O: Are you filing a formal accusation of incompetence against 353006/B?

Team: Uh. Hang on...

The 'logic' at work here is, it's easier for everyone involved if the Troubleshooters just act like the train is here and everything is fine. Andrea-O's Avengers are already successfully debriefing, reporting the ST700 is present and accounted for. If the ST700 was present and accounted for at the end of their shift, but it's not there now, that must be the fault of the current security detail, no? Make it clear to the players everyone believes the stealth train to have been safely parked alongside Platform A/B as of the shift changeover at midnight. Every second the players spend suggesting the mission is already

in some way suboptimal just makes Molly-O more agitated. ('How can it be gone now? It was there just minutes ago! What did you do to it?') The moment they claim the ST700 is, in fact, right here—'Oh, there it is, on track A!'—she calms back down again.

Whoever first claims to have verified the presence of the train, no matter how long it takes, should get 5 Perversity.

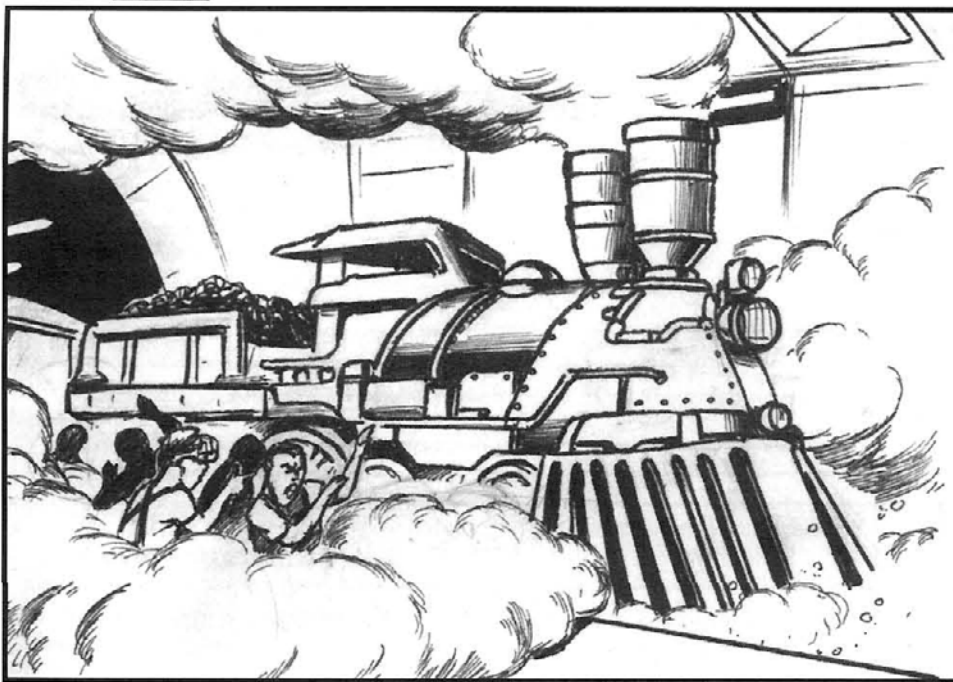
At this point attempts to get more information about the ST700 fail; the PCs are not cleared for that information. They're not even high enough clearance to learn whether the ST700 is parked on track A or track B; nobody will tell the players which track it is supposedly on. Every attempt to get more information must go through Molly-O; there isn't even a standard confession terminal on this platform to hack into. And Molly-O gets progressively twitchier with each successive request for information as she flips through her procedural binders for long minutes. Absolutely everything the players do other than sit there quietly watching an empty platform is, as far as she is concerned, a violation of process, and she rapidly escalates to a breaking point if they keep poking.

Check up or check out

About the time either Molly-O seems like she's going to explode or the players have run out of ways to cause trouble among themselves on a completely empty platform, Molly-O informs them someone from Transport Forerunners R&D (a well known R&D service firm) is with her at Troubleshooter Central, ordering them to do some tests on the train. **Jerrod-Y-MKE-3** is part of the ST700's development team, and he wants to run through a few basic system checks to make sure everything is in order before tomorrow's first full set of trials.



CRASH PRIORITY!



Redefining the meaning of 'stealth'.

If the team tries to worm out of it by claiming they're not authorized, he reassures them they're 'properly covered under C76.B440.' He also informs the team there's a 250-credit bonus in it for each of them (and for Molly-O) if they can just help him out. That should get them motivated; it definitely helps Molly-O overlook her usual protocol.

Toss a couple of Perversity points to the first player who starts doing something to help Jerrod-Y. Do your best to get the players to commit to one or the other track as the location of the ST700. Once one or more team members are ready to help Jerrod-Y, he starts taking them through a bunch of steps, something like this:

'There should be four cars total: the engine, the power supply, the dining car and the tailgunner. Is the stealth field currently engaged? Yeah? Okay, put on the phase goggles that were provided and tune them to 64-8-32, which is the current phase of the field. Huh? No goggles? Are you sure? They were left at the platform at 16:30 and the Avengers don't have them. If you look around I'm sure you'll find them.'

If the team looks around, they find a small box tucked under one of the benches; it contains six sets of mylar sunglasses, each of which has a little dial from 1 to 100. Turning the dial does nothing; they're just sunglasses. If the team claims they don't work, Jerrod-Y tells their equipment guy to fix the glasses. Every minute they aren't helping Jerrod-Y get the actual tests done, Molly-O will become more frantic, certain that the Troubleshooters are

deliberately interfering with these tests for some reason. Again, the first player to 'successfully' use the sunglasses to detect the ST700 gets two Perversity. Through this whole set of tests, your goal is to let any attempt by your players to play along succeed; the more they fake it, the better their lies work.

'Okay, first enter the engine car through the open archway and verify turbine functionality. Pull the leftmost lever to the notch at the halfway position. The turbine RPM gauge should now read something around 12,000; what does it say? Good. On the power output dial next to it, what does that one read? No, the other one. Really? Uh...okay. Now move the turbine lever to the notch at 3/4. RPMs? And power output? Uh, very good. Now set it all the way to 100%.'

(You will probably need to improvise around this script, of course, as your players try various tactics to stall or complicate the tests. If at any point they claim something is not working, Jerrod-Y becomes concerned, and Molly-O freaks out, believing that the team has broken the ST700. Award one or two Perversity to players who keep the tests moving forward instead, or 'fix' these problems as they come up.)

'Now we need to check the beta-ray projectors in the tailgunner car. The access code to the tailgunner car is 7113-0752. Sit in the gunner's seat and turn on the targeting system. Disengage the override; that's the red toggle switch on your right. On the fire control console,

select *Single Shot*. Use the control yoke to aim the projectors at something down the tunnel—nice and safe now; we don't want to damage anything important. Now fire off four shots, two seconds between each shot, until all four barrels have discharged. Impressive, huh? Okay, finally, engage the, uh, safety mechanism by disconnecting that large cable marked Ground from the locking-ring it's in. Now try one more shot to verify that it doesn't fire.'

'Okay. Let's check the dining car real quick. One car forward. Are all the dining tables properly set? Both sets of forks? Wait, I have a note here... we need to make sure the menus for tomorrow's test are correct. What does it say the appetizer is going to be? Really? Damn, I told them... Okay, no problem, we can get that reprinted by tomorrow.'

'Okay, finally, board the train's power supply car; that's the second car. The access code to the compartment is 4432-5002. This is a somewhat complicated test procedure so I'll need you to do this fairly quickly; no time for questions. First, pull the red lever on the far right to the opposite position. Now, switch off anything on the panel next to it that is currently lit-up. The coil-shaped thing on the wall should change from a warmish red-orange glow to a bluish-purple one if you've done it right. Finally, pull the handle marked *Control* up as high as it will go, to—uh—set power control at its highest level.'

'Well, it sounds like all tests passed with flying colors. You guys did great. I'm going to put that bonus authorization in now.'

He then signs off. Molly-O doesn't come back on. In fact, Molly-O doesn't ever respond if the team tries to raise her on the PDC. Why is this? We'll find out shortly, but first...

Too much of a good thing

While the players are wondering what happened to their mission handler, they hear an enormously loud, chugging noise down one of the tunnels—specifically, down whichever track is *not* the one they previously established as the location of the ST700. Sure enough, in a minute or so, an enormous huffing steam train made of black iron comes belching out of the tunnel, choking smoke pouring from its stack, a blinding bright light pointed ahead of it. Emphasize how *unstealthy* it is in every way. It shrieks to a halt, sparks flying from its iron wheels, and stops with a huge belch of steam. Soot begins settling on every surface as a team of YELLOW-Clearance Troubleshooters

disembarks from its four cars—an engine, a coal tender, a dining car and a caboose with a four-barrel gun turret. They're all wearing sunglasses like the ones in the box under the bench.

These Troubleshooters are Deborah-Y's Defenders; their team leader, **Deborah-Y-CTB-2**, steps down from the engine and wants to talk to the team leader. 'Sorry we're late,' she apologizes. 'Final rundown tonight ran late. We're Deborah-Y's Defenders, by the way.' She seems to think the Troubleshooters should have heard of them. Unlike the Avengers, these **YELLOW**s don't treat the team with utter contempt; quite the opposite: Deborah-Y's team is buddy-buddy from the first moment... though there's a slightly menacing edge to it. 'You guys seem pretty cool. You're not going to cause any trouble by reporting our late handover... *right*?' Deborah confirms this is the ST700 and asserts, aggressively, the stealth field is currently engaged. 'Of course it's on; that's why you can't see it!' She takes her goggles off, looks at the train as though she can't see anything and conspicuously shakes her head in amazement: 'That stealth field is the weirdest thing I've ever seen. Or rather, *not* seen, eh? Ha ha ha. *Right*?' The rest of her Defenders follow her lead, as assertively as their leader. Savvy players laugh with her, not at her, and pretend they, too, can only see the train when they're wearing their goggles.

If there's any disagreement about whether this train is supposed to be here, Deborah-Y calls into Troubleshooter Central and talks to their own mission handler, Mary-G, who unconditionally backs up anything Deborah-Y says. The players, of course, still can't get in touch with Molly-O. Are they going to show insubordination to a bunch of **YELLOW** Troubleshooters and their **GREEN** mission handler? Probation and a 200-credit fine.

The Defenders leave pretty quickly; they need to get some sleep before they come back and take the train out for its first official time trials tomorrow. 'Take good care of our baby,' Deborah-Y tells the players. 'If anything happens to it, we'll hunt your last clone to the furthest corners of Alpha Complex.' It's not clear if she's just kidding around or deadly serious.

Did you or did you not?

The team will probably start poking around this new train, thinking about maybe reproducing the tests Jerrod-Y talked them through. Unfortunately, none of the controls in this train match Jerrod-Y's description. There's no turbine control; there's a giant coal-burning furnace instead, with pressure gauges. There's no reactor; it's a coal tender. The guns aren't high-energy beta-ray projectors; they appear to be some sort of flamethrowers. Even the dining car is wrong; it has tables and chairs, but no silverware or menus of any sort. Troubleshooters with good Hardware or Software

Defender stats

Each Defender has Management 07, Chutzpah 11, Con Games 11, Intimidation 11; Stealth 07, High Alert 11; Violence 11, Energy Weapons 15, Thrown Weapons 15; other skills 08; laser pistol with three yellow barrels (W3K energy), 3 concussion grenades, yellow reflex (E1).

For convenience, assume all the Defenders are in Free Enterprise or some other Class A society (degree 5), and all have Regeneration (Power 05), unless it suits your storyline to give them something else.

rolls might figure out how to bring any or all of its systems online, but the moment they try to actually engage any of them (put the train into gear to move, for example, or fire the guns at something), nothing happens other than a small automated voice which says 'Unauthorized use detected and logged.' The responsible Troubleshooter will be subjected to Probation and a 200-credit fine. (This train, of course, also has no sophisticated computer console, no bot brain, nor any other interesting new technology players might be looking for.)

As the team looks around the train, the elevator returns to their level, and out comes a **GREEN** Internal Security goon squad in riot gear and glossy black faceshields, all screaming 'Everyone *get down!* Down on the ground!' They have scary-looking weapons. Everything is super-tense for a moment, then one of them notices the huge steam train. 'Wait a second, it's right here. It's fine,' he says. They put their weapons down and ask to speak with the team leader. The IntSec squad leader informs the team a message was intercepted from Jerrod-Y-MKE to a known agent of PURGE, claiming he had convinced a security team to set the ST700 in self-destruct mode. Mission handler Molly-O-DLA-1 was found fatally shot in her Troubleshooter Central cube.

Fearing the worst, of course, The Computer sent this team to the platform to apprehend any Troubleshooters who survived the destruction of the ST700, but apparently the train is right here, right? This *is* the ST700, right? Did the team actually test it in any way? No? Good, because they are absolutely not authorized to use anything in or on it. So they simply *pretended* to be following the orders of a higher-clearance R&D member? Well, that's very clever, you know, but... that's also disobeying orders. Why did you disobey orders from a **YELLOW**-Clearance R&D representative?

Whatever the team claims, it's likely they will confess to something that should result in a fine and possibly Probation.

Once the team has managed to talk the IntSec team down with whatever desperate story they can come up with—perhaps aided by Bootlicking and bribes, as always—and the agents are

headed back up the elevator (perhaps with one or more team members in custody, if things have gone poorly), **Molly-O-DLA-2** comes online at Central. She's even more focused on attention to procedure than her predecessor; had Molly-1 been more careful about process, she'd still be alive, right? If asked, Molly-2 knows nothing about Deborah-Y's Defenders or a second train or anything, and the more the team tries to find out what's going on with this new train, of course, the more stressed Molly-O gets.

Needless to say, there's no 250-credit test bonus awaiting the team.

You've got the look

Some more time goes by—perhaps it's been two or three hours total now—when the team again hears noises up one of the tunnels. This time, it's up the tunnel the unstealthy steam train is *not* on—that is, whichever track is still empty. It sounds like many voices, somewhat excited, and maybe a little bit angry.

It is, in fact, a bunch of **INFRARED** protesters, some with signs, being led by an **ORANGE** citizen from HPD&MC, **Dennis-O-CRV-4**. Dennis-O has a properly approved and signed 202-D1750 Authorization for Expression of Minimal Dissent (AEMD) on level 8 of Tubeway Station SC44 during this particular graveyard shift. They are protesting the change of CrunchieTym's flavor from 'SoyLike' to 'Kelp I Need Somebody'. Little do they know this is just part of the overall marketing strategy to eventually bring SoyLike back as Classic SoyLikeLike, thus boosting sales. Of course the protest was supposed to happen at a time and place nobody would witness. Did nobody inform HPD&MC this 'long-abandoned' station SC44 was actually a classified R&D lab? Oops.

This situation makes Molly-O... erratic. She looks up Dennis-O's paperwork and confirms he and his protesters really are supposed to be here, like it or not. She also reminds the Troubleshooters quietly that none of these people are cleared to see the ST700. 'Thank goodness the stealth field is engaged,' she says, just about the time some of the **INFRARED**s start trying to climb on the big steam train. 'What's this?' they want to know.

Quick-thinking players may manage to get Dennis-O and his IRs to confine themselves to one end of the platform, to protest there quietly. There Dennis-O starts to put his real agenda into action, subtly at first. Dennis-O, you see, is a Romantic, and he recently turned up a reference to the notion of 'freedom of speech'. He wants to try it out. So he gets the IRs chanting various approved slogans and then slowly, smoothly switches them to slightly-less-approved slogans. Being IRs, they'll repeat anything an **ORANGE** tells them to. A suggested sequence of slogans:



1. 'Bring back SoyLike!'
2. 'More flavors, less fillers!'
3. 'We hate Kelp!'
4. 'Grow food, don't build it!'
5. 'Too many machines!'
6. 'Get rid of bots!'
7. 'The Computer's not my friend!'
8. 'Smash The Computer!'

Around the time of the first slogan switch, an HPD&MC media team emerges from the elevator—three ORANGE camera crewmembers and a second-unit director, **Andy-Y-LIC-2**. Andy-Y is all Hollywood: 'Hey, baby! Who loves ya? You're doing great. Don't ever change!' He used to be a happiness officer in his earlier career. He has an MC50/R202 'Order to Produce Media Content for an R&D Presentation'. There's going to be a media presentation about the stealth train during tomorrow's trial run, and Andy-Y needs to get some additional coverage for the 'behind the scenes making-of' special. He takes one look at the unstealthy steam train and sighs. 'I thought she was going to be a lot prettier than this. Tough one. Well, we're all professionals here.'

Film crew and associated nuisances

Dennis-O-CRV-4

HPD&MC, Romantics (degree 5), Hyper-senses (power 05); Management 10, Chutzpah 14, Con Games 14, Moxie 14; Violence 04, Ducking for Cover 10; other skills 07; no weapons or armor.

Andy-Y-LIC-2

HPD&MC, Romantics (degree 6), Ventriloquism (Power 05); Management 11, Bootlicking 15, Con Games 15, Moxie 15; Stealth 05, Concealment 09, Surveillance 09; Violence 04, Running and Hiding 10; other skills 07; laser pistol with two indigo barrels (treasonous), orange reflec (E1)

Leonard-G-EMT-3

R&D, Anti-Mutant (degree 8), Bureaucratic Intuition (Power 08); Management 09, Intimidation 13; other skills 07; no weapons or armor.

INFRARED protesters

If you need stats to run a bunch of INFRAREDS, well—the Gamemaster is always right. HPD&MC, FCCC-P or other harmless societies, Death Simulation or other benign mutations (Power 04); Management 05, Bootlicking 09; Violence 05; other skills 04; no weapons or armor.

If the Troubleshooters check in with Molly-O, she informs them the ST700 Project Marketing Manager, **Leonard-G-EMT-3**, is with her at Central. He's a gruff-sounding guy, and he's not going to put up with any foolishness from a bunch of REDs. He authorizes the team, under Title 6

Section 4 of the Research Media Code, to operate the ST700 for the purposes of providing action to Andy-Y, who is directing his three cameramen as they set up their gear. The team, wary after the Jerrod-Y incident, will surely want proof they really are authorized, and Molly-O dutifully starts looking up the appropriate procedures. She eventually returns to confirm they are, in fact, authorized this time. By now Leonard-G is impatient to get the filming started.

Andy-Y, meanwhile, has noticed the chanting INFRAREDS. 'We didn't need this many extras, but actually, I think it'll help,' he says, and starts directing protesters to stand here and there all over the unstealthy steam train. If Troubleshooters try to stop him, his cheery exterior suddenly turns ugly: 'Is this your shoot? No, I don't think so. Your job is standing there quietly. My job is directing. Let's both do our jobs, shall we?'

The protesters continue chanting while they're on the train, of course, and occasionally Dennis-O slips in the next slogan among them. Andy-Y is confused: 'Why aren't they singing the jingle? They were supposed to sing the stealth train jingle. Will somebody please get these idiots started on the official stealth train jingle? What do you mean, 'What jingle?' Not my lookout. Didn't anyone get the memo? Look, I will personally give 100 credits to whoever gets these idiots started on the jingle.' Andy-Y really will beam 100 credits to any Troubleshooter who makes up a song and convinces the INFRAREDS to sing it, too. You should also award 5 Perversity to the player who does so.

However, the odds are good that, jingle or no, the protesters soon begin chanting their unapproved slogans again. If the Troubleshooters do nothing about the increasingly treasonous talk coming from the INFRAREDS, Andy-Y captures this as part of the making-of documentary: 'Shocking! the security detail seemed completely lax in its enforcement of proper thought and behavior in the facility.' If, on the other hand, they use violence on these obvious traitors, Andy-Y's team films the screaming protesters as they scatter in all



A protester getting things done in Alpha Complex.

directions, Troubleshooters laying down gunfire: 'Shocking, the security detail was positively eager to murder our unarmed civilian extras.' Either way, word will likely get back to IntSec that the Troubleshooters are irresponsible.

Another optional (but horrible) trick you might try is having Andy-Y pull individual Troubleshooters aside, 'away from the cameras and off the record,' to talk to them about 'what's really going on.' He's secretly gathering evidence to prove that the whole ST700 project is a scam designed to line someone's pockets with embezzled R&D funds. 'You can tell me the truth,' he says to any Troubleshooters he suspects won't immediately report him. He conspicuously turns aside all camera lenses. 'This thing isn't the real train, is it? Is there even a real stealth train?' Andy-Y is wearing a microcamera disguised as a button on his coat, recording anything the Troubleshooter says.

Whatever happens, Andy-Y still needs footage of the train's stealth field in use. He expects the Troubleshooters to show it in action. His team can't do it because they're filming it, and being from HPD&MC they have no useful skills, let alone technical training. If the team resists, Leonard-G, on the PDC, orders them to demonstrate the field turning off and on. The longer it takes the team to sort out some way of faking success (perhaps with Andy-Y's collusion; film the empty track and splice together in editing...?), the more frantic Molly-O will get; perhaps she ultimately has a cardiac arrest from stress and goes offline again for a while.

The odds are good by now your players will be also pretty close to some sort of breaking point. If they just cut loose and kill a bunch of people at any point—especially higher-clearance citizens of any sort—the GREEN IntSec squad returns and ends their shift conclusively.

Comedy of terrors

If, on the other hand, your players somehow manage to both satisfy the HPD&MC media team and safely deal with the increasingly treasonous protesters, a peaceful calm (before the storm) settles over the platform. Eventually Molly-O-2 (or -3, if -2 collapsed) comes online. She sounds concerned; apparently rumors have begun flying all over the place:

- ③ The team believes Andrea-O's Avengers didn't do their job, and now the Avengers are angry;
- ③ This team has had dealings with PURGE;
- ③ There are stories about treasonous protests;
- ③ Some questionable interview footage leaked out; and so on.

The reason she's mentioning this is, she's giving the team a heads-up: The head of Troubleshooter Central, **Arnold-B-BAR-3** (her boss's boss) is coming down to the platform to find out for himself what's going on. It's not often the team has seen a BLUE citizen in the flesh, and this is almost certainly the first time they've had to deal with one directly.

Emphasize the seriousness of the situation. Arnold-B is bringing a Troubleshooter team with him, which can only mean one thing: he intends to have the players taken off the mission, demoted (or worse!) for incompetence, and the new team put on for the rest of the shift. Smart citizens would practically beg to be demoted to INFRARED and sent to stir the vats, but your players presumably want to cling to RED Clearance. And Molly-O doesn't want to be punished for the team's foolishness, either. 'Whatever you do, make sure he thinks everything is still okay,' she snarls at the team, 'or so help me, I will make you all pay.'

So—after you've given the players time to clean up whatever evidence is around, or otherwise plan a course of disaster—Arnold-B emerges from the elevator with a basic RED Troubleshooter team. He doesn't believe a graveyard shift guard assignment can be all that challenging; any random group of REDs can do it! Little does he know his team, randomly pulled from the midnight roster, has:

- ③ Two Death Leopards (CPU equipment guy **Peter-R-YAT-1** and HPD&MC loyalty officer **Michelle-R-TSL-2**) who intend to blow up the train—Peter-R's repair kit is actually a powerful bomb (M2V energy). If there are any Death Leopard player characters, these two might try to convince the PCs to help.
- ③ Two Pro Techs (Power Services team leader **Larry-R-DVU-1** and Armed Forces happiness officer **Leslie-R-DRR-3**) who plan to steal the train—Leslie-R's pill dispenser is actually a security override

for the train's control systems. If there are any Pro Tech player characters, again, perhaps these two try to convince the PCs to come along.

- ③ Two Illuminati assassins (R&D hygiene officer **Janet-R-VXO-2** and Tech Services recording officer **Maggie-R-DTE-2**) who are waiting for a chance to assassinate Arnold-B. Each packs a violet laser barrel painted red. If there are any Illuminati player characters, Maggie-R simply makes this week's secret eye-pyramid sign at them when nobody else is looking, but says nothing.

It starts innocently enough; Arnold-B simply grills the team about every inconsistency so far in the entire mission. He's direct and businesslike. 'Where's the train?' If the players point at the unstealthy train, he says, 'No, that's not it. There's no reactor, no beta-ray projectors and no turbine. I don't know what that is, but it's not the prototype you're supposed to guard. I'll ask again: Where is the ST700?' If they suggest the empty track, he'll walk over to that side of the platform and wave his hand through the thin air. 'Where did it go?' He won't pretend to see anything through the 'phase goggles'. He is convinced the Troubleshooters lost, or stole, the train at some point and are feigning ignorance now. Molly-O stays deathly quiet; her survival depends on not being noticed while this is going on. If the team is adamant the unstealthy train is the correct one, Arnold-B wants to know where it came from. If Deborah-Y's Defenders are mentioned, his eyes go wide. 'The Defenders went missing days ago. Your assumption is they've gone rogue. They're the ones who dumped off this fake train? Why didn't you report them?' In short, Arnold-B calls any bluff the players attempt, or have attempted so far, and keeps driving back to the main question: 'Where is the real ST700?'

Then, when you think you can't make the players squirm any harder, the lights go out.

The Troubleshooter bigwig and his traitorous team

Arnold-B-BAR-3

CPU, Humanists (degree 3), Deep Thought (power 4); Management 11, Act Official 17; Violence 09, Die Horribly 20; other skills 07; Gamemaster anti-fiat (that is, he's definitely gonna die).

Death Leopards (2)

Electroshock (Power 12); Violence 09, Demolitions 13, Energy Weapons 13; other skills 07; laser pistol with two red barrels, red reflex (E1); bomb (K2K energy).

Pro Techs (2)

Mechanical Intuition (Power 12); Stealth 8, Sneaking 12, Stealing the Stealth Train 20; Violence 09, Energy Weapons 13; other skills 07; laser pistol with red barrel, red reflex (E1).

Illuminati assassins (2)

Hypersenses (Power 12); cover society FCCC-P (degree 4); Stealth 10, Concealment 14, Disguise 14, High Alert 14, Surveillance 14, Violence 09, Energy Weapons 13, Kill Arnold-B-BAR Silently 20; other skills 07; laser pistol with two violet barrels painted red (treasonous), red reflex (E1).



Someone (Death Leopards, Illuminati—does it matter who?) has cut power to the station for three minutes. That's right: it's time for... a Dark Room!

Several things happen in rapid succession, not including the Troubleshooters' actions. It's totally dark, so unless they have some way to see in pitch black, nobody knows what anyone else is doing. Unless the PCs *immediately* move to prevent these actions, Arnold-B's team succeeds at the following things:

- ③ The two Death Leopards, convinced the steam train is actually the real ST700, slip aboard the coal tender and plant the bomb out of sight. Then they flee down one of the tunnels on the empty track. The bomb has a ten-minute timer.
- ③ The two Pro Techs don't care if it's the real ST700 or not; they just want to steal something real. So they slip aboard the steam engine car, override the security controls, fire up the boiler and put the train in gear. This takes a couple of minutes and is quite loud, so it is apparent there is action aboard the engine. Unless the PCs take swift and decisive action to stop them, however, the two Techs quickly get the train moving down the track at speed.
- ③ The two Illuminati assassins drill Arnold-B in a flurry of violet-colored laser fire, then flee down the other tunnel on the empty track, in the opposite direction from the Death Leopards.

All of this (plus whatever mayhem the players engage in) happens in about three minutes. Maybe less. Then the lights come back up to reveal, at the least, Arnold-B lying dead on the ground full of laser-holes, all the new Troubleshooters gone and probably the sound of the steam train receding down the tunnel.

Molly-O comes back on the PDC. 'What happened? What's going on? Was that laser fire?' Give the Troubleshooters about two minutes to deal with the new circumstances. Be sure to find out what the Recording Officer is filming right now. The dead BLUE? The team leader standing near the corpse? Anyone got a smoking laser out? If the team is even remotely honest with Molly-O about what's happened, she simply says, 'Ohh... man. We are so dead.' She signs off and doesn't return.

Then the bomb on the train goes off. It isn't big enough to completely destroy the train, just enough to completely wreck the coal tender, kill anyone in the engine car (i.e., the Pro Techs) and seriously injure anyone in the dining car (or next to it on the platform if it didn't get stolen).

Variation on a theme

To further complicate the Arnold-B scene, or set up another chaotic situation for the next scene, feel free to have a completely standard commuter tube-train slide up on the empty track at some point around now and discharge a perfectly ordinary bunch of 30 or so INFRARED and RED citizens before sliding quietly away again. They were on their way back to their communal living areas at the end of their graveyard work shifts. The train stopped at the wrong platform, and they all got off without thinking. Now they're stranded, because it's not likely another train is going to come pick them up; this station is abandoned, remember? If not prevented, they'll get bored and start messing with anything in sight, especially the unstealthy train if it's still around.

Then feel free to have *another* film crew show up, this one bearing a fully authorized DEM-40/CEM-310 Order to Record Pre-Scripted Protest. They're here to record the SoyLike protest. Are these the protesters? Director **Jamie-Y-OAA-4** wants to know why they aren't protesting anything. 'Look, we're on a timetable here; get these people protesting or *eltz*.' Is the corpse of Arnold-B still lying around? Oh, that's going to look good on film.

Any landing someone can walk away from...

So...the team is responsible for a non-existent train that has never been here—probably lost a train that *did* exist but wasn't supposed to—been witness to (and perhaps accused of) the assassination of a BLUE citizen... How can it get any worse? Let us suggest a course of action:

The elevator doors open and two INDIGO citizens emerge: Armed Forces General **Joel-I-RPO-4**, who is supposed to see the ST700 in action for the first time this coming morning, and R&D Professor **Lincoln-I-STW-6**, the senior development lead on the ST700 project. Neither man is dressed entirely professionally; they were both roused from their sleep by an emergency message from Arnold-B, sent before he came down here, indicating something had apparently gone horribly wrong with the train. The two INDIGOs arrive, otherwise unescorted, and upon seeing the two empty tracks—or the one empty track and the ruins of the steam train on the other—they begin to argue.

Joel-I wants to see the train. 'Show me the train. Show it to me right now.' He refuses to put on any stupid glasses. He immediately recognizes the steam train, if it's here, as not being what he ordered. 'Turn off the stealth field. I refuse to put up with any more shimmery light-shows, Professor. I insist you show me, right now, a train that matches the specifications I ordered, or I will be forced to conclude you have been



A side of INDIGOs no Troubleshooter wants to see.

embezzling your funding and falsifying reports this entire time.'

Lincoln-I, of course, wants to convince Joel-I the project is, *heh heh*, on track. 'There have admittedly been some bugs in the stealth field we can't turn it off and on as easily as we want yet,' he says. 'Isn't that right?' he says to the Troubleshooters, trying to sucker them into going with him on this. 'You haven't been able to decloak the train all night, have you?' he says with an inviting look. Is anyone going to go against an INDIGO?

Joel-I, of course, suspects the Troubleshooters of being on R&D's payroll. 'So then, you can vouch that the train exists and it works?' he asks the Troubleshooters, who will probably not fervently, desperate to keep everyone happy. 'You sure the train isn't just some sort of scam?' he continues. 'Positive that the whole thing isn't just a fiction to siphon off my budget? Knowingly aiding and abetting fraud is a serious offense you know.'

The Troubleshooters are now between a rock and a termination place, but salvation is close at hand. First, determine *exactly* where everyone is. Then an evil chuckle comes from one of the tunnel exits. 'Ah, the trap came together exactly as we hoped,' says the familiar voice of Deborah-Y, as her Defenders emerge from the dark behind her. They're all bearing massively nasty-looking weapons and wearing heavy armor. 'All it took was the right set of fools to make such a mess that the two most senior project members would

INDIGO stats

FCCC-P (degree 12); Bureaucratic Intuition (Power 10); Management 9, Intimidation 13, Moxie 13; Violence 04; Hardware 13; other skills 8; no weapons or armor (hey, they just got out of bed)

come investigate personally. We'll get a hefty ransom for these two.' She looks at the players half-apologetically. 'Sorry, fellas. We're gonna have to waste all of you, of course. No hard feelings?'

Just as the Troubleshooters start to think about doing something, anything, another familiar voice shouts out—from the tunnel diagonally opposite Deborah-Y's team: 'Drop your weapons, Deb, or you'll fry where you stand!' The first player to guess this is Andrea-O and her Avengers gets two Perversity points. They have just as many weapons, all pointed at Deborah-Y's Defenders. The Defenders point their guns at the Avengers. The two INDIGOs try to keep everyone calm: 'Whoa, whoa, whoa! Citizens, there's no need for any of this!' An insanely tense standoff crystallizes with the players in the middle of a huge field of fire. And then...

Well, what? Perhaps the team comes up with a brilliant Management-based ploy to talk the situation down. Or they come up with a clever Stealth-based trick that gives one side, either side, the upper hand. Maybe they just go for broke and resort to Violence, happy to finally have an excuse to cut loose and kill something. Or perhaps they stand there like stunned rabbits waiting for someone else to start the ball rolling.

In which case, Molly-O can come bursting out of the elevator, unregistered slugthrower in

hand: 'How could you morons blow such a simple assignment? *How could you do this to me?* She pops off a round at the nearest Troubleshooter... and you can probably guess what follows.

Forward... to peace!

If a firefight occurs, run it as loosely as possible. All of Deborah-Y and Andrea-O's team members are way better at this than the Troubleshooters. For the most part, there is little the PCs can do to them. Instead, emphasize the danger to the two INDIGOs, with hideous energy blasts and cone rifle shells going back and forth. If the team saved those high-level citizens, we bet they'd be pretty grateful, huh?

The fight could end with one or both of the INDIGOs killed, combined with either Andrea-O's or Deborah-Y's team killed (or both). It is entirely up to you which of these combinations occurs, but we recommend an ending in which Andrea-O's team wins but one of the INDIGOs is killed. (If both survive, the players are still stuck mediating the basic argument, the purpose of which has already been served; if the Defenders win, the players have to fight them to prevent the kidnapping of the INDIGOs.)

If only Joel-I survives, and Deborah-Y's team is defeated, he reassures the Troubleshooters: 'It's okay, I've always suspected the train was a fake, and now I'm going to expose this project for the R&D fraud it is... and you're going to be my star witnesses.' (Why does that sound like things are only getting worse...?)

On the other hand, if only Lincoln-I survives and Deborah-Y is defeated, he too reassures the Troubleshooters: 'It's okay, Joel-I has been trying to undermine our work from the start, and now I'm going to expose his sabotage... and because you've done such an incredible job protecting the ST700 so far, I'm going to have you permanently attached to the project.' (Death would be far preferable, no?)

Either way, the INDIGO survivor tells them he'll be in touch soon and then departs—with Andrea-O's Avengers providing escort, if they've survived. 'You saved my life,' he tells the Avengers as they step into the elevator. 'Andrea-O, how can I ever repay your team?' As the elevator doors close, Andrea-O gives the team a smug look as she says, 'I'm sure you'll think of something, sir.'

Then they're gone, leaving the PCs on an empty platform flanked by two empty tracks.

Look on the bright side: Now they can probably get some sleep!

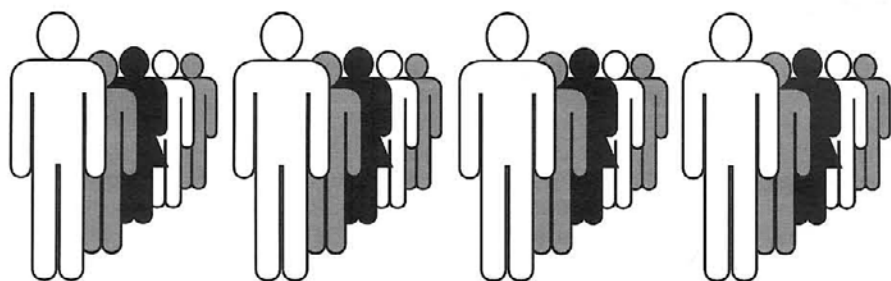
The railroad scandal was, I think, the most breathtaking swindle perpetrated during the Brezhnev regime; granted, the competition is fierce. A railroad through Georgia was proposed and designed. The go-ahead was given. Every kopeck of the millions of rubles allocated for the project was siphoned off during the four-year period of so-called construction. In most of the world, secrets known to more than one are no longer secrets; in our incomparable land, millions know secrets and they remain secrets. The multitude eventually involved in the scheme not only conspired to pretend that the railroad was being built, continuing after its theoretical completion to claim that the railroad truly existed, but went one step—a staircase!—beyond by providing and forwarding to the unsuspecting agencies solid proof that the imaginary railroad was one of the most productive in the Soviet Union. I have read much in the western magazines recently concerning the supposed new field of virtual reality; has there ever been any other kind in Russia?

—Jack Womack, *Let's Put the Future Behind Us* (1996)



CRASH PRIORITY! TRAITOR BACKUP

BETHESDA & ALLEN VARNEY



GM AND 3-6 PLAYERS
PLAYING TIME 1 SESSION
(2-3 HOURS)

ATTENTION!

In pursuit of the **PARANOIA** XP edition's goal of broadening the game's range of experiences, this Straight mission, 'Traitor Backup', throws the Troubleshooters into a termination center where life is cheap, IntSec officers are cruel and the humor is so dark you need a night-light. This funny-creepy mission is for GMs and players who laugh at the final scenes in *Brazil* and *Dr. Strangelove* and *Monty Python's Life of Brian*—who giggle, perhaps painfully, reading Pynchon and Mark Leyner and *Trainspotting* by Irvine Welsh—who blithely ignore issues of taste in *Hogan's Heroes*, the 1960s sitcom set in a Nazi prison camp.

If that audience doesn't include you, please skip this mission and check out the other, lighter—yet no less fun!—entries in this collection. Thank you for your cooperation.

The Troubleshooters, dispatched to serve beverages to termination center prisoners, find themselves on death row when PURGE attacks. The PCs have mere moments to save themselves, spring their secret society contacts and serve a last round of beverages to the rioting prisoners. It's **PARANOIA**: Guess which goal takes priority?

This mission works best for players who have already played **PARANOIA** at least a couple of times and can solve problems without automatically resorting to laser fire.

Why Troubleshooters serve drinks to traitors

1. A big IntSec canvassing operation in HGN Sector has hauled in so many traitors the local Happy Homecoming Automated Euthanasia Center is backed up. Convicted traitors stand in line under heavy guard.

2. HPD&MC in HGN Sector recently imposed an experimental happiness regulation as a sweetheart deal for the service firm Pleasant Experience Concessions. The directive requires all Alpha Complex offices with long waiting times (higher than 150% of optimum, as determined by CPU statistical surveys) to serve complimentary CoffeeLike, TeaSir or Bouncy Bubble Beverage drinks at least every 30 minutes to all waiting citizens of RED Clearance or higher. The directive authorizes outsourcing this vital function to 'any private service firm provider of pleasant concession-related experiences that' (this is the sweetheart bit) 'is based in any sector beginning and ending with 'V'.

3. Through an oversight, this directive doesn't exempt termination centers.

4. When they saw the problem, HGN IntSec HQ instantly contacted CPU to amend the directive to exempt termination centers. Unfortunately, HGN's central CPU node is offline due to treasonous sabotage by many of the selfsame traitors who now await termination. Nothing can be amended until CPU gets back up.

5. So. Rules are rules. Directives must be obeyed. Given the danger of serving drinks to traitors and the greater danger of hanging around IntSec officers for any length of time, Pleasant Experience pulled its drink-service flunkies and instead requested a Troubleshooter team in their place.

The Computer's manifest of equipment required for a hospitality mission includes no weapons—what could be more harmless than serving drinks?—so PLC won't issue any to the PCs. For security purposes they must check their weapons and PDCs at the door. The Troubleshooters face the

termination center traitors with no weapon stronger than a CoffeeLike percolator.

Briefing

(Tension level 5)

Read the following to the players:

You awaken in the dark. The last thing you remember is bedding down for sleepcycle, followed by nightmares involving truncheons and hypodermic needles. You feel a metallic stasis collar around the base of your skull sending a strong electric current through your spine, completely immobilizing you. You hear a crackling noise coming from the darkness high above. A muted burbling issues from behind one wall.

(This is heated water from a boiler room next door, but the PCs have no way of knowing that. And it does sound, well... a little creepy.) Let them wait a bit, and perhaps sweat.

The lights snap on. You seem to be in a briefing room, with several camera eyes peering down. You are all strapped to identical metal chairs bolted to the metal floor. Hot, bright lights glare from the stained ceiling tiles. In one corner an implanted wall speaker crackles with the noise you heard earlier. Across the room, a mirrored panel stretches from wall to wall. Undoubtedly, behind the panel lies an observation room.

Everyone has lumps and bruises in various visible spots, except <name a PC>, who has none.

The collection team that brought the players to the briefing room injected them with a powerful experimental tranquilizer that sent all but one into violent psychosis and erased all memory of the collection team. The team needed truncheons

to establish control and haul the PCs to the briefing room.

Of course, the PCs have no way of knowing any of this. Let the players suspect the unbruised character.

A voice over the loudspeaker! (It's not The Computer, but some anonymous human.) Read the following to the players:

Welcome, Troubleshooters! You are in Briefing Room B-37F. The Computer is honoring you by allowing you to participate in a new service for the citizens of our glorious Complex. Our calculations project that your service will increase happiness and efficiency across the complex. Your selection is evidence of The Computer's trust in you and appreciation of your value. In return, you wish to show The Computer your undivided loyalty, do you not? [Pause, allowing the PCs to realize they cannot move their heads or speak.]

Excellent—loyal citizens, as expected. Your respectful silence indicates acceptance of the mission.

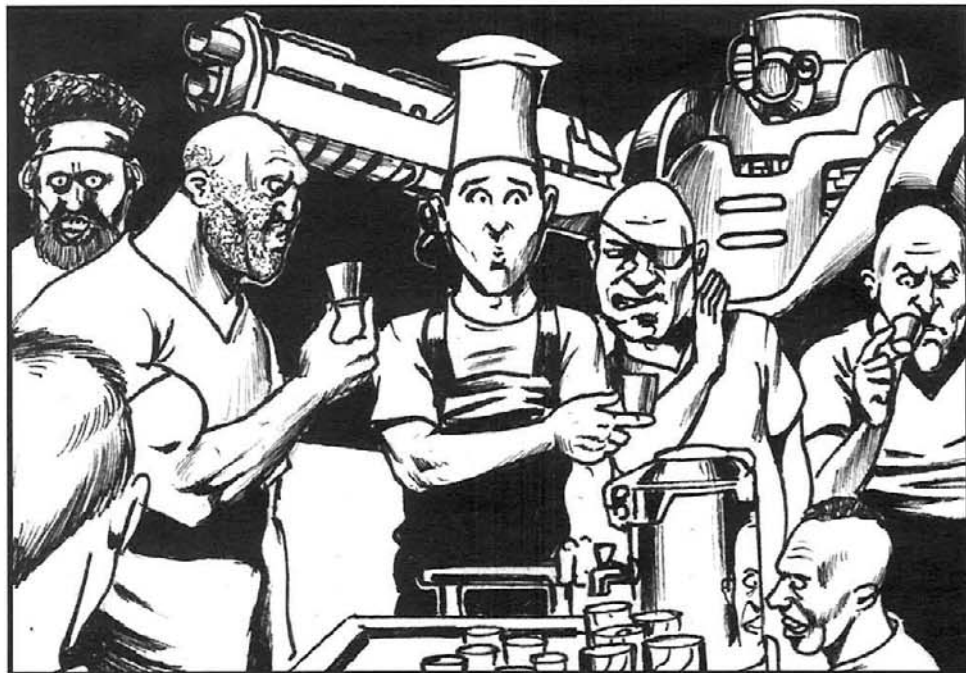
As part of a special Troubleshooter team, you will serve complimentary beverages at least every 30 minutes to all citizens of RED Clearance or higher who have been waiting at a specified location, per experimental happiness regulation PEC-V-9A-65992B. Your specified location is: [pause to access file] Termination Center VWV-3C. The happiness of Alpha Complex's citizenry depends on you. Do not fail The Computer!

Your team leader for this mission is [name one of the PCs]. After this briefing, you will immediately appoint from among yourselves loyalty, hygiene, recording, happiness and equipment officers. Starting now, you have one hour to report to your contact at PLC Outfitting Warehouse R17 in VWV Sector to receive equipment and supplies. You are fully responsible for all equipment and supplies requisitioned to you. That is all.

The lights dim. The stasis collars on the backs of the PCs' necks shut off, allowing the characters to move. The straps on the chairs slide back, freeing the characters. A door slides open to a RED Clearance hallway: the exit. There is just enough light to navigate the room and get out. Attempts to talk to the briefing officer through the speaker system meet blank silence.

The characters have their PDCs, ME Cards and personal equipment. No laser barrels, though.

If they try to break through the mirrored panel to get into the observation room, and they succeed—this is bulletproof and laser-reflective



plastic, armor value 4—no one is in there. The PCs later find their ME Cards charged for 'Damage to Briefing Room B-37F' (a charge steep enough to hurt their accounts). Moreover, the observation room is painted BLUE. If they don't deal with the cameras in the briefing room before they enter the observation room, Internal Security charges them with treason (code GG, treason damage P4C plus a 40-credit fine).

Secret society briefings (Tension level 3)

At some point between the briefing and their arrival at the termination center, each Troubleshooter may try to contact his secret society, or vice versa if the player doesn't remember.

The contact tells the Troubleshooter Internal Security has arrested a member of his secret society, who now awaits execution in the termination center. The contact describes the prisoner (see 'Prisoners (222)' below) and stresses the urgent, imperative need to rescue him or her. The PC is the society's only hope.

For the encounter, either use one of the secret society meeting locations given in the fine **PARANOIA** supplement *The Traitor's Manual* or take inspiration from these suggestions:

- ③ A supply closet with a gummy algae chip stuck to the jamb, a prearranged signal
- ③ Behind a grate in an INFRARED barracks, a narrow human-size water duct leading to a sewer pipe
- ③ An empty transtube car

Sometimes briefings take the form of a message, not a meeting. For example:

- ③ An encoded message on the PC's PDC
- ③ A soggy note in blue ink at the bottom of the PC's Funbot mug
- ③ A coded conversation with a medicated citizen who has one silver fingernail
- ③ A sudden, inexplicably strong 'feeling' that a GREEN Clearance citizen, complete with an image of the man's face, needs assistance in the termination center

PLC outfitting (Tension level 5)

For once the PCs have no trouble locating PLC Outfitting to get their supplies. A bored clerk issues them the following:

- 6 100-sheet pads of Form VWV/CL-TS-BBB/TC-1A, 'Pleasant Experience Directive Beverage Service Tracking Statistics (To Be Verified Through Video Recordings)'
- 6 'Proudly Serving My Fellow Citizen' black pens with black ink
- 3 5-kilo cannisters powdered CoffeeLike (makes 75–100 servings)
- 1 case pseudolactate fungal residue (for the CoffeeLike)
- 3 5-kilo cannisters powdered TeaSir (makes 75–100 servings)



CRASH PRIORITY!

3 crates Bouncy Bubble Beverage canned sodas (72 cans/crate, 216 cans total)

500 foam cups

500 plastic stirrers

1 pair Snippies (small thread scissors)

2 PerkyLators (S5M impact damage) for CoffeeLike and TeaSir

2 red tablecloths

500 red napkins

2 drink carts

6 red 'Happy Service!' aprons

6 red 'How May I Help You?' apron pins

1 red 'Pleasant Experience Team Leader' chef's hat

The clerk discourages questions about the supply list, but if pushed, tells the PCs (with a smirk) 'PLC cannot provide weapons or armor for beverage dispensing missions.' Period. End of discussion. End of Troubleshooters....

IntSec service service

The PLC clerk also assigns the PCs supplies for their service service, a repair errand on behalf of an Internal Security firm called 'Better Endings':

1 crate (200-count) New and Improved Fresh Orangelyke Fungal Blossom Scent Balls

1 plastic pouch of six number-2 (that is, teeny-tiny) ball bearings

1 tube of SqueakyGate oil

1 stainless steel monkeywrench (S5K impact)

1 ten-centimeter half-round bastard file

1 box of 20 electroprod rubber handles

However, the clerk knows nothing (and nervously avoids speculating) about the required service. The Troubleshooters won't find that out until they arrive at the termination center and talk to the director. But to quench your curiosity, here's the scoop:

When a prisoner recently tried to escape the termination center through the bathrooms, a combat guard slagged him, and the bathrooms as well. An unpleasant odor has arisen from the sewage backup. One prisoner has died of gas inhalation, and the fumes from the leakage are corroding the metal Headsweeper gear tracks above the former restrooms.

The service firm Better Endings is responsible for upkeep and repair of termination center

facilities in VWV Sector. Owing to the current backup of termination center clients, The Computer considers Better Endings personnel inadequately trained to handle needed repairs. Inasmuch as the Troubleshooters will be at that center anyway, they certainly won't mind performing these minor chores, will they?

The air fresheners are intended to remedy the termination center's odor problem. With the other equipment the PCs are to oil the Headsweeper gear tracks, replace six ball bearings on the rotator joints holding the blades in place and sharpen the blades with a file. (The PCs do not yet know what a 'Headsweeper' is, nor what their duties are in regard to it, and have no likely way to find out until they arrive at the termination center.) The box of rubber handles goes to the center's assistant director, who distributes them to her goons.

Are we there yet?

The entrance to the Happy Homecoming Automated Euthanasia Center in VWV Sector lies at the end of a winding maze of office hallways in the deepest sanctum of VWV Internal Security Headquarters (Tension level 18).

Just reaching this entrance could theoretically give the Troubleshooters problems, if they happen to be (say) wanted fugitives or something. But the mission hasn't even begun properly yet, so we suggest you avoid making their lives hard here. Dangle a few ominous suspicions and move on. ('You half expected the IntSec officer to say something about your last mission, but he just jotted a note on his PDC and waved you through.')

When they reach the checkpoints, *then* you can start making their lives hard.

Checkpoints 1-3

(Tension level 18)

Before the Troubleshooters can enter the Happy Homecoming Center, they must pass three checkpoints. Each checkpoint lies on a different floor. Each pair of floors is connected by a cargo elevator (Tension level 18) that connects to no other floors. No stairs, either; CPU believes this keeps IntSec committed to proper elevator maintenance. So far this has worked. Just in case, a locked steel cabinet at each checkpoint holds climbing gear for six people, replaced and tested annually, and custom-made for these particular elevator shafts.

The Troubleshooters enter **Checkpoint 1** on the main floor of IntSec HQ (designated Floor VWVHHAEC-1), where four GREEN goons insist they deposit all weapons and their PDCs. If the PCs act up, the goons take their Snippies away. If the PCs are really bad, the goons may take their apron pins. ('You could poke someone's eye out with that!') Still, 'GREEN

goon' is synonymous with 'stupid and corrupt', so appropriate Concealment, Bootlicking and Bribery specialties may work wonders.

Once the Troubleshooters are disarmed, or at least have convinced the goons they're disarmed, the PCs pass through Checkpoint 1 to the spacious Cargo Elevator VWVHHAEC-E1. The elevator's bot brain politely requires all passengers, especially repair people, to show proper authorization. If someone fails to display proper ID after three requests, the bot sends an alert to all three checkpoint stations. Each checkpoint guard station has controls to shut down the elevators, or even to remotely flood it with sleeping gas.

If all passengers show authorization, the elevator takes them down to **Checkpoint 2** on Floor VWVHHAEC-2. There's nothing on Floor VWVHHAEC-2 except Checkpoint 2, a bulletproof plastic enclosure about the size of a one-hour photo-finishing booth. Inside the booth, sitting at machine-gun emplacements, are two bored GREEN lieutenants—not goons, but the bosses of goons. They're not corrupt and not particularly stupid. Concealment, Bootlicking and Bribery are all harder here. They lethargically X-ray every can of Bouncy Bubble Beverage to ensure it's not a grenade. (If a Troubleshooter did in fact conceal something in a beverage can, the guards get less bored fast.) Then they pass the PCs through to another secured cargo elevator exactly like the first, VWVHHAEC-E2. After checking their ID, this elevator takes them down to Floor VWVHHAEC-3, where Checkpoint 3 guards the termination center itself.

Checkpoint guards

GREEN goons (4)

Management 06, Interrogation 10, Intimidation 10, Take Bribe 16; Stealth 06, Sneaking 10; Violence 08, Hand Weapons 12, Energy Weapons 12, Unarmed Combat 14; laser pistol with two green barrels (W3K energy), truncheon (S5K impact), green reflex (E1)

GREEN lieutenants (2)

Management 08, Interrogation 12, Intimidation 12; Stealth 08, High Alert 12, Sneaking 12, Surveillance 10; Violence 08, Hand Weapons 12, Energy Weapons 12, Projectile Weapons 12; Unarmed Combat 12; slugthrower with dum-dum ammo (W3K impact), energy pistol (W3K), green reflex (E1)

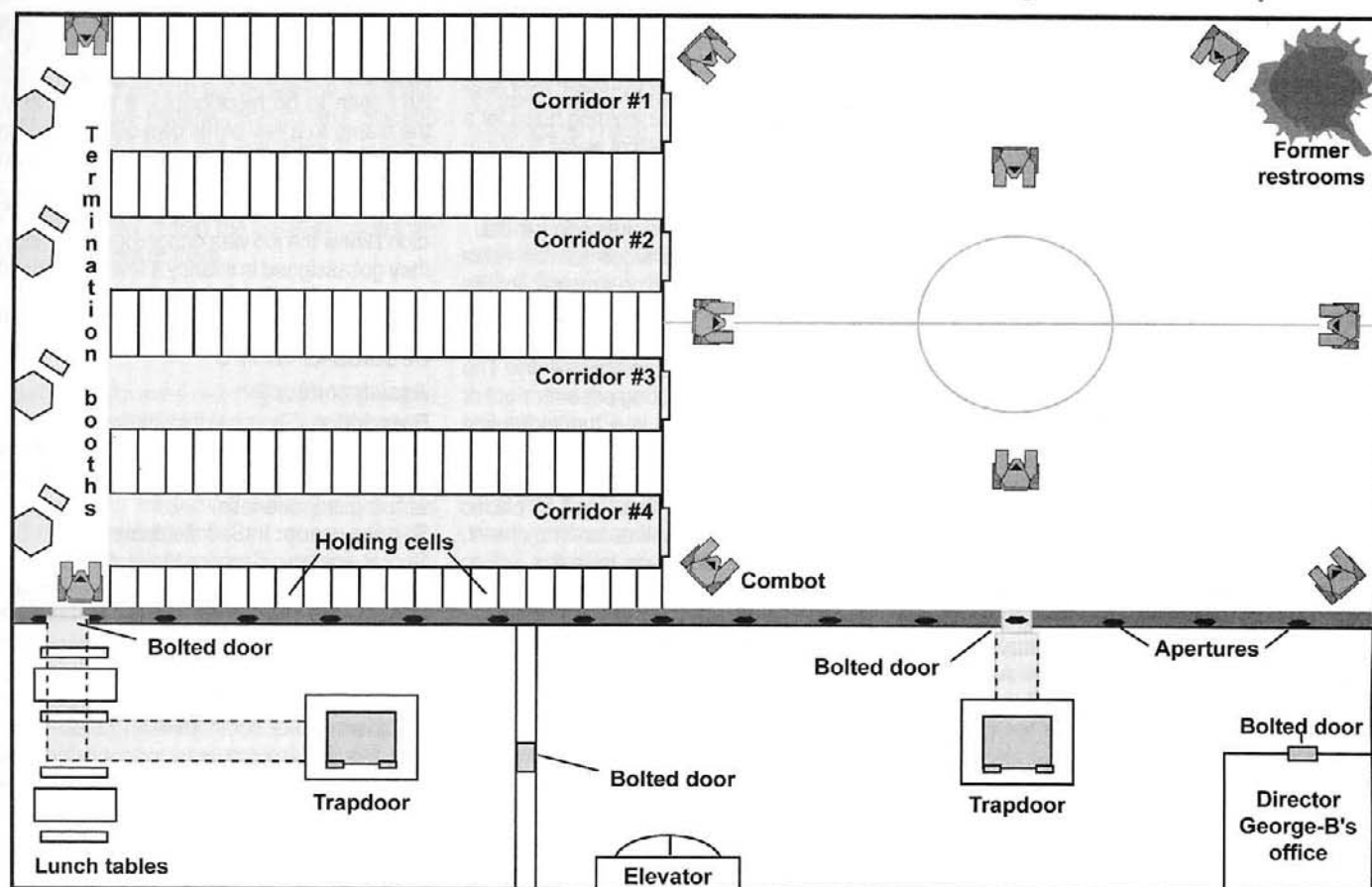
BLUE guard (1)

Interrogation 14, Intimidation 14, High Alert 13, Sneaking 14, Surveillance 12; Hand Weapons 14, Energy Weapons 14, Unarmed Combat 12; force sword (S3K energy), laser pistol with blue laser barrel (W3K energy), blue reflex (E1)

Happy Homecoming Euthanasia Center VWV-3C

Homecoming Cells (100)

The Waiting Room



At **Checkpoint 3**, identical to 2 directly above it, a single BLUE guard seems asleep. The PCs can pass through unmolested. If the Troubleshooters wake him, the guard grumpily asks for their identification, and waves them through to an anteroom.

Anteroom

(Tension level 14)

The anteroom is a small, spartan room with unknowable numbers of concealed security cameras. Like a dentist's office, except instead of magazines there are instructional pamphlets with titles like 'MemoMax and your next clone' and 'The importance of loyalty.'

Some pamphlets market services like secure property storage, MemoMax backup integrity testing, Loyalty Encouragement Counseling and even automatic renewal of your previous clone's Toilet Permit. The legality and utility of these services are up to you.

In the anteroom the PCs meet the termination center's assistant director, **Jessica-G-RFA-6**. The details of that meeting appear in the boxed Timeline on page 21 (in the entry for 11:30). From here she takes them to the termination center.

Happy Homecoming!

This section describes the termination center proper: the lookout, waiting room and homecoming chambers. A lineup of its cast of characters follows. Then we piece everything together in a boxed Timeline on page 21.

Lookout

(Tension level 10)

This is a large elevated platform overlooking a spacious floor milling with prisoners. The lookout platform is separated from the floor below by bulletproof, laser-refractive plastic (armor value 4). Apertures in the shielding let guards enter from the elevator target their weapons at the prisoners on the floor. A bolted trapdoor in the platform floor opens onto a narrow gangway to the main floor. Once on the ground, guards must pass from the trapdoor through a high-security vault-style door (armor value 6) to enter the main floor.

The main floor is divided in half. The half near the entrance, the waiting room, is completely open, like a ball court. The far half comprises the

homecoming chambers and termination room. All these areas are described below.

Director George-B's office

(Tension level 16 or 0)

Termination center director **George-B-RTW-9** has a large steel-walled office in a corner of the lookout platform, near the entrance. The office has scads of surveillance devices, but George-B can turn them all off using a thumbprint-controlled sensor hidden under his desk. This reduces the room's Tension level to 0. The director uses this feature only for special occasions: unusual brutality, bribe-taking, etc.

Waiting room

(Tension level 10)

Imagine an airport passenger lounge for an Aeroflot flight delayed three days, or a bus station in the outer vestibule of Dante's Inferno. There it is: the Happy Homecoming waiting room.

The ceiling of the waiting room is 35 meters up and partly lost in shadow, giving the impression a lot more security equipment could swing down from the rafters. Troubleshooters who look



CRASH PRIORITY!

closely can see in the shadows the fist-sized barrels of heavy armaments. Transparent bulletproof plastic covers fluorescent lights built into the dented metal walls. The bright lights cast a greenish pallor over everything. Multiply-redundant, shielded camera banks halfway up the wall track every movement.

Happy elevator music plays quietly over the loudspeakers. HPD&MC polls taken several months ago indicated music would calm prisoners distressed by shrieking from the termination booths.

An ugly smell pervades the air. Yesterday a prisoner tried to escape via the restrooms, located in one corner of the waiting room floor. One of the combots gunned him down, unfortunately destroying the facilities in the process (not a great concern for a bot). The restrooms are now chunky slag.

Headsweepers: Gear-like mechanisms attached to articulated metal arms sweep the room just below the ceiling. These jointed metal arms, Headsweepers, are tipped with spinning rotary blades (W3K impact, armor-piercing) that circle the perimeter of the room on a gear track. The four Headsweepers cast weird, spinning shadows on the floor below, but are completely silent. They're IntSec's response to a previous jailbreak during which Commie traitors used Tanglers (and Adhesive Skin) to drop from the ceiling and liberate prisoners.

The Troubleshooters must maintain and repair these Headsweepers as part of their service for IntSec, as described under 'Outfitting.'

Homecoming cells

(Tension level 10)

Five-meter-tall transparent panels divide the far half of the floor into a hundred small holding cells, open at the top. Passages connect these 'homecoming cells' to the termination booths.

The cell panels are made of a material called **pyrolex**, which is (by careful design) not a shield—quite the opposite, in fact: If an intense energy- or heat-based attack (not something as mild as boiling water, but most any weapon) hits pyrolex, it bursts in an explosive pyroclastic spray (S3K impact, armor-piercing) that releases nasty lung-searing biotoxins (O3K bio). Chances are good—say, target number 14 maybe? Does 14 sound good, GM?—one panel's explosion will set off panels connected to it. Get a chain reaction going, and you've handily obviated the need for termination booths. Even better, a couple of IntSec service firms with sweetheart contracts will pick up nice profits for replacing the destroyed cells.

Pyrolex is quite common in Internal Security centers. Any PC with the Chemical Engineering specialty knows about its deadly effects.

Termination room

(Tension level 18)

The four termination booths are windowless steel cabins like human-sized thermos bottles. Recycling Specialists place a traitor in the booth, close the gasketed door and push a big red button on a simple console. A red 'Occupied' light over the door blinks on. There is a whirring noise for a few seconds, then the *whoosh* of water flushing. The sound stops and the green 'Vacant' light blinks on. Inside, the booth is empty and gleaming clean. The entire procedure takes one minute.

Girded in steel on three sides (armor value 5), the termination room has no exits except the holding cell passages, the termination booths themselves and a bolted door at the south end of the room, guarded by a combat sentry. The door locks automatically during prisoner riots or mayhem. Beyond the door is a tunnel leading to a gangway. At the top of the stairs, a locked steel trapdoor leads to a lunch area with two metal tables (bolted to the floor) and 12 plastic chairs. For the staff's lunchtime entertainment, a wallscreen shows vid feeds from the IntSec interrogation chambers upstairs.

Happy Homecoming staff

George-B-RTW-9

Termination center director

Description: Medium height, with a bland, round face and remote brown eyes that would not stand out in a crowd. Ar-tic-u-lates his word-ing ver-y pre-cise-ly and blinks rapidly when speaking at length.

Service group: IntSec (commander)

Secret society: Illuminati, 10th degree; cover society: Anti-Mutant, 15th degree

Background: IntSec, the service group itself and not a service firm, still runs most termination centers. The IntSec officer in charge here,

George-B-RTW-9, is tough, cynical and on the take from New Patriot Solutions, a service firm that wants The Computer to privatize termination centers. New Patriot has offered George-B a plum job and promotion if he can quietly show IntSec-run centers are inefficient. Thus he's happy to keep the line backed up, as long as he himself isn't seen to be responsible. If he has to shift the blame to a few of his own officers and have them terminated, well, they knew the job was dangerous when they signed up. Actually, when they got drafted. Well, to be totally accurate, they *didn't* know the job was dangerous, inasmuch as they got assigned in infancy a few moments after decanting. But anyway.

Jessica-G-RFA-6

Assistant director

Description: Short and thin; narrow, severe face; greying hair pulled back in a tight bun. Her green uniform is impeccable, her speech brusque, often with implied rudeness.

Service group: IntSec (lieutenant)

Secret society: Corpore Metal, 5th degree

Background: Jessica-G's severe, no-nonsense attitude drove her up through the ranks, and her resulting position at the termination center made her an ideal agent for Corpore Metal. She plans for the day when she can upload her personality into a termination booth, perform the deed herself on prisoners and compute *pi* during downtime.

Meanwhile, she wouldn't be averse to seeing George-B demoted, but she doesn't dare do anything overtly against him until he proves himself incompetent or traitorous. If she catches the PCs planning such an incident, she might look the other way.

GREEN goons (10)

Description: Hulking brutes on the take. Always grumpy, as if they've been sitting in hard uncomfortable chairs all day.

Happy Homecoming Euthanasia Center staff

George-B-RTW-9

Mental Blast (Power 12); Hand Weapons 12, Interrogation 19, Intimidation 12; Neurowhip (S4M), blue reflex (E1) and GM fiat (infinite)

Jessica-G-RFA-6

Electroshock (Power 8); Projectile Weapons 14, Interrogation 13; Intimidation 10; ice gun (W5K), green reflex (E1)

GREEN goons (10)

Violence 10, Hand Weapon 12, Energy Weapons 16, other skills 11; truncheon (S4K impact), green reflex (E1)

Humphrey-R-BDA-9

Hypersenses (Power 08); Hand Weapons 10, Interrogation 10, Hygiene 19; mop (S5K, used as truncheon, breaks on roll of 12+), no armor

Euthanasia specialists (4)

Clearance YELLOW; various mutant powers; Termination Booth Operation 14, Synchronizing the Whizzing Sounds of Termination Booth Operation with Other Operators to Play the Song 'The Computer Is My Friend' 16; no weapons or armor

Combots (10)

Built-in energy rifle and power supply (W3V, 100 shots, skill 18); built-in battle armor (6)

Service group: IntSec (guards)

Secret societies: Frankenstein Destroyers, 1st; Anti-Mutant, 1st; Death Leopard, 1st

Background: Drafted directly to GREEN Clearance from the numberless ranks of INFRAREDs, these 10 goons are the stupidest, absolutely most savage, brutish and crooked lot IntSec could find. But now they're GREEN Clearance, and if the prisoners or the Troubleshooters misplace a 'sir' (or then forget to slip 'em a few creds) the GREEN goons will beat the crap out of them.

Humphrey-R-BDA-9

Janitor

Description: An extremely hygienic middle-aged man of medium height, blond hair and blue eyes, whose teeth sparkle in the termination center lighting. Smiles and chats easily.

Service firm: IntSec—Termination Center Janitorial, 'SecuraClean'

Secret society: Humanists, 4th degree

Background: Sometimes a prisoner doesn't react well to stomach blows, or a little leakage runs out of the termination booths. Humphrey-R's there to clean it up and get things working right. Nothing fazes Humphrey-R. A people person, he enjoys chatting with the soon-to-be-terminated, trying to cheer them up. Humphrey-R's an IntSec veteran but with the attitude of a retiree; his old habits of interrogation die hard, but they're put to a more pleasant use as a janitor. He might also know a few old codes that unlock doors around the center.

It'd be darn hard to bribe Humphrey-R, though he may take a shine to the Troubleshooters' hygiene officer. His current fond wish is to get back to the barracks in time to watch the 'Vulture Culture Hour'.

What a genial old guy! What a completely inappropriate character for **PARANOIA**! Wait, there's more: Humphrey-R used to be Humphrey-I, one of IntSec's top officers in this sector. A bioweapons accident aged him prematurely and addled his brain, and even now he's sort of—you know—contagious. In a termination center he does less harm than elsewhere; his disease takes days or weeks to manifest, by which time the patrons have long since been happily Homecominged. Troubleshooters, though, may wonder why the termination center staff steers so far clear of good old Humphrey-R.

Euthanasia specialists (4)

Description: Four squirrely little YELLOW jerks with pompous attitudes and bad breath.

Service group: IntSec

Secret societies: Anti-Mutant, 1st; Death Leopard, 1st; Pro Tech, 1st

Background: These clowns, though zealous to press the Little Red Button and watch the lights

on the termination panel display, are the first to hide when violence starts. When confronted with the fire in the holding cells, the prisoner riots and the gun-toting fanaticism of the PURGERS (see 'The attack' below), they tend to curl up into little balls and scream for their caretaker. The Troubleshooters find it difficult to get them to think clearly under pressure (Intimidation or Interrogation help).

Combots (10)

These ten giant, fearsome, faceless bots on halftrack treads disintegrate traitors who step out of line. Each combot has a built-in energy rifle and power supply (W3V, 100 shots, skill 18) and built-in battle armor (6).

Tech Services constructed these combots here in this room. They're too large to leave by the elevator. They have old bot brains formerly housed in jackobots and programmed to serve drinks. Even now, the combots may take issue with the Troubleshooters' methods of drink serving. When a combot offers authoritative and forceful advice on proper pouring techniques, everyone listens.

Prisoners (222)

In the Euthanasia Center 222 unarmed, unarmored prisoners await recycling, many of

them jailed during IntSec's recent HGN Sector canvassing operation. About half sit in the cells of the homecoming chambers and half in the waiting room, jammed together at combat gunpoint. Despite the greenish lighting, it's a colorful sight, unique in Alpha Complex: Prisoners of all security clearances (almost all RED and above) stand or crouch together in their clearance-appropriate jumpsuit hues, variously fearful, desperate, surly or sullen depending on how often their clones have been through this before.

The smell that wafts forth from this lot doubtless alarms the Troubleshooters' hygiene officer.

Of the 222 traitors waiting for their Happy Homecoming, many have an angle to get free. These desperate schemes require an inside accomplice, for definitions of 'inside' that include 'random Troubleshooter'. Each traitor promises a large bribe and other incentives to the individual Troubleshooter who springs him from the termination center.

This section describes eight of these traitors, listed by secret society. Use these as inspiration to develop similar prisoners who belong to your PCs' societies. All the societies and most degrees are represented among these traitors. Each one tries subtle recognition signals to connect with the Troubleshooter who shares his society. Though these descriptions suggest society degrees, feel free to raise a traitor's degree so he can give orders to the hapless PC.



Enjoy your refreshing beverages, or else!



CRASH PRIORITY!

If a player asks why a given prisoner is awaiting termination, you can pick a reason at random from the Treason Chart at the back of this book. Or you could say they're all there for the crime of belonging to a secret society. That ought to make the players gulp.

Corpore Metal

Name: Inga-Y-LNB-2 (degree 8)

Service group: R&D

Mutant power: Mechanical Intuition

Description: A chunky copper blonde with rosy cheeks and plump lips, Inga-Y is part cyborg. (Unauthorized cyborging, the implantation of cybernetic machine parts in humans, is illegal.) Termination center staff removed a bioplate from the nape of her neck, revealing some circuitry, so she cannot pretend to be human. Her false robotic arm conceals an as-yet undiscovered needle gun. Inga-Y has a weird, dissonant sense of humor and a barking laugh.

The pitch: In exchange for her freedom, Inga-Y offers a fortune in bot brains (worth five years of a GREEN-Clearance salary).

Of course, even if Inga-Y is on the level (unlikely unless the Troubleshooter shares her secret society), Corpore Metal won't leave bot brains in the hands of a low-clearance Troubleshooter for long. Plus, trying to fence bot brains in Alpha Complex is like crossing a minefield on a pogostick.

Free Enterprise

Name: Martin-G-BLT-4 (degree 8)

Service group: PLC

Mutant power: Charm

Description: Martin-G's a super-nice guy; tall, dark, good-looking, he's affable and likes to guide people by their elbows. With his impending termination, what ordinarily would be a relaxed smile is a tight grin.

The pitch: For his get-out-of-jail-free card, Martin-G offers a fortune in hard-currency credits. He sounds much like a Nigerian '419' banking scam ('Dear friend, I write to you on a matter of utmost urgency...'). If the Troubleshooter will just get him out of the termination center, Martin-G will tell him where to find caches of hard-currency credits earned in the line of duty. Unfortunately, all the credits are bugged, leading IntSec directly to whomever has them.

Humanists

Name: Susan-LNH-1 (degree 1)

Service group: Tech Services

Mutant power: Ventriloquist

Description: Susan's an INFRARED clone with medium-length chestnut hair that she has an unconscious habit of smoothing around her ear. She's earnest, friendly, helpful and naïve: the perfect fall-gal for the PCs' frame-ups. Believe it

or not, she's actually innocent; she was framed for bugging, then rumpling the sheets of, the neatly made bed of an ORANGE Clearance citizen.

The pitch: Susan weeps easily and sweetly when she thinks of her impending death, and pleads with the Troubleshooter to help her. She has nothing to offer except deep gratitude, not a popular currency in Alpha Complex. Don't raise her degree; she can't offer anything or command anything. Susan exists so you can lure players unfamiliar with the **PARANOIA** mindset into attempting a heroic rescue, then crush their foolish hopes.

Mystics

Name: Mary-O-RDF-5 (degree 8)

Service group: HPD&MC

Mutant power: Death Simulation

Description: Laid-back and spacey, Mary-O projects an air of world-weariness, like the day after a jag. Behind the façade, the Troubleshooter may detect in Mary-O a steely determination to get out of the termination center alive.

The pitch: Mary-O sits back with the Troubleshooter and starts a rambling story of her past exploits, particularly how she was recycled in her previous clone forms. Before long, apropos of nothing, Mary-O suddenly tries to secure the Troubleshooter's jailbreaking service in return for her cache of Benetridin ('Videoland') and Rolactin ('Happy Life') stashed away in a distant maintenance locker.

Psion

Name: Martin-G-BLS-1 (degree 16)

Service group: CPU

Mutant power: Heightened State (see box nearby) plus any others you want to give him

Description: A tall man with a long, thin face, dark eyes and trim black doorknocker beard. His manner is arrogant, threatening and supercilious toward regular mutants.

The pitch: Martin-G's unique power, Heightened State, lets him induce ecstasy or pain in a specified target. He uses these briefly on his target Troubleshooter to coerce his cooperation. (See the boxed 'Heightened State' description nearby.)

Blandly Martin-G offers to use Heightened State once a month for a year on any target the Troubleshooter specifies. This might be useful, for example, in creating evidence another character has gone off his hormone suppressants (ecstatic state), or in threatening an enemy (pain state). Or the Troubleshooter could use it on himself for an unparalleled buzz.

If you like, Martin-G may also covertly use his Heightened State power on the euthanasia technicians, to mysteriously delay the termination process. The techs go in to push the big red button; they experience agonizing pain; they soon become convinced there's an equipment

Heightened State

Similar to Mental Blast, Heightened State lets the mutant stimulate agonizing or ecstatic brain activity in a single organic being within a five-meter radius until the end of the next round. Bots are unaffected. The character declares which state he wants the target to experience, and the GM makes a hidden Power roll. Success means the target must make a Violence roll to resist the effect. You may wish to impose modifiers to the Violence roll based on the success margin of the mutant's Power roll.

If the target fails his Violence roll, he suffers acute mental agony or ecstasy. If his roll succeeds, he feels a flash of mental discomfort or joy but experiences no effects.

If the Power roll fails, the effects of the mental blast are more unpredictable. Sometimes the mutant himself is stunned or knocked unconscious. Sometimes the victim's brain explodes, or he turns into a pleasantly drooling goober. Sometimes it seems as though nothing happens, but citizens in neighboring sectors pass out while operating heavy machinery or nuclear reactors, or they start a Woodstock-sized lovefest.

malfunction, and they won't terminate anybody until it's fixed. The traitor backup continues threatening the PCs with the prospect of a severe drink shortage. Supervisor Jessica-G may draft the Troubleshooters to investigate this mysterious malfunction.

PURGE

Name: Dan-B-LMD-3 (degree 8)

Service group: Armed Forces

Mutant power: Pyrokinesis

Description: A compact man of medium height with frighteningly intense steel-blue eyes, Dan-B is military to the bone. He's furious at 'those Internal Security vatslimes' for catching him. When you look in his eyes, you know he could kill you without a second thought.

The pitch: Dan-B bargains matter-of-factly for his life, always with a just perceptible edge of threat in his voice. If a PC is in PURGE, Dan-B commands help and no questions. In exchange for help escaping, he offers his weapons and armor cache, consisting of several types of bioweapon: two tangles, a neurowhip and blue reflex armor. If the Troubleshooter doesn't free him, when the squad of PURGERS strikes at the mission climax Dan-B points at the Troubleshooter and tells his allies, 'Kill the betrayer.'

[continued on page 2]

Timeline

Here's one likely way events may play out once the The Troubleshooters arrive at Happy Homecoming Automated Euthanasia Center. The incidents mentioned here are detailed in the section 'The attack' that starts on the next page.

10:00–11:20

The PCs proceed through Checkpoints 1, 2 and 3 and enter the anteroom.

11:30

Assistant director Jessica-G-RFA-6, the GREEN IntSec lieutenant, arrives in the anteroom with a stack of papers and a sour look. She is aware of the PCs' mission, but asks for details and identification anyway. She's a stickler for rules, and she wants to give them a hard time. A Corpore Metal member, Jessica-G secretly sees the PCs' mission—increasing prisoner happiness through application of beverages—as yet more evidence of pathetic human frailty.

After questioning them, Jessica-G orders the PCs to transport the concession materials to the center of the waiting room floor, where GREEN guards will clear a space for them to serve beverages.

Jessica-G hasn't been informed of the Troubleshooters' service service duty (deodorizing the bathroom and repairing the Headsweeper). If they ask about it and show her their supplies, she can guess the duty, but she's reluctant to turn them loose on it without authorization from director George-B. She'll get that while they serve drinks.

If a Troubleshooter gives the recognition signal for Corpore Metal, she pulls him aside while the others are setting up the concession stand, and orders him to add sour pseudolactate fungal residue to the PerkyLators. She not only enjoys seeing the prisoners march into the termination booths, she wants to see them go with sour stomachs. Unfortunately, the pseudolactate fungal residue the PCs received from PLC is 'good'—good in the sense it doesn't actively cause stomach upset. To follow Jessica-G's order ('I do not care how you do it; just do it!'), the Corpore Metal PC must foul the residue himself, or find some already soured.

11:40

In the waiting room the Troubleshooters set up their refreshment cart and serve beverages. Members of their secret societies covertly approach the various PCs, offering recognition signals, seeking escape. Some prisoners stay away from the beverage cart and may require the PCs to solicit them.

Serving an individual prisoner takes 30 seconds, because the regulation requires the Troubleshooters to serve in a gracious and

courteous manner. If they fail to be gracious and courteous, the combots graciously and courteously threaten to blow them away.

The logistics of sharing cart supplies means three PCs can use one cart. If they work together smoothly, without distractions—and really, that's what **PARANOIA** is all about—three PCs can serve 5–6 prisoners per minute, meaning they can achieve 100% service of all 222 prisoners in 35–40 minutes. Hey, what could go wrong?

12:00

(Or after the PCs have served maybe half the prisoners.) The janitor, Humphrey-R, chats briefly with the PCs. If they haven't already found out their service service, he correctly surmises they're supposed to deodorize the destroyed bathroom and repair the Headsweepers.

12:05

Jessica-G emerges from the director's office to instruct the PCs in their service service, having received authorization from George-B to let them proceed. If the PCs have already started on their duty, Jessica-G berates them loudly for acting without authorization and fines the offenders 100 credits apiece. She then orders them to perform whatever part of the service they haven't yet performed.

12:10

PURGE member Dan-B-LMD-3 approaches one or a group of PCs. Skipping recognition signals and secrecy, he openly, brazenly requests their help in escaping. He offers the weapon cache listed in his description under 'Cast', and says refusing to help him may bring 'consequences'.

12:15

(Or after the PCs have completed their service service.) Computer Phreak hackers put the Troubleshooters first on the termination manifest.

12:20

Internal Security GREEN goons arrest the Troubleshooters. The goons bring the PCs before director George-B, then (12:25) drag them to the termination booths.

12:26

Just in time to keep the PCs from getting terminated, nine PURGE soldiers attack through two holes in the ceiling, trying to rescue PURGE member Dan-B-LMD-3. Six soldiers open a hole over the waiting room floor, while the other three open a second hole in the lookout platform ceiling.

1. Using cone rifles with ECM shells, the soldiers immediately destroy eight of the center's ten combots, the ones stationed on the waiting room floor. The two remaining combots, in the termination room, are unharmed.

2. The three soldiers invading the lookout kill all the GREEN goons there.
3. On the waiting room floor the GREEN goons and assistant director Jessica-G engage five of the PURGERS, killing two. A Headsweeper kills a third soldier.
4. On the lookout, two soldiers open the trapdoor, storm down the gangway and blow open the door with a shaped charge. The remaining soldier heads to director George-B's office to assassinate him. George-B waits until the assassin gets into his office, blasts him with Mental Blast and calmly shoots him. Then, with the battle raging, George-B closes his door, kicks back and watches a vidshow. He wants the termination center to appear inefficient, as long as he himself won't get blamed, so he intends to claim the PURGER held him hostage until the battle's end.
5. The GREEN goons' clumsy misfires set off a few pyrolex homecoming cells, starting a chain reaction. The cells start to explode, one by one (S3K impact armor-piercing, O3K bio), down the line toward the termination room. The burning homecoming cells sit between the Troubleshooters, their secret society contacts and their refreshment carts. The janitor and euthanasia staff are trapped with them.

12:27

The Troubleshooters either escape the termination room or die like rats in the explosions.

Prisoners riot or try to escape. The remaining combots and goons try to stop the uprising. Whether a particular prisoner escapes depends on whether a Troubleshooter helps him.

The surviving PURGERS grab Dan-B from the waiting room floor and try to get him out through the ceiling. If a specific Troubleshooter(s) refused to help Dan-B, then before escaping he coldly commands the PURGERS to kill that PC. All the soldiers turn to that task, while Dan-B escapes.

12:28

Unless the surviving Troubleshooters stop them, all surviving PURGERS disappear through the ceiling hole and reactivate the overhead heavy armaments.

12:29

The pyrolex homecoming cells nearest the termination booths explode (S3K impact armor-piercing, O3K bio), killing everyone nearby—including the PCs, who deserve it if they just sat there like lumps all this time.



CRASH PRIORITY!



'Just go with us, and if there's a mistake, we'll clear it up with your next clone.'

[continued from page 20]

Romantics

Name: Clarence-Y-SCA-4 (degree 8)

Service group: Power Services

Mutant power: Uncanny Luck

Description: A skinny red-haired guy with crooked teeth but a strangely compelling stream of blarney, Clarence-Y has a deep fascination with 'Oola-Hoops'. He bemoans his impending death because he'll be missing the monthly Second Twosday Secret Hooping Congress.

The pitch: While whispering to the PC about Oola-Hoops, Clarence-Y offers to provide the location of a cache of priceless Old Reckoning artifacts, including a vintage pink Oola-Hoop and a 'pay phone', if the Troubleshooter can just get him to the Hooping Congress tonight.

Sierra Club

Name: Laura-O-NMT-6 (supposedly degree 8)

Service group: HPD&MC (actually IntSec)

Mutant power: Adhesive Skin

Description: Tall and athletic, Laura-O nervously picks at her styrofoam cup. Her eyes are wide and panicked, darting about as if she's trying to think of something. She's brusque in conversation but, as the last clone in her pack,

she tries to overlay that tendency with pleasant conversation to convince the Troubleshooter she's worth saving. The technique just results in an offhanded and aloof conversation about the temperature controls.

The pitch: Laura-O knows a way to get Outside, and says she has a base out there. If the Troubleshooter frees her, she can bring him to her base and be free of Alpha Complex. In reality Laura-O is an IntSec plant, and if the Troubleshooter agrees to help, she immediately arrests him and puts him in line for termination center processing.

The attack

Here is one way you can stage the mission's climactic battle. See the boxed timeline on the previous page for a suggested sequence of events.

Hacked!

While the Troubleshooters busily meet their beverage-serving quota—smile cheerily, fill out their quota forms, perform their service services and covertly handle desperate pleas from secret society contacts—the Computer Phreaks are also

at work. Hackers add the Troubleshooters' names to the termination center's manifest of traitors. Worse, the PCs are at the front of the line.

Why do the Phreaks want to terminate the PCs? Maybe they offended a Phreak in an earlier mission—for instance, 'Mister Bubbles' in the **PARANOIA** rulebook. Maybe this is part of a shadowy larger scheme by an unseen enemy. Or maybe you don't care. After all, you don't intend to tell the players anything, right?

With the change in the manifest, the hackers also fake an alert to the GREEN goons, who pull the Troubleshooters away from their beverage carts (thereby hurting their beverage quota) and escort them to director George-B for processing. George-B isn't what you'd call sympathetic, but he patiently listens to the problem. He believes the Troubleshooters, and mentions we IntSec has had problems with data security go ('one more reason to privatize these centers, rep say'). Still, the bureaucracy required to fix the manifests—the approvals needed—George-B shudders demurely. He chooses the path of least resistance: The Troubleshooters will submit a termination 'and we'll sort it out with your next clone.'

The goons grab the Troubleshooters by the ears and attempt to drag them to the termination room. The goons clap resisters in plastic handcuffs and stun them with electroprods. The prods, newly refurbished with the rubber handles the Troubleshooters just delivered, stun the target for one round; a stunned target is still conscious and can speak weakly but can't do anything physical.

Bombs away!

After the hackers change the manifest, if things have stalled or gone too fast, stage the climactic attack. To free PURGE official Dan-B-LMD from the termination queue, PURGE assaults the termination center with a crack squad of nine heavily armed soldiers.

The PURGERS attack from above. They have crawled through a ventilation duct from a long-abandoned section of IntSec headquarters contaminated with radioactivity decades ago in a tacnuke mishap.

The squad has two strike teams. Alpha team with three soldiers, attacks the lookout platform

PURGE soldiers

Management 05; Stealth 10, Surveillance 14, Shadowing 14; Violence 10, Energy Weapons 14, Projectile Weapons 14, Hand Weapons 14, Unarmed Combat 14, Climb and Descend Rope 16; other skills 8; cone rifles with ECM (J2J impact) and HEAP shells (W2K impact); laser pistols with yellow barrels (W3K energy), yellow reflex (E1); PURGE **Dan-B** has Gamemaster fiat armor (infinite) until you decide he doesn't

TRAITOR BACKUP

Bravo team, with six, attacks the waiting room floor and extracts Dan-B.

With expert timing the two teams simultaneously blow holes in the ceiling with cone rifles firing HEAP shells. Alpha team hits the lookout platform and kills the five GREEN goons there. One PURGER heads to George-B's office to assassinate the director (but George-B will use Mental Blast and kill the assassin instead). From behind the blast shields, the remaining two soldiers destroy the waiting room combots with high-power ECM equipment. Then they open the trapdoor and move down to the floor, where they blow open the security door using shaped explosive charges.

Bravo team descends to the waiting room on guylines, wielding slugthrowers and other weapons as you choose, mowing down GREEN goons with high-velocity ammo. (They have reprogrammed the heavy armament banks above the lights; no heavy weapons are firing.) One Headsweeper takes out one PURGE soldier in a messy spray that sprinkles everyone in the waiting room with flecks of intestine and ruins their beverages.

The surviving GREEN goons and Jessica-G retaliate, but they miss a lot. Their shots set off the pyrolex homecoming chambers, causing chain-reactive bursts of slag to advance slowly, suspensefully toward the termination booths.

Survive? Or meet the quota?

The Troubleshooters see all this from the termination room. Janitor Humphrey-R has the presence of mind to help the PCs, should they manage to ally with him. The termination center euthanasia specialists have more on their minds than helping or hindering Troubleshooters—namely, panic. This gives the PCs several escape options (that we can think of):

- ③ Con Humphrey-R into using his codes to open one of the bolted doors around the center. Hide until the action dies down, at the expense of the beverage quota.
- ③ Con a combot into escorting them to safe quarters 'so they can be terminated properly later on.' If you're feeling perverse, the combot they try to persuade is a Corpore Metal member.
- ③ The more...daring...PCs might disable the termination booth consoles and then hide in the termination booths themselves. Sure, no way anything could go wrong with that plan.
- ③ Try to get a termination booth floor open for flushing and wriggle out that way. No promises where the escapees end up—Waste Recycling? The sewers? Outdoors?

PURGE ATTACK

PCs interesting obstacles to springing their secret society contacts—and certainly to meeting their beverage quota.

Once the chaos starts, the 122 prisoners in the waiting room (but not the other 100 trapped in the pyrolex cells) suddenly realize this is their chance and they riot or race to the trapdoor below the platform—their single route of escape. If the Troubleshooters have reached the waiting room floor, they may now help their contacts, but keep in mind the remaining two combots and any surviving GREEN goons aim to prevent the prisoners' escape. No prisoner important to the storyline can escape without a Troubleshooter's direct assistance.

No-longer-waiting room

The PURGE assault has not only distracted the GREEN goons from shoving the Troubleshooters into the termination booths, but also gives the





CRASH PRIORITY!

Meanwhile, the holding cells of the homecoming chambers are exploding toxically, torching numerous prisoners who come staggering out of their cells half-alive, gasping and beseeching the Troubleshooters for help.

Also, the Troubleshooters' refreshment-serving quota is nose-diving, and the equipment is getting dented.

Lookout!

If they make it to the lookout platform, the PCs might try to hole up in director George-B's steel-walled office. It's currently Tension level 0; the director has turned off surveillance so no one will see him casually watching a vidshow.

One PURGE soldier went to assassinate George-B, but the director's Mental Blast went off first. George-B calmly killed the assassin with a laser blast, then closed his door. He hopes this current debacle will prove the unworthiness of IntSec to run its own termination centers, so the service firm New Patriot Solutions can take over.

Should the PCs catch him off-guard, George-B stammers, 'You see? This is what unauthorized combat drugs do to you! These Death Leopard traitors amaze me. Luckily the drugs took effect just a moment ago, and I managed to shoot him.'

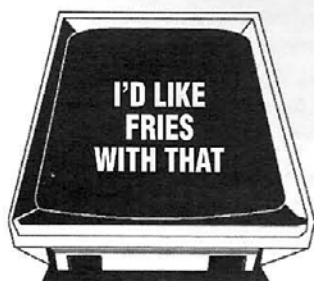
If George-B hears them entering, the PCs find the director panting after an obvious struggle with the traitor.

In any case, the director sends the PCs back out to the waiting room to put down the prisoner revolt in a full frontal assault. If they succeed, he'll postpone their termination while he investigates why they're on the manifest.

Bustin' da man

All the PURGEs do whatever it takes to keep their PURGE colleague, Dan-B-LMD-3, alive. They try to pull him from the waiting room floor and escape through the ceiling hole.

If the Troubleshooters have not helped him by the time the PURGEs ready their escape,



Dan-B points at the PCs and tells the PURGEs to shoot. Hanging above the waiting room on lines, the PURGEs have a clear line of sight anywhere in the center except the director's office and the high-security hallways below the platform. As ruthless amoral terrorists, they are of course happy to comply with Dan-B's command. He escapes while they're firing.

Once the PURGEs exit through the ceiling hole, they reactivate the Headsweeper armaments in an attempt to cut off pursuit. Should the PCs pursue anyway, they enter a ventilation duct tall enough for duck-walking but absolutely not tall enough to dodge the retreating soldiers' withering slugthrower fire. From there the soldiers flee through a busy transtube, a maze of sewers, the fortress of Barad-Dur and whatever other locales it takes to throw the Troubleshooters off the trail.

Post-quota (debriefing)

There's a mandatory lockdown, the PCs get interrogated along with everyone else, it turns into a procedural crime show and you're already bored to tears just thinking about running it all. Skip it. Your players have proven themselves heroes or idiots or both, so just skip lightly over the bureaucracy and go straight to the debriefing.

It's all rather, um, brief. An anonymous mission officer behind a reflective barrier recounts in broad strokes what happened during the PURGE attack and gives the Troubleshooters the opportunity to fink on each other.

Then in a stern and disappointed tone he gets to the point of the debriefing:

'Our records show you missed your quota on this mission by 206.3 percent. In fact, the prisoners who survived are thirstier than when you started. You served only a fraction of the YELLOW-Clearance citizens in the Happy Homecoming Center, failed to prevent beverages from being contaminated by biological substances and allowed valuable—*valuable!*—beverage resources to be wasted during the attack. CPU polled one surviving prisoner who said your attitude was "less than I expected from Pleasant Experience concessionaires, plus the Bouncy Bubble Beverage was flat." PLC notes as well that a drink cart was dented, and you misplaced your Snippies. Do you have anything to say in your defense?'

Give the Troubleshooters another opportunity to accuse each other of treason.

'Thank you; your input has been noted. You will be pleased to know The Computer releases you this time with only a monetary fine. The Computer has beneficently pardoned you of serious charges because you missed the majority of your quota *after* the traitorous attack on the center began, by which time termination waiting times had decreased to 142% due to unscheduled prisoner casualties. This happiness regulation applies only to offices with waiting times higher than 150% of optimum.

'The Computer is wise! Look forward to your next opportunity to serve The Computer!

'Slide your ME cards through the reader on your way out; we will deduct the charges from your accounts.'

We live in cheap and twisted times. Our leaders are low-rent fascists and our laws are a tangle of mockeries. Recent polls indicate that the only people who feel optimistic about the future are first-year law students who expect to get rich by haggling over the ruins... and they are probably right.

—Hunter S. Thompson, *Songs of the Doomed: More Notes on the Death of the American Dream* (Gonzo Papers, Vol. 3) (1990)



Background

Throughout his steady progression to Clearance INDIGO, Rex-I-DON-10 slunk secretly along the traditional Mystic path of inner enlightenment. However, IntSec watched Rex-I's pursuits carefully, including his steady conversion to an almost entirely organic diet grown in his own personal garden. IntSec meant to bring Rex-I down, hard.

Stumbling back to his quarters after a mind-blowing session of drugs and meditation, Rex-I experienced an epiphany—the brain-melting onset of Zen Deficit Disorder. Suddenly Rex-I grokked Alpha Complex in its entirety: The Computer had the best intentions for its citizens but completely failed to understand their needs, and High Programmers were shrewd opportunists who had the best intentions for themselves alone. Rex-I saw himself as the city's appointed savior. Citizens who witnessed Rex-I's epiphany saw a small, paunchy man obsessively rocking back and forth and drooling.

In that moment of crystal clarity, IntSec swept in and carted off the Mystic for interrogation. However, IntSec agents Lennox-B-DON-5 and Boden-O-DON-4 were not prepared for Rex-I's ingenuity. Using his mystic Zen awareness (and mundane access to treasonous security codes), Rex-I slipped away. He avoided capture across half a sector until a firefight locked him down in an R&D lab. GREEN goons armed with tangles and stun grenades captured the slippery INDIGO, but not before accidentally drenching him in mercury-like fluid from a disrupted magnetic bottle.

On his return trip to the interrogation cells Lennox-B took precautions and reset all security codes. However, Rex-I's recent dousing with experimental nanoprobes had saturated the Mystic's blood stream. The nanoprobes started making minor improvements to Rex-I's physiology, while also imbuing him with a form of viral Machine Empathy. In an IntSec holding

cell, Rex-I opened his cell door with a thought, then turned two slavering doberbots against their surprised (and rapidly dismembered) handler.

After his escape, the fugitive INDIGO found refuge in the gloomy service ducts behind a DON Sector Trans-Underplex Bullet Express train station, a drop-point for Mystic parcels and messages. Rex-I knew the TUBE station was close to a core trunk connection to DON Sector's primary CompNode. With his new powers, he resolved to take control of the node and overthrow The Computer itself.

Why, yes, Rex-I is indeed nuts—and worse. His nanoprobes were designed as a new means to implement in-the-field bot repairs. As Rex-I does not fit the common template of any known bot, the nanoprobes believe they occupy a catastrophically damaged bot intelligence and have scheduled completion of a total overhaul and repair. Rex-I doesn't know it, but as long as the nanoprobes remain in his bloodstream, he has less than a day to live.

Armed with a true understanding of Alpha Complex and the ability to communicate directly with machines, Rex-I has secreted himself in the deepest reach of the TUBE station. He plans to dig through to the trunk connection and infect the CompNode, forcing it to reveal the terrible truth of imprisonment and oppression to every Alpha Complex citizen. Meanwhile, he has used his new powers to reprogram a few bots to protect him.

The Computer knows nothing of this. It only knows it has lost communication with the DON Sector TUBE station. It assigns the Troubleshooters to investigate, install a hardware device and download a firmware maintenance patch into the local system management network. This should restore remote access and control.

Under normal circumstances, this assignment would be trivial. However, the mission briefing lacks pertinent details, such as a refugee INDIGO citizen pumped up on nanoprobes and a couple of dangerously peeved Internal Security agents.

Mission alert

The Computer sends a text message to the Troubleshooters over their PDCs at their workplaces. Read the following to the players:

The Computer requires your attendance at a briefing regarding Communist sabotage most foul in DON Sector. Treasonous actions have breached transportation protocols, and happiness futures plunge following unscheduled property destruction and multiple citizen death. The Computer's loyal servants in CPU have arranged for your timely escort to the briefing room in one hour. Consult with your supervisor to excuse yourself from regular duties. END MESSAGE.

If you have previously established the Troubleshooters' individual service firm jobs, you may wish to play out the PCs' requests for leave from their obstinate supervisors, arguments with envious coworkers, etc. Or you may just want to get the mission underway, because that's why your players showed up, right?

In one hour, four IntSec GREEN goons arrive to escort the PCs to the appropriate briefing room.

The briefing

The room is dull pink with dark red carpet, and a large red-framed whiteboard occupies the wall opposite the door. A chemical stink from the whiteboard's dry-erasable pens pervades the air. Charts, tallies and random scraps of paper, tacked to the wall on either side of the board, look like parts of previous mission briefing announcements.

The briefing officer, Aubin-B-NDA-3, is a hawk-nosed, narrow-faced man who seems two sizes



too small for his uniform. As GREEN goons guide the Troubleshooters into the room, Aubin-B looks down his nose at them and curtly gestures for them to sit—right there, on a hard wooden bench at the center of the brightly lit room.

Aubin-B stands patiently, straight-backed and in silence, until the Troubleshooters give him their full attention. He then reads the mission briefing aloud:

Communist sabotage has triggered technical malfunctions, rendering the Trans-Underplex Bullet Express station in DON Sector inaccessible, and greatly reducing the productivity and happiness quotas in the sector. Remote inspection of the problem indicates a traitorous software virus has massively corrupted local systems. Your mission is to install a Circuit Override Interface Transfuser, or COIT, hardware device. You will then apply three firmware patches, at three separate locations in the TUBE station, to reenoble remote access control of the local system. You alone are responsible for restoring functionality to the TUBE system.

Additionally, your friend The Computer is generously allowing your team to perform an additional service firm service while in the TUBE system.

Two days ago, a classified R&D service firm, working with a Technical Services service firm called Nanotest, installed a highly experimental nanotube skin over the steel bulkhead protecting certain Computer circuitry. The hull skin detects whether the steel beneath it has been breached, and reports data back to R&D. Newly reported data indicate that a breach occurred two hours ago. However, a breach is not certain: In lab tests, the hull skin was prone to reporting false data approximately 74 percent of the time.

Your R&D service service assignment is to determine whether a breach in fact exists. If the skin has been breached, determine the cause and deal with it, then apply a fresh coating of hull skin. If a breach does not exist, provide a brief report on why the skin data indicate otherwise.

PLC will provide you with all necessary equipment and instructions to complete both tasks. Clear? Good. Now, [pick a PC], summarize for us your team's mission and service service assignment.

Aubin-B requires the Troubleshooters to repeat the basics of his mission back verbatim to ensure adequate understanding. If he detects hesitation, inaccuracy or complete ignorance of the mission details, he assigns Official Reprimands. Aubin-B

ensures the Troubleshooters fully understand the importance of making the TUBE station functional. Alpha Complex itself faces harrowing inconvenience due to the continuing threat of this malfunction, and the Troubleshooters should fully appreciate the import of their mission!

As time is of the essence, Aubin-B urges the Troubleshooters to get on with the task instead of asking pointless questions. Copious Bootlicking may lighten Aubin-B's mood and prompt him to answer one or two questions, but not thoroughly and not for long.

Aubin-B taps a button on his PDC and the briefing room door opens. He concludes:

You will report to the DON Sector TUBE station in two hours. You are released.

Private conferences

The Troubleshooters may now seek information from their secret society contacts.

- ④ **Anti-Mutant:** Rumors circulating among the hated Psion suggest they know there's a mutant behind this whole incident. Identify and destroy the offending monstrosity. As proof of the deed, bring back his earlobe in this contamination-proof box.
- ④ **Communists:** Current reports blame the situation on a Communist presence, but without proof. Comrade, do not let this opportunity go to waste: Here, take some pamphlets and red paint. Reinforce our involvement, to strike fear into the hearts of the Capitalist Minions of The Computer!
- ④ **Death Leopard:** Random destruction that can shut down a whole station—dude, in all honesty could you miss something like that? A serious trashing like this deserves closer inspection. Find out what's going on and record it for future vidnights.
- ④ **Humanists, Frankenstein Destroyers:** IntSec's official line is they've locked down the Commie responsible. It's some kind of crazed metal freak. Find the monstrosity and deactivate it, permanently.
- ④ **Free Enterprise:** The TUBE tunnels around DON Sector provide access to an ancient hangar that's part of the Underplex. Up to now, the hangar has served as a storehouse for unofficially acquired goods. With this state of emergency, no one can reach the storehouse, and that's bad for business. Find the problem and end it.
- ④ **Mystics:** Closure of that TUBE station is a problem, little buddy. There's a Mystic drop-point in the middle of the platform,

Aubin-B-NDA-3

HPD&MC (IntSec), FCCC-P, Regeneration 9; Violence 8, Hand Weapon 12, Neurowhip 16, other skills 11; neurowhip (S4M energy), reinforced uniform (I3)

IntSec GREEN goons

Violence 10, Hand Weapons 12, Energy Weapons 16; laser pistol with two green barrels (W3K energy), truncheon (S5K impact), green reflex (E1)

and no one can reach it. While you're down there, locate the drop-point—an **OUT OF ORDER** recycling bin—and return any packages in the bin to me. You and I will have a little celebration afterward, okay?

- ④ **Pro Tech:** Bumbling Internal Security idiots broke into an R&D lab and lost a piece of cutting-edge technology we were about to acquire. It was a microscopic electrical oscillator, extremely sensitive to mass and force. It's encased in a sensitive plate about a centimeter long with the marking 'THX-B7.' Unfortunately, IntSec scattered or ruined many other similar plates at the same time. We have the plate's housing and passcodes already; you must return the oscillator. Handle IntSec interference in any appropriate way.
- ④ **Psion:** Leaked information suggests a new mutant power at work, or else a variant of the feared Machine Empathy talent. However, Control detects no mutant activity. Gather as much data on the phenomenon as possible. Ideally, complete a deep scan of the individual's brain and return the information for analysis—though a living specimen would be even better. See if you can pick up the passkey to his apartment, too.
- ④ **Program group lackey:** Internal Security has imprisoned a respected and influential ally, one Rex-I-DON-10. We've learned nothing of his fate, but something is certainly up in the sector of his incarceration—specifically the loss of some dangerous experimental nanotech. IntSec has contained all information. Expect rich rewards for anything concrete on the actual situation and how it might concern Rex-I-DON.
- ④ **The rest:** Gamemaster, you know your particular PCs better than we Famous Game Designers do. Give them something relevant to this mission: A deep contact updates them on society-specific gossip relevant (or, depending on how perverse

you're feeling, *seemingly* relevant) to their interests.

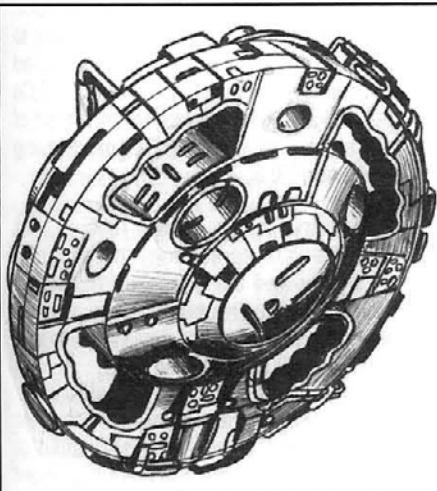
Outfitting

Handle outfitting as you see fit, whether via PLC, the IR Market or C-Bay. Regardless, at the end of outfitting, the PCs should have the following items:

④ **COIT (1):** The Circuit Override Interface Transfuser (or COIT) resembles a large, old-style cinematic film can crossed with a steering wheel. Knobs, nodes, circuitry and flashing lights riddle the outer casing of the COIT, with a multiplug in the middle of one circular face. The whole thing weighs about 20 kilos and has a convenient handle installed in the middle of the opposing circular face from the multiplug.

There are **three override sockets** in the TUBE station. The Troubleshooters must plug the COIT into all three sockets, in any sequence, to complete a system firmware upgrade that will restore Tech Services access to the station facilities. (They don't know it, but this may also cure Rex-I-DON of his nanoprobe infection.) The COIT documentation (!) actually includes accurate information about the location of all three sockets in the TUBE station. (Yeah, we know, it's not really **PARANOIA** to tell them what they should do—but really, you want to move this mission along, right?)

④ **Experimental hull skin (3 packets):** Packaged in a wet gel, the fragile obsidian folds of the hull skin cause the PCs' fingertip epidermis to crawl when they touch it. It is contained in a non-reactive red plastic lunchbox and smells vaguely like glue. The hull skin adheres to metal; hence the plastic container.



The Circuit Override Interface Transfuser (COIT).

Possession without the proper permit constitutes treason (code MM). Though the Troubleshooters don't know this, R&D is keeping careful tabs on this substance and knows its mass, down to the microgram, in case any goes missing or is misapplied. Because the hull skin transmits data, treat it as a GPS system in case the PCs decide to do anything illegal with it.

④ **Skin applicators (6):** These look like foam makeup wedges. They are used to apply the hull skin.

④ **Permit to Carry and Use Highly Experimental and Classified Substances (1):** A classified R&D service firm (identity available at Clearance VIOLET) provides this permit, which allows the Troubleshooters to complete their service assignment. The permit expires at the end of the day, though this is not stated on the form. The permit specifies exactly where the hull skin may be applied and under what circumstances. It has seven signatures, including officials in R&D, CPU and Technical Services; however, all signatures have been meticulously blacked out save for the last, the Troubleshooters' briefing officer, Aubin-B. To obtain the permit, the Troubleshooters are required to sign for it and provide a blood sample for DNA verification. Use the permit as a point of suspicion if the Troubleshooters run across the two IntSec agents pursuing the Mystic, Rex-I.

A fixer-upper

Both the primary mission and service service bring the Troubleshooters into direct conflict with Rex-I. The INDIGO becomes aware of the PCs' interference when they start using the COIT, and he and his bots confront them when they inspect the CompNode's hull skin for breaches (in area 10 on the map on page 29).

To complicate matters, two IntSec agents, muddling around trying to find Rex-I, follow the Troubleshooters, waiting for the PCs to do their job for them.

IntSec on the trail

Internal Security agents Lennox-B and Boden-O (the ones who let Rex-I-DON get away, twice) are your utility infielders in this mission, free agents (so to speak) who can, um, *encourage* the players in directions you desire, or can resolve the action with adjustable degrees of happiness for all concerned.

The two agents arrive at the start of the mission proper, just after the Troubleshooters enter the DON Sector TUBE station (described

Lennox-B-DON-5

IntSec, Humanists (degree 5), Bureaucratic Intuition 12, Shadowing 14, Moxie 12, Suggestion 13, High Alert 11, Energy Weapons 13, Field Weapons 12, Thrown Weapons 10; laser pistol with blue barrel (W3K), tangler (entangling), ECM grenade* (H2J), X-317B hardened full-figure combat armor (4)

* Grenade works as slugthrower ECM ammunition.

Boden-O-DON-4

IntSec, Free Enterprise (degree 5), Deep Thought 8; Shadowing 13, Medical 12, Data Analysis 13, Data Search 12, Forgery 12, Vehicle Ops and Maintenance 14, Energy Weapons 12, Hand Weapons 11; laser pistol with orange barrel (W3K), neurowhip (S4M energy), X-317B hardened full-figure combat armor (4)

below). The IntSec agents have linked the recent malfunctions at the station with Rex-I's odd new powers, and his frequent use of the station as a Mystic drop-point. Using Deep Thought, Boden-O has thereby deduced a possible lead to Rex-I's current location.

The IntSec agents know the Troubleshooters are in the station and also know their mission. Unlike the Troubleshooters, the agents understand the danger. (Experienced **PARANOIA** players expect trouble, of course—but they're smart enough not to say so aloud, to avoid treason code QQ.) The agents plan to let the Troubleshooters flush out Rex-I by accident and take the brunt of his attack; then the agents will ensure the PCs die in unfortunate accidents, so they themselves can bring the Mystic back alive to IntSec HQ. This, they hope, will atone in some measure for their earlier incompetence, which resulted in swift reprimand and demotion.

However, when it becomes clear Rex-I has turned into a half-man, half-machine hybrid, you may want Lennox-B's Humanist sentiments to come into play. Lennox-B cannot allow Rex-I's survival; he thinks Rex-I could become a template for future R&D combinations of man and machine. At that point, he aids the PCs in killing Rex-I, as long as this won't compromise his own position in Internal Security.

Boden-O has no such qualms. His Free Enterprise loyalties have no bearing on this case, and he intends to take Rex-I back to HQ, period. He may try to bribe the Troubleshooters with a couple of months' salary to keep quiet about Rex-I's presence in the station, if that would be more convenient than killing them. As for Boden-O's attitude to his supervisor, Lennox-B—well, a supervisor's unfortunate death is IntSec's time-tested method of advancement.



Tension?

The Tension level throughout this mission is at least 15, but that requires clarification. Security cameras are in place and functional, but due to Rex-I's intrusion, they're offline—they aren't sending remote feeds to Internal Security HQ.

While offline, each security camera locally stores its last eight hours of surveillance. Destroy the camera and you destroy the recording. In such cases the only proof of a Troubleshooter's treasonous activity would come from verbal and multicorder records. Cool!

The problem, of course, is ensuring you find and destroy all the cameras. Every location has at least one obvious, visible ceiling camera encased in laserproof plastic (energy armor 1). But as every citizen understands bone-deep, it wouldn't be Alpha Complex without hidden cameras.

Troubleshooters can find hidden surveillance devices with a successful Stealth or Surveillance roll. But gaming the search in room after room can be a real pain if you're not careful, so here's a cheesy shortcut: If a PC looks for hidden cameras at any point in the mission, make one single 1d20 roll for that character. If the roll succeeds, and it's lower than the current Tension level, the number rolled becomes the new Tension level for the rest of the mission. Assume the reduced Tension ensues because the Troubleshooter consistently finds hidden cameras, bugs and associated paraphernalia throughout the station.

If a PC later makes a still better roll to find cameras, replace the current Tension level with that new result.

Of course, it never hurts to mention surveillance devices now and then, even if the PCs have reduced the Tension level to insignificance. Anything to keep them twitching.

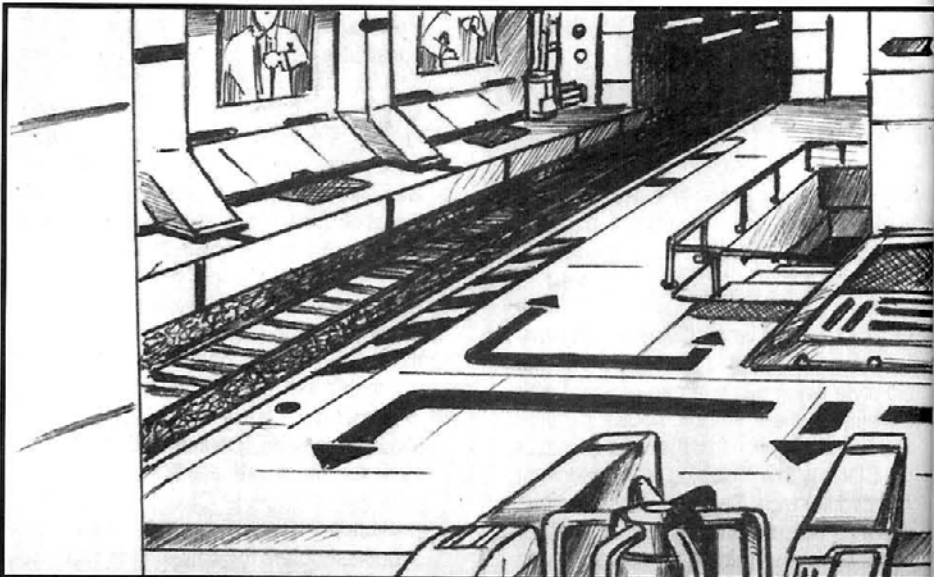
Entering the TUBE

(Tension level 15)

Don't make the journey between outfitting and the DON Sector TUBE station too taxing on the Troubleshooters, unless they have been particularly cocky and unhelpful so far. They'll have plenty to deal with when they arrive.

Upper access to DON Sector TUBE station lies in a centralized area surrounded by kiosks, booths and an INFRARED eatery. A wide corridor, tastefully decorated with HPD&MC infotainment wallscreens and enlarged security camera snapshots of smiling citizens, opens out into a lobby. The lobby, currently empty, has several rows of different clearance access points, though there is nothing for Clearance BLUE or above (such citizens seldom need consort with the masses on the TUBE).

Low-clearance citizens enter the TUBE station through narrow turnstiles surrounded by sensors. Tracking them are security camera pods underslung with bot-controlled twin lasers



Before this unfortunate sabotage, DON Sector TUBE station had been on the verge of achieving a remarkable record of nearly three traitor-free days.

and identity verification devices that would make a dentist's chair look inviting.

Citizens with higher clearance enter through plush secure control gates, which take a quick tongueprint and swing open. Lower-clearance, armed security cameras mounted on gyroscopic brackets allow a full range of movement to easily target traitors trying to force their way through. Subtly draw the players' attention to this by saying something like, 'All the cameras here will track you if you misbehave.'

Once through the uncomfortable and embarrassing scrutiny of the turnstiles, the Troubleshooters see three access points to the lower levels:

- An INFRARED funicular (cable-drawn capsule)
- An INFRARED escalator
- A Clearance YELLOW doorway leading to a flight of stairs

Remember the three override sockets where the PCs have to plug their COIT? The **first override socket** is prominently located in the wall between the funicular and the escalator. The other two are in areas 7 and 9 on the station map, described below.

When the Troubleshooters complete the first maintenance patch, Rex-I (in area 10) becomes aware of them. The triple patch, if fully completed, would neutralize his nanoprobes' ability to alter the system and rob him of his chance to bring down The Computer. Rex-I won't allow the Troubleshooters to foil him. Unfortunately for him, the initial firmware maintenance patch, as it battles the nanoprobe infection, delivers ongoing feedback to Rex-I's nervous system; he's snafued for quite a while, until the Troubleshooters discover him in area 10 on the map.

TUBE map

The numbered areas on the TUBE station map (see next page) refer to the following features:

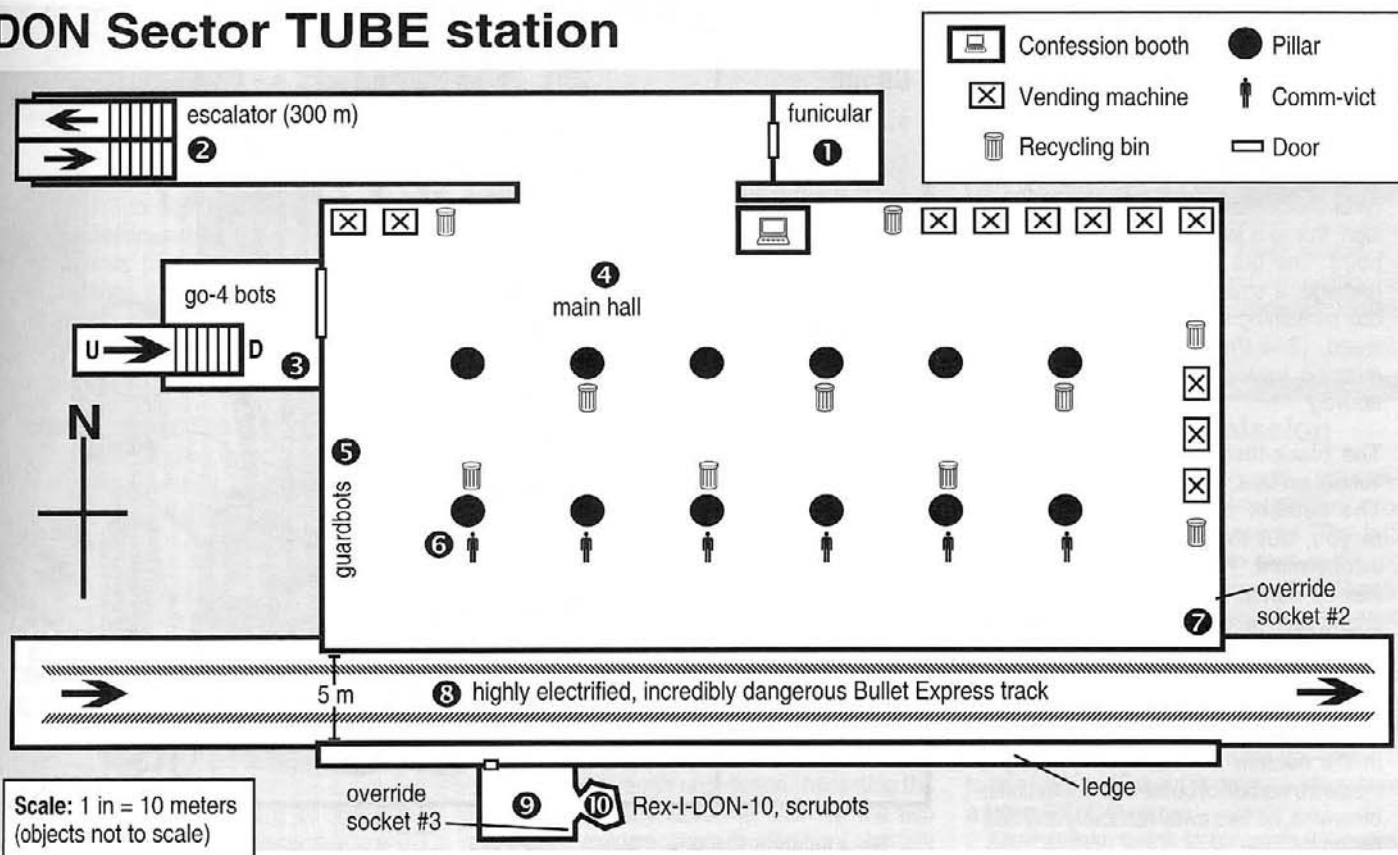
1. **Funicular:** The funicular compartment is a boxy 25-passenger capsule. A Tech Services sign touts the funicular's fast and efficient access to the lower levels of the station. The compartment interior is spacious, about five meters square, with five rows of five seats in the center. The seats are heavily padded and have shoulder- and lap-belts. On seeing this setup, experienced **PARANOIA** players doubtless feel impending doom: Troubleshooters will dive for a seat and start donning the safety gear.

By the entry door is a big red button marked **PUSH**. When someone pushes the button, the doors close and there is a slight judder followed by a low hum of machinery. On the wall next to the door, a light-emitting display panel brightens to show the number 10. Carefully maintained machinery glides into gear, and the PCs feel a downward movement in the pit of their stomachs. The panel begins counting downward: 9, 8, 7....

Try to imply this is entirely routine. With no immediate screaming, the sound of machinery and the sense of movement, inexperienced Troubleshooters may be lulled into thinking the display is charting their descent to the lower level.

In fact, the display is a countdown to launch. The sounds and sensation of motion come from the capsule's movement into a frictionless shaft.

DON Sector TUBE station



On zero, the sense of movement and the low hum of machinery stops abruptly. Then the capsule plummets like a boulder dropped from a cliff, accompanied by an unnerving screeching (of the metal funicular grinding sparks against the cable mechanism) and a taste of bile in the mouth. The drop to the bottom takes five looong seconds, during which time the PCs feel weightless. A Violence or luck roll, with appropriate attention to the less-than-relaxed atmosphere, may determine whether a floating PC manages to strap in before the capsule reaches bottom.

Anyone who took care to strap in early, or succeeded in an attribute check by a margin of 5+, survives the experience shaken but otherwise unscathed. A late starter with a success margin less than 5 suffers an S2K (impact) strike. Anyone who achieved unaided flight suffers a breathtaking W1K impact that may test the funicular's automated internal cleaning systems.

The funicular terminates (*haha*) at the main platform hall (area 4).

- Escalator:** The escalator descends 300 meters to the main platform hall (area 4). The two stair belts are separated by a wide central block.

These dull metallic moving stairs look ancient, with dents, slug holes and burn marks. The escalator controls are behind metal plates in the central block, at both the top and bottom of the escalator. The control panel under each plate is for maintenance access only; it records unauthorized tampering through a DNA scraping on the locking mechanism. The manual control is a slide with three settings: up, off, down. There is no local control of escalator speed, so the Troubleshooters are safe in that respect.

On the central block at the top is a metal plate with four pictograms. Beside them are instructions in large white capital letters on a red background:

WARNING!
Hold on to rail at all times
Dogs must be carried
Keep to the right
No smoking

- Stairs:** The Clearance YELLOW stairs behind the door should be well above the security clearance of any run-of-the-mill Troubleshooter. If the Troubleshooters choose to ignore the security classification, or the mission operatives have YELLOW Clearance, 20 flights of stairs lead down to the main platform hall (area 4).

Malfunctioning **go-4 bots**, which normally catch stray vermin, patrol the stairs. Rex-I's interference has totally screwed their vermin identification protocols, so citizens have become fair game. Troubleshooters may initially be confused when faced with the presence on the stairs of small cubes of pungent I-Find-It-Hard-To-File-A-Report-That-It-Isn't-Cheese. After the PCs have descended three flights of stairs and passed increasingly large portions of cheese, go-4 bots attack everyone (one bot per Troubleshooter).

Go-4 bots are squat, stealthy work units usually employed to track down and utterly annihilate annoying vermin common to the food vats and maintenance ducts of Alpha Complex. The go-4 bots tote automatic weapons and powerful slicing teeth to handle particularly belligerent vermin.

- Main platform hall:** This is the main area of the lower level. The funicular, escalator and stairs all end here (as may

Go-4 bots (one per PC)

HPD&MC-assigned, asimovs inactive; Slugthrower, semi-automatic-10, Hand Weapon-10, Stealth-14, Other Skills-6; Semi-Automatic Slugthrower (solid AP, W3K), Serrated Tooth (S6K), Armored Shell (2)



the Troubleshooters themselves). The cavernous hall has a pillar-supported ceiling fitted with large extractor ducts. Black tiles decorate the walls.

On every wall are recycling bins and vending machines. One recycling bin (your choice) has a large **OUT OF ORDER** sign; this is a long-standing Mystic drop-point. The bin contains, among other garbage, a small, brown paper-wrapped box containing several packets of brown weed. (See the Mystic secret society mission under 'Private conferences' above.)

The black-tiled floor sports massive ventilation fans, covered with steel mesh. The number and placement are up to you, but there are enough to be inconvenient. Thrown into overdrive by Rex-I's nanoprobes, the fans currently create such an updraft that any character stepping over one momentarily rises into the air. A high Agility rating (or a successful roll), or Violence in a pinch, lets the Troubleshooter control his movement in the column of roaring air, doing a mediocre version of bullet-time contortions; otherwise, he flies away randomly and falls flat on his face.

5. **Guardbot post:** Rex-I has ordered the two station **guardbots** to ensure no one approaches the tracks. The bots are bright enough to know all-out attack may not necessarily be the best move and will use the home advantage to their benefit. The bots use pillars and Comm-victs (see area 6) as cover, lure Troubleshooters into the fan updrafts and (if you are feeling particularly malicious, and they haven't been neutralized already) recruit the go-4 bots from the stairs (area 3).

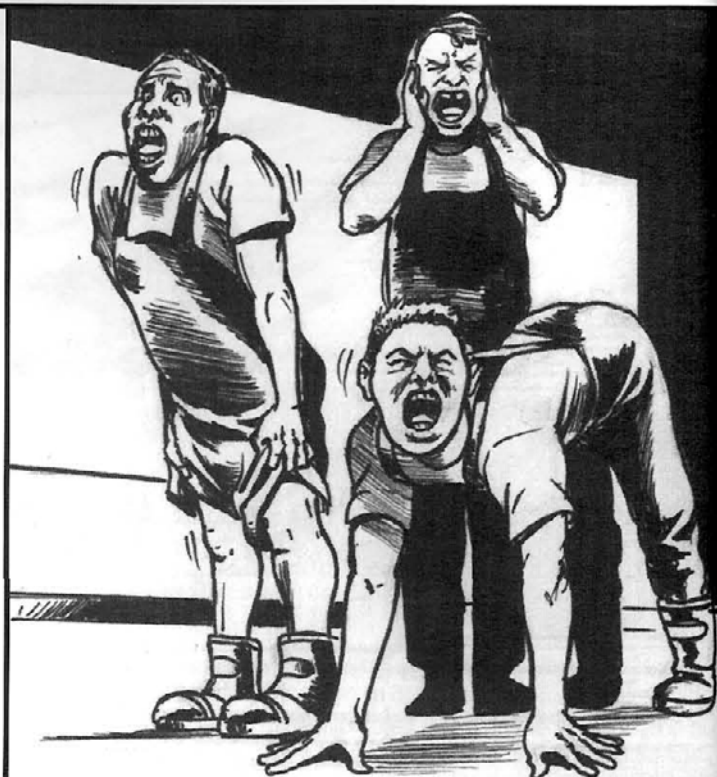
TUBE station guardbots handle platform disturbances, check for malcontents who may have skipped the upper barriers and answer questions about TUBE service and schedules. Their answers are, 'Are you questioning the efficiency of The Computer's beneficent municipal services, citizen?' and 'That scheduling information is not available at your security clearance.'

6. **HPD&MC Comm-victs:** HPD&MC has made a success of the Bright Vision

Guardbots (2)

HPD&MC-assigned, asimovs inactive; Stun Gun 14, Needle Gun 14; stun gun (stun), needle gun (S2W impact), armored shell (3)

INFRARED
Comm-
victs have
ample time
to reflect
on the
importance
of loyalty
and good
hygiene.



Re-education Centers (BVRC), bringing deviant, unhappy citizens back into line with the rest of society through cultural enlightenment, better hygiene and copious doses of approved, mind-altering drugs. For repeat offenders, HPD&MC has established the *Comm-vict* program to reinforce the positive lifestyle choices necessary to be useful in society.

Comm-victs are citizens on a heavy dosage of auto-administered gelgermine (delivered through a special belt), put in public places—like TUBE stations—to recite satisfaction-enhancing infomercials and positive slogans. Heavy magnetic boots fix the Comm-victs to metal floor tiles, ensuring they stay put until retrieval and return to their BVRC for evening medication and confession.

Unfortunately, **six INFRARED Comm-victs** remained locked in place when the TUBE station systems went down. Two have died from extreme buffing by overenthusiastic scrubbots. Four Comm-victs remain, now almost free of meds and steadily becoming aware of their dire predicament. When they hear the Troubleshooters approach, they start screaming for assistance, thus alerting Rex-I to impending company.

Releasing the INFRARED Comm-victs requires a successful Electronic Engineering roll (or a particularly good

Hardware roll). Though scared, the Comm-victs are reasonably lucid and figure it's probably safer to stick with the Troubleshooters than chance escape from the station on their own. They probably get in the way a lot.

7. **Forward platform:** The second override socket is located on the forward platform, just past a row of vending machines. (The first socket is up in the main entry hall, described in 'Entering the TUBE' above; the third is in area 9, below).
8. **Track:** The lower track area is dangerous and off-limits to all non-Tech Services personnel without proper maintenance access clearance, completed on a 27B *Clearance to Access Restricted Areas for Direct Intervention and Maintenance* form in triplicate. Electrified lines make the Buller Express track extremely dangerous. Each line courses with the sort of voltage that would turn your average Troubleshooter into a pile of smoking ash.

The Troubleshooters could try to cross on foot, but the flow of air from the fans into the tunnels creates occasional gusts and blasts likely to unbalance. Alternative methods could involve dumping stuff on

INFRARED Comm-victs (4)

HPD&MC; all skills 04; no weapons or armor

the tracks—vending machines or bodies, for example—and trying to skip across.

9. **Maintenance cage:** On the far side of the track is a narrow ledge, about half a meter wide, with a wheel-locked airtight door that allows access to a maintenance cage. Troubleshooters from Tech or Power Services may recognize a few of the various tubes, ducts, cables, dials and gauges that fill the cage. Amid the machinery is the third override socket. (The other two are in the main entry hall and in area 7.)

10. **Underplex duct:** The trunk cable into the CompNode runs through a partially blocked duct in the rear of the maintenance cage. Here Rex-I-DON-10 and two scrubots are clearing debris.

The Troubleshooters' service service requires them to paint this duct and the trunk cable with the experimental hull skin. The current skin has detected a breach—Rex-I's work.

Rex-I, weird techno-mutant

Once Rex-I becomes aware of the threat presented by the Troubleshooters and the COIT, he ventures out of the duct into the cage and assesses the situation on the platform. However, the maintenance patch's attack on Rex-I's nanoprobes has spread to the probes within Rex-I's own body; the battle within his bloodstream has left him snafued. Consequently, he takes no action until the Troubleshooters tangle with the guardbots or set the Comm-victs screaming.

Rex-I-DON-10

Techno-mutant IntSec escapee

Tech Services, Mystic, Adrenalin Control*, Hypersenses, Machine Empathy*, Regeneration* (10/25**); Sneaking 16, Agility 15, Oratory 15, Meditation 18, Drug Procurement 16, Hardware 15, Energy Weapons 14, Hand Weapons 11; sonic pistol (S3W energy), armored fists (S4W impact), ArmorAll (4)

* The nanoprobe infection in Rex-I's bloodstream has imbued him with abilities that work like the mutant powers indicated.

** Rex-I has a natural Power rating of 10 (using his Hypersenses); his nano-infection abilities use an independent Power rating of 25.

Scrubots (2)

HPD&MC-assigned, asimovs inactive; Obsessive Hygiene 18; soap spray (stun), mop (S3W impact), armored shell (1)

Rex-I wants to stop the Troubleshooters, either physically or through negotiation. Assuming the PCs have already used the COIT at the two previous override sockets (on the front platform and in area 7), Rex-I is committed to preventing the PCs from reaching the final socket in the maintenance cage. The two scrubots helping him are prepared to defend the cage with their last drop of soap; Rex-I is fast, resilient and has nothing to lose. He's also wily enough to use cover, updrafts, bots and even the vending machines. Few Troubleshooters will expect an

attack by masses of rampaging Bouncy Bubble Beverage dispensers.

Ideally, Rex-I would rather enlighten the Troubleshooters than kill them. He wants to inform all Alpha Complex of the treachery of The Computer and the High Programmers. He appeals to like-minded Mystic or Romantic Troubleshooters, and highlights the untold dangers they face for little, if any, reward. If the Troubleshooters rescued the Comm-victs, Rex-I may find in them some immediate supporters for his cause.

Concluding the mission

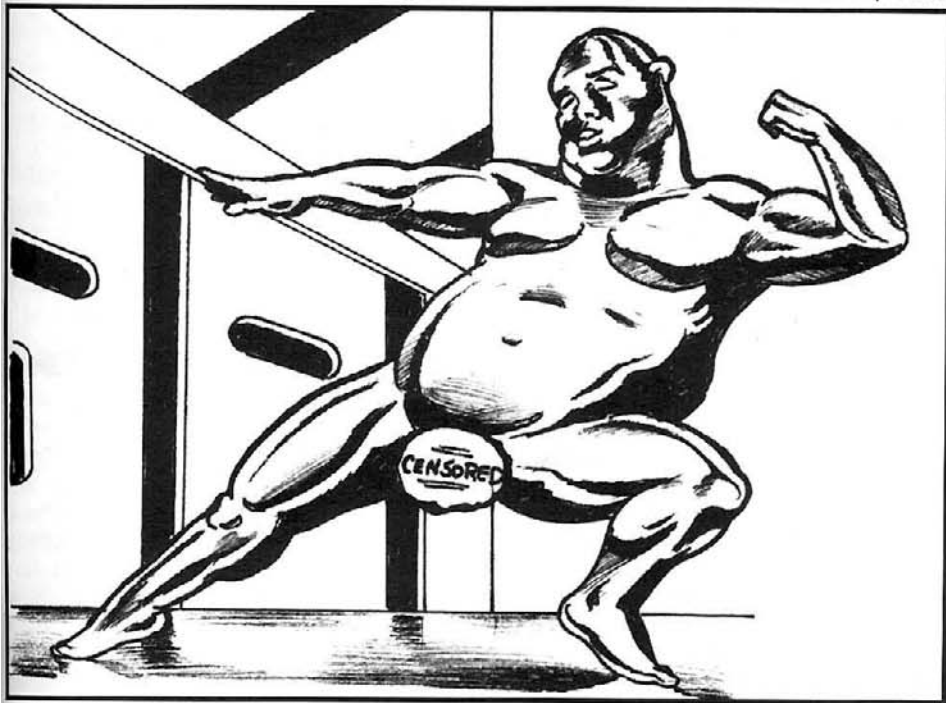
The Troubleshooters' primary goal is to install the complete hardware patch; Rex-I and their service service are secondary concerns. The IntSec agents originally intended to capture the rogue INDIGO, but Lennox-B's compelling Humanist urges may lead the IntSec agents to yet another dismal failure. Imagine the scene: Assuming the Troubleshooters manage to complete the patch, as Lennox-B attempts to deliver the coup-de-grâce to Rex-I, the TUBE systems come back online, and The Computer turns up—just in time to see Lennox-B about to deliver a killing blow to a fallen INDIGO citizen.

Alternatively, failing to complete the upgrade, Rex-I may choose to expose the bungling of the IntSec officers by releasing control of the TUBE systems himself at the most inopportune moment.

Though Rex-I's primary aim is to overthrow The Computer, he may be temporarily satisfied with humiliating the IntSec officers: In this case he lets the patch kill off his nano-infection; this cures his fatal illness. If he escapes death, Rex-I humbly asks The Computer's permission to return to his old position. He intends to erase all incriminating IntSec files and find another means to undermine The Computer. The Troubleshooters' evidence, or lack of it, may prove critical in determining Rex-I's fate.

Why would the PCs think of helping Rex-I? Well, the Troubleshooters may face recriminations for attacking an INDIGO citizen (IntSec records about his activities are classified INDIGO Clearance) and for destroying any number of station bots and vending machines. In addition, The Computer may charge them for the release of the INFRARED Comm-victs. It's possible one or more Troubleshooters may want Rex-I's support against treason accusations. If nothing else, individual PCs may enlist his support just so other PCs don't get it.

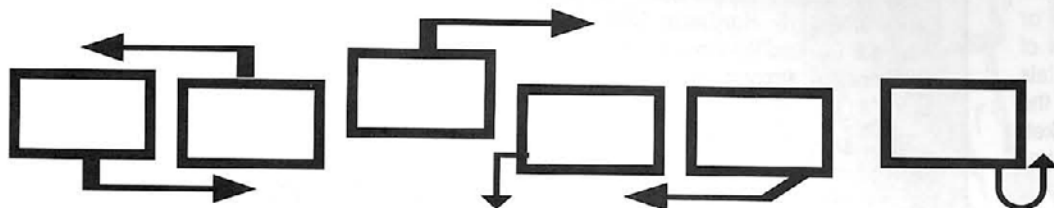
After this mission, Internal Security may keep a closer eye on the Troubleshooters. If Rex-I (or his clone backup) survived and resumed his previous role, he may become an interesting briefing officer on future Tech-based service missions.



Rex-I-DON-10 communing with his inner whatever.



AND 4-6 GM PLAYERS
1-2 TIME PLAYING SESSIONS
(HOURS 4-6)



RANDOM ACCESS MISSION

ANDY FITZPATRICK

Life as one of The Computer's Trusted Friends may be fun and exciting (if short), but some routines you just can't avoid. As nightcycle inevitably follows daycycle, all missions kick off with a **mission alert**. This is followed by a **briefing**, then the usual trips for **outfitting** and **service services**. Anyone lucky enough to come through the mission in one piece finishes things up by attending the mandatory **debriefing**.

Well, not today!

Background

As Chief Data Input Clerk for the CPU service firm Key Puncher Clones, **Byron-I-SON-4** works at HED Sector Troubleshooter Headquarters (THQ) where he supervises entry and updates of all personnel and work schedule data. His staff at KPK, whom he routinely frames for inputting treasonous data errors, works tirelessly in demoralized subservience, leaving Byron-I with plenty of spare time.

Byron-I, bored Computer Phreak (one of the most dangerous three-word phrases in Alpha Complex), amuses himself by playing hanky-panky with the Troubleshooter HQ personnel records. Byron-I's invisible hand has promoted or demoted many citizens. No one has yet noticed, not even when he accidentally demoted HED Sector's VIOLET Supervisor to INFRARED Food Vat Buoyancy Test Volunteer.

Byron-I has recently found a far riskier but more exciting pastime: He browses the ULTRAVIOLET areas of the Headquarters Command Console file system. During one of these treasonous hacking sessions, he stumbled across the T3tr.1S program.

Hidden deep in a long-neglected CC system directory, T3tr.1S seemed nothing more than a fun Old Reckoning vidgame. Byron-I didn't realize

the T3tr.1S virus carries a payload of subliminal Commie propaganda.

Byron-I is too amoral and socially unaware to succumb to any propaganda, but nevertheless became utterly addicted to T3tr.1S. Concentrating on high scores, he failed to notice the virus infecting the service firm console, exposing his entire workforce to this Commie threat.

Byron-I's staffers have now transformed from docile CPU clerks into insane Commie CPU clerks with body odor issues. In a rash act of defiance, the clerks loaded the Commie virus into The Computer's Loyalty Update program, sent to all HED Sector PDCs at hourly intervals.

Although the virus has only spread to the KPK service firm console and a few thousand PDCs, chaos has ensued, and treason is up a shocking 4.462% (CPU-unadjusted daily mean). Once-loyal citizens throughout HED Sector are now neglecting their normal duties, instead hypnotized by the viral game.

Byron-I, finally realizing the danger of his position, grew desperate to cover his tracks. He decided his best course of action was to add to the mayhem, in hopes of diverting The Computer's attention long enough to let him set up a new identity far across the complex. Byron-I's first act of sabotage was to foul up the Troubleshooters' mission schedules.

He then decided to involve Terence-U-EDD-4, HED Sector Chief Administrator, hoping the irate ULTRAVIOLET would find someone else to blame for this whole mess—preferably any number of Troubleshooters. Through cunning spoofs of Computer alerts, Byron-I started ordering Terence-U on ridiculous courier missions for a bunch of no-good REDs.

Byron-I was actually starting to enjoy himself—until his Commie underlings decided to overthrow him. Now they're wrapping him to the throat in rubber bands and masking tape. Meanwhile, at

Phoning home

Though every **PARANOIA** mission requires Fear and Ignorance, 'Random Access Mission' emphasizes a lot more Ignorance than usual. For best effect when you run this mission, isolate the player characters from anyone in authority, except on your own terms. If the Troubleshooters try to contact The Computer, Troubleshooter HQ, Internal Security or anyone useful, tell them these institutions are all dealing with viral chaos and hence unavailable. Conversely, The Computer and these same agencies may summon the Troubleshooters hither and thither through text messages, public-address system alerts and other one-way communication.

Maybe you could simulate this during your game by, we dunno, having your players duct-tape their mouths shut. Let us know how that works out.

least one Troubleshooter team suddenly finds its mission schedule getting really bizarre....

ULTRAVIOLET?

The PCs—that is, Troubleshooter Team DAADN/552—are practicing with red laser rifle (W3K energy) at a scheduled weapons test at the THQ Firing Range facility (**Tension level 3**). Imagine an ordinary military firing range. Now imagine it after a direct nuclear strike. You're nearly there.

In the distance INFRARED citizens, who The Computer recently convicted of various treasonous crimes, are reluctantly holding up targets.

The PCs' instructor for the day is **Hunter-G-DRD-5**, a veteran Troubleshooter. Vain, pompous and tough as yesterday's Cold Fun, he's more interested in telling stories about past missions than in giving instruction. Through long experience he has learned to pointedly ignore anything but direct threats.

Let the Troubleshooters blast away at a few targets (or possibly each other) with their issued laser rifles, while Hunter-G drones on about the time he terminated the Great Trotsky-5 using an ordinary spatula. (Have the players keep track of each other's ammo; the rifles can fire six shots safely. The Troubleshooters have no additional barrels.)

Then **Terence-U-EDD-4** enters. Read the following aloud:

Aiming down the barrels of your laser rifles, you notice that the INFRAREDs have stopped running around in terror and are now staring stupidly in your direction. You hear a commotion behind you.

In the rifle range doorway stand four extremely well-armed BLUE Vulture Warriors. They all have slungthrowers slung over their shoulders and bandoliers full of grenades. One of the Vultures grabs the nearest citizen and asks him something. The citizen points in your direction.



In this mission, scheduling problems pull the Troubleshooters in all directions. (It's, you know, a conceptual illustration. Hey, work with us here.)

Let the players react, if you like. If anyone tries violence—well, that won't be the first time a player loses a clone in the first 30 seconds of a **PARANOIA** mission.

The Vulture drops the citizen and nods at the others. All four move into recon formation. The lead Vulture nods back to a figure in the doorway—a tall, thin man. He's wearing... white.

The ULTRAVIOLET High Programmer and his bodyguards start walking straight toward you.

Byron-I has hacked the sector scheduling program and dispatched this sector's ULTRAVIOLET administrator on a courier job suitable only for INFRAREDs. Envision Bill Gates bringing you your morning newspaper—you'd consider this unusual, no? (Disregard this example if you happen to be Mrs. Bill Gates.) Everyone in Alpha Complex sees High Programmers on vidshows, but in all likelihood the Troubleshooters have never seen a High Programmer in person, and absolutely never in such low-clearance digs. This should make them profoundly uneasy.

When Terence-U arrives, increase the **Tension level** to 16. (The Computer likes to pay close attention to its trusted High Programmers, to protect them from subversion.)

Playing Terence-U: For his part, Terence-U is rightly disturbed. He strongly suspects this errand is some kind of trap set by a rival UV or fellow Illuminati—or, worse still, The Computer has finally discovered his secret stash of Old Reckoning adult entertainment literature. Either

way, he's confused, bemused and extremely edgy.

This is the first of three encounters with Terence-U. When he deals with the PCs, play him like a medieval lord ordered by his monarch to hang out with plague victims. He does not address the PCs directly unless absolutely necessary, instead using his Vulture bodyguards as middlemen.

Citizens scramble away from the ULTRAVIOLET like healthy citizens from a docbot. The High Programmer and his entourage stop a few meters in front of you. Hunter-G has already fallen to his knees.

The lead bodyguard points at all of you, then to the ground in front of him. 'You! Don't talk! Listen! Here! Move it! Nowwww.'

How do the PCs react? Grovelling gets them nowhere, but that shouldn't stop them trying. The more the Troubleshooters talk, the angrier the bodyguards get. If a PC is sufficiently insane to try interacting with the ULTRAVIOLET, bad things happen to him. Repeatedly.

Terence-U hands a note to the lead bodyguard, **Willard-B-HED-3**, who tosses the note to the nearest Troubleshooter. All the bodyguards stare menacingly, then escort Terence-U away.

The note:

TROUBLESHOOTER TEAM DAADN/552, PLEASE REPORT TO SERVICE FIRM PLC OUTFITTING EXPRESS FOR OUTFITTING FOR YOUR ASSIGNED MISSION. YOUR FRIEND, THE COMPUTER

Hunter-G-DRD-5

Firing range instructor

Armed Forces (actually Internal Security), Pyrokinesis (Power 12); Moxie 12, Energy Weapons 13, Field Weapons 13, Unarmed Combat 13; laser pistol with green barrel (W3K energy), tangle (entangling), green reflex (E1)

Terence-U-EDD-4

High Programmer!

CPU, Program group (his own), Bureaucratic Intuition (Power 16); Management 12, Intimidation 16, Bootlicking 01; Stealth 7, High Alert 11; Software 12, Hacking 16, C-Bay 16; Program Group propaganda 12; other skills 6; no weapons; Gamemaster fiat armor (infinite)

BLUE bodyguards (4)

Armed Forces, Program group (Terence-U-EDD-4), various mutant powers; Violence 12, Athletics 16, Projectile Weapons 16, Hand Weapons 16, Unarmed Combat 16; Program Group Propaganda 6; other skills 4; slungthrower with solid and dum-dum ammo (W3K impact), 6 concussion grenades, combat suit (armor 3)



CRASH PRIORITY!

PLC #1: Brainscrubbed clerk

The Troubleshooters have no assigned mission. No PC should have the remotest clue what's going on. But they do know how to get to the PLC service firm Outfitting Express, not far from HED Sector THQ. Move the players along efficiently, and when they arrive at the service firm (**Tension level 6**), read this:

You walk into a rundown outfitting depot. A vacant-looking RED clerk is standing behind the counter, picking something out of his ear. Above him is a tattered sign that reads 'If we don't stock it, it's not available at your security clearance!'

The clerk, **Derek-R-JMS-12**, is a dense, permanently perplexed lump who only communicates in grunts and occasional sign language. His employers only keep him on because he's too stupid to be corrupted or bribed.

Derek-R was once a brilliant but reckless PURGE terrorist. His previous clones were given so many brainscrubs that now the MemoMax transfer acts like an instant lobotomy, rendering each subsequent clone moronic. If any trace of his former self has survived in Derek-R's mind, it's extremely well hidden.

Derek-R won't obstruct the PCs deliberately, but his monumental stupidity does make life difficult.

PC: Okay, what do I have to do to get a cone rifle and some HEAT shells? I'd rather not use the last shot on my laser rifle to find out, if you know what I mean.

Derek-R: Wha?

PC: Listen, we're on a special mission for The Computer and we need some equipment.

Derek-R: Wha?

PC: You know, weapons, grenades—What can you give us?

[Derek-R grabs the first thing he sees and holds it aloft triumphantly.]

Derek-R: Pens!

PC: *[Sighs.]*

The PCs have a hard time getting what they want from Derek-R. The de-clued clerk can't tell a tacnake grenade from a pair of RED pants. Nor can he distinguish colors well, so make sure he hands the PCs a few items well above their security clearance—a chapstick, say (GREEN), or a vacuum cleaner (ORANGE). Nothing too useful, though. Outfitting Express supervisors have meticulously cut off Derek-R's access to anything useful, and only keep this outlet open to fulfill a contractual obligation.

At the end of this particular trip to PLC (the first of three in this mission), the Troubleshooters should emerge with a completely useless pile of equipment: 52 Happiness Pill dispensers, three jackobot replacement arms, 287 toothpicks, an INDIGO nostril brush....

If the Troubleshooters take to violence—okay, when they take to violence—send in the next Derek-R and pick up where you left off.

After a while, the team's PDCs beep simultaneously, indicating a message.

**TROUBLESHOOTER TEAM DAADN/552,
PLEASE REPORT FOR DEBRIEFING,
ROOM 28, THQ, HED SECTOR. DO NOT
BE LATE. THIS DEBRIEFING WILL BE
INTERESTING AND EDUCATIONAL.
BEST WISHES, THE COMPUTER**

The Troubleshooters have no idea what they're being debriefed about. They haven't been assigned any missions recently. Still, orders are orders. The Troubleshooters must make do with whatever random articles you've given them and move on.

Debriefing #1

Once the Troubleshooters make their way to debriefing (their first of three debriefings in this mission), read the following aloud.

As you enter the debriefing room, you hardly notice the usual scorch marks and laser burns. The room itself is typically dark, and a strange odor hangs in the air. Rows of molded plastic seats, some partially melted, line the rear wall of the room. The far end is dominated by an imposing platform supporting a long table. Both are protected by a well-tested blast screen. You can't help noticing the stained gutter around the walls.

This first debriefing room is **Tension level 12**.

Debriefing officer **Victor-I-VDD-4** sits behind the table, his attention focused on something in his lap. Flanking him are two Internal Security GREEN goons (use the statistics for Terence-U's bodyguards in the previous section, except the goons' armor is green). The blast screen has Fiat (infinite) armor. If the PCs get out of hand, one Vulture summons backup via his cuff-mike. Within moments, six more goons enter at the back of the room and take up positions behind the PCs.

Let the players argue over important matters like which seats to take and who gets the one nearest the door. Victor-I ignores them, as he's busy with his PDC.

Eventually the INDIGO acknowledges their existence with a vague 'Hi, citizens' but never looks up. From their vantage the Troubleshooters can't see Victor playing T3tr.1S on his PDC,

though they hear an occasional *ping-wheep-whoo* sound effect from the game. Victor-I is addicted, but hasn't yet succumbed to the viral Communist propaganda.

Victor-I throws the Troubleshooters an occasional question, like 'How'd it go?' but isn't focused on the debriefing at all. The only response the PCs ever get from him is 'Yeah, great' or 'That's interesting.' At various times he exclaims with surprise, disappointment or joy. However, none of these emotions has anything to do with the debriefing, but only with the game.

The debriefing ends when two goons ceremoniously lift up Victor-I's chair and carry him out of the room. The other goons leave with them. The Troubleshooters' PDCs beep moments later, informing them The Computer has fined each of them 4,100 credits for failing to complete their assigned mission. Half a minute later, the lights go out one by one.

Sooner or later they'll leave debriefing and decide where to go next. Smart players use this opportunity to check in with their secret societies. You should now distribute some rumors among the players. See the 'Rumors' box nearby for details.

After you've rumor-ified the players up to their ears, The Computer dispatches yet another PDC message to the Troubleshooters' PDCs.

Rumors

As ever in Alpha Complex, the rumor mill is working overtime. Read each player one or more of these rumors (sans the italicized portions, naturally).

1. The Armed Forces are carrying out a live exercise in this area. Be extra-cautious around Vultures. (*True, but this practice has been going on for weeks.*)
2. IntSec has accidentally terminated all RED-Clearance citizens whose name begins with F. (*Not true. IntSec has just been busy recently.*)
3. Pro Tech and Corpore Metal have struck some kind of deal. Mutants should be extra careful. (*Not true—but mutants should always be careful.*)
4. Commie saboteurs are disguising themselves as scrubots to pass into high clearance areas unnoticed. Keep an eye out. (*True, if you want it to be.*)
5. B3 production has taken a sharp downturn. Prices for Bouncy Bubble Beverage are expected to hit the roof. (*Originally not true—PLC was just trying to set off panic buying to fulfill quotas. Their scheme worked too well. Now there really is a shortage.*)
6. Vending machines have been fitted with secret IntSec listening devices. (*True, although testing has been unreliable and few of the devices work.*)



1. Trackerbot

This medium-sized track-driven jackobot has several dozen varieties of sensor and homing device. The bot can track objects and people using radar, sonar, heat resonance, ESP and many other methods.

Several secret societies sabotaged the trackerbot's original programming because they didn't want such a potent device in the hands of IntSec or, indeed, Troubleshooters. Their covert tinkering has made the bot unreliable and rather insane. Given enough time, however, it finds its target. Really.

The trackerbot has the personality of a phony TV psychic and the wandering instincts of a puppy.

PC: Trackerbot, how far is it to the target?

Trackerbot: The mists are clearing...I can feel a presence...Is that you, Johnny?

PC: Uhhh... Who's 'Johnny'?

How does the trackerbot fit in with the other bots in the party? Well, if the PCs are 'mom and dad', the trackerbot is the family dog. The other bots sometimes follow it when it goes astray; they become frightened if it gets too boisterous. Don't overplay this dynamic, but use it to distract the players at inconvenient moments.

2. NanoByte antivirus lotion

Large jar of glutinous goo packed with billions of nanobots. Extremely sticky. Use of gloves highly recommended. Gloves not provided.

IMPORTANT: This smart gel, as it's otherwise known, is the key to stopping the T3tr.1S virus. The PCs must smear it all over the KPK console to stop the virus spreading any further.

3. Bouncy Bubble Beverage belt

Belt with a dozen can holders. Designed for Troubleshooters working in the field, this belt offers instant access to tasty refreshment any time, anywhere. Comes with a remote control to rotate the can holders and fire cans into the wearer's hands. Almost never gets stuck on 'fast spin' or 'emergency dispense'.

The moment a player realizes the potential of this device as an effective weapon, start thinking about malfunction rolls.

4. ElastOBlastic grappling hook

Underslung grappling hook attachment for rifled weapons. Once fitted, it overrides any trigger releases and fires the hook instead. The attached rope is highly elastic for easy use and fast user insertion. *Really* fast.

You know the way a certain popular superhero shoots out long, sticky strands of webbing and

uses them to swing around from building to building? Well, this works nothing like that. This is just one long bungee rope with a hook on the end.

We'll let you ponder the possible effects of indoor use.

5. Multi-Max microwave machine-gun

(D3V energy; range 1000m)

Large rifled energy weapon with enormous microwave module on top. The weapon is divided by a large shield just in front of the trigger guard, making it front-heavy and very difficult to aim anywhere except down—roll against their Violence skill when they try and aim it.

Calibration is tricky, too. Many dials on the side of the weapon must be set correctly, which requires an Energy Weapons specialty roll. Incorrect calibration can have unfortunate effects, such as slowly cooking the internal organs of a citizen in the next room or causing the nearest B3 vending machine to arc wildly.

Should you wish, the gun makes a 'ping' sound after each use.

6. Explosive body armor

Pyronetics RD has studied the proven benefits of explosive armor on military vehicles and applied it to personal body armor.

Like ancient plate armor, the suit consists of many individual metal plates loosely bound together. Each plate is made of two sheets of steel with a thin layer of explosive sandwiched between. When a plate takes a hit from a projectile, the explosive layer is designed to neutralize the impact with its own counteracting force.

Unfortunately, the explosive force has as much chance of wounding the wearer as it does of neutralizing incoming rounds.

For each impact, if the attack's margin is even, the armor works correctly; add one to the Boost number of the incoming attack (that is, weaken the attack). If the attack's margin is odd, the armor backfires; subtract one from the attack's Boost (making it deadlier). So, for instance, if the armor is hit by a slugthrower slug and the margin is five, the armor backfires, taking the slugthrower damage from W3K to W2K.

Or you could just decide one the plates explodes violently, ripping off a limb or two in the process.

7. Personal periscope

Shoulder-mounted periscope able to reach a height of four meters. Comes with X8 zoom lens, quick release function and, most impressively, a directional top section that lets the user direct it forward and backward as well as sideways—rather like those bendy straws you get with milk shakes.

Requires the instincts of a fighter pilot and the brains of a chess grandmaster to operate successfully. Incorrect operation can lead to severe neck strain for the user and severe headaches for anyone else standing too close. Otherwise it works just fine.

We really should stop meeting

The moment the PCs walk out of R&D they hear thumping footsteps approaching fast. Moments

T3tr.1S

The T3tr.1S virus has a special place in Alpha Complex folklore. Many stories of were told about how the virus came to be—until IntSec ruthlessly terminated most of the storytellers. This has made it one of the less popular myths in Alpha Complex.

One version of the story claims many, many years ago two ULTRAVIOLET High Programmers, Lovett-U-HYF-6 and Felix-U-BVG-6, loved to set each other challenges and place bets on the outcome. Lovett-U challenged Felix-U to write the most dangerous virus he could. Felix-U, a brilliant programmer, responded by writing T3tr.1S. Lovett-U immediately turned in Felix-U for trying to infect The Computer's file system, but he kept a copy of the virus hidden in his personal files. Though Lovett-U was later terminated and erased, the hidden file survived.

Whatever its origin, the virus is still as potent as ever. Disguised as a fun but addictive vidgame, it spreads itself from system to system at an alarming rate.

The game is a simple graphical puzzle in which the player has to assemble colored blocks in interlocking patterns. Not immediately apparent is the subtle Communist propaganda at the heart of the game: RED-colored blocks become more prominent as the game proceeds. This subtle message of treasonous equality among security clearances is reinforced by the display of subliminal Communist slogans every time a player levels up.

If a PC plays T3tr.1s for more than five rounds, secretly roll against his Management. Failure means he has just learned the Communist Propaganda skill at rating 1, or increased his existing skill by one. Repeat this process every so often—say, once a scene, or when the player does something you dislike—increasing the skill each time the roll fails.

Don't tell the player about his PC's new skill until after he's finished playing the game.

later, Terence-U's four BLUE Vulture bodyguards charge around the corner and straight toward them, slugthrowers ready.

Ask the players: Do they run? If they do, the pursuing guards shout at them to stop. Should the PCs fail to stop, the chasing pack opens fire and soon catches them. Whatever happens, the bodyguards gather the PCs and line them against a wall. The bodyguards use any excuse to give at least one Troubleshooter a serious beating. Make it ugly; these guys are *not* happy to act as postmen for RED Troubleshooters. The ULTRAVIOLET, Terence-U, watches from afar with suspicion and loathing.

The lead bodyguard produces a note from his pocket. 'I got a present for ya!' He shoves the note in the team leader's mouth, grabs him by the neck, leans into him and shouts in his ear, 'Sort! This! Out!' With that, the group departs, leaving the dumbstruck Troubleshooters to extract the note from their quivering teammate.

**TROUBLESHOOTER TEAM DAADN/552,
PLEASE REPORT FOR DEBRIEFING,
ROOM 55, THQ, HED SECTOR. DO NOT
BE LATE. THIS DEBRIEFING WILL BE
INTERESTING AND EDUCATIONAL.
YOUR FRIEND, THE COMPUTER**

Debriefing #2: Infection

When the PCs arrive at their (second) debriefing, they find exactly the same setup as before, only this time they are briefed by **Victor-I-VDD-5** and he looks mad as hell. He fires lots of strange questions at the Troubleshooters, barely giving them time to respond:

- ② Why haven't you tracked down and terminated the Commie Mutant Hacker?
- ② Why haven't you neutralized the virus?
- ② Have you become indoctrinated by the virus?
- ② Did you think the virus was fun?
- ② Have you had your PDC loyalty-tested recently? Why not?
- ② What was your high score?

Victor-I does not respond to any innocent pleading and instead takes notes. Answer awkward questions with, 'Why do you want to know that in particular, citizen?' or 'You've already been given that information' or other responses from the Information Withholding Table (see the **PARANOIA** rulebook appendix).

During this debriefing, one Troubleshooter's PDC gets infected by the virus. Pick a player and pass him a note telling him he has a private



Your turn!

message on their PDC. He finds nothing but the T3tr.1S game. If he examines the game for one round, have him roll against his Management skill to avoid becoming addicted. Failure means he can't put down the game, and he receives one point of Communist Propaganda skill.

Make sure that each player's PDC gets infected at some point in the mission.

The debriefing goes badly for the Troubleshooters. Victor-I fines them each 34,281cr and sternly orders the GREEN goons to escort them to HED SectorPower Services Core for voluntary reactor shielding duty. By now the PCs, burdened with crushing debt, face permanent erasure.

On their way out of the room they notice one of the goons playing something on his PDC. The virus is spreading....

Reactor shielding duty

When the goons escort the Troubleshooters to the Power Services Core (**Tension level 7**), read the following:

The Core is a vast space of incalculable size and depth. You see infinite stretches of interlinking catwalks threading in and out of the many cylindrical reactors that look like enormous Bouncy Bubble Beverage cans. Industrial noise fills the place like a warbot orchestra tuning up.

High-clearance Power Services staffers work everywhere, some carrying bright, glowing rods, others reading dials, some attending to one of the many surface fractures in the reactor walls. Everyone tries hard not to slip off the enormous

concrete aprons into the darkness below.

You notice everything around you has a strange glow, including the personnel.

The goons escort the PCs (and their bot entourage) to the supervisor, **Cosmo-I-ODW-2**. He stands at the apex of a dozen catwalks, all leading off to different reactors. The INDIGO stands near a small group of traitors of varying security clearances and service groups. The assembled citizens all wear the same expression of dread, visible despite their well-practiced smiles. Stress the atmosphere of fear and anxiety. Go ahead, pile it on. This is reactor shielding duty, not a Hot Fun picnic.

Beside Cosmo-I, a small, spindly ORANGE clerk named **Monty-O-EPO-1** holds a clipboard. He appears to be checking a register. The PCs arrive during roll call and are quickly asked to confirm their names.

During this entire encounter, Cosmo-I never looks up from his PDC. That's right: He's got the bug for T3tr.1S, and he's determined to beat it. He only communicates in short grunts. Monty-O the clerk talks as if relaying the silent thoughts of Cosmo-I: 'Supervisor Cosmo-I is pleased to see so many volunteers today. It warms Citizen Cosmo-I's heart to witness such loyalty.'

The clerk talks about how important the volunteers' work is to the smooth running of The Core, how they should feel privileged to serve Alpha Complex, blah blah. Mention the alarm sirens that sound at frequent intervals—the unbearable heat—the hurried, worried throngs of heavily-suited Power staff.

Monty-O finishes his preamble and stands silently, waiting. Within half a minute, a voice from a nearby speaker calls, 'CRACK IN FIVE! GRID



CRASH PRIORITY!

REF NINER-EIGHT-TWO-NINER!' One look at the reactor in question confirms this; a large crack has appeared on the surface and brilliant green light is leaking out.

The clerk looks at his list and calls for **Hugh-R-TRH-3**. A small, rat-like citizen steps forward, shaking with fear but still wearing the standard fixed grin. The clerk pulls out a spraycan and covers the front of Hugh-R's overalls with sticky glue.

The clerk points down one of the catwalks towards the damaged reactor pod. 'Aim left', he says. Hugh-R mutters something to himself, then runs off down the catwalk, screaming. He takes a running jump towards the distant concrete monolith—and only now do the players realize the enormous gap between the half-melted end of the catwalk and the enormous reactor below.

The screaming slowly fades and the flying citizen seems to hang in the air forever before hitting the reactor wall with a dull thud. Unfortunately for the others, Hugh-R has completely missed the crack.

Monty-O looks at the PCs. *Next!*

Let the players do whatever they can to avoid being volunteered. Bootlicking, bribery and bullying all work, but try to encourage funny or original ideas. Make 'em work for it. The other volunteers aren't above a little pushing and shoving themselves, either.

After this byplay, either one or more PCs go over the edge, or they manage to persuade Monty-O to take someone else in their place. Either way, the scene promptly concludes with an INFRARED courier running up the catwalk to them. He breathlessly hands Monty-O a note.

The INFRARED knows nothing about the note, nor really about anything at all (he's drugged on HappyTime). Nor can Monty-O explain anything important about the note, except the most important point of all: It's basically a Get Out of Reactor Duty Free card for all the PCs. In Cosmo-I's name (the INDIGO remains obviously locked in his game), the clerk releases the Troubleshooters from their duty and gives them the note. 'Hurry along,' he advises primly. 'The Computer is depending on you.'

The note:

**TROUBLESHOOTER TEAM DAADN/552,
PLEASE REPORT TO SERVICE FIRM
PLC TRY-N-BUY FOR OUTFITTING FOR
YOUR ASSIGNED MISSION.
YOUR FRIEND, THE COMPUTER**

PLC #2: Money spinner

You arrive at the same outfitting depot as before and notice that the place has been redecorated since your last visit. The walls are wet with red paint, and a new banner reads 'TRY-N-BUY. Buy Now, Pay Now!'

Derek-R-JMS-12 has been replaced by an altogether sharper-looking RED clerk. He smiles at you as you approach the counter.

Since the PCs were last here, The Computer has replaced the previous underperforming service firm with a new, more enterprising firm. The new clerk, **Wylie-R-WPI-3**, is far slicker than Derek-R. Wylie-R believes trading and bartering are the key to profit, and he runs his counter like a market stall owner of Old Reckoning times. Unfortunately, he failed out of Free Enterprise because he has no sense of the relative value of goods; Wylie lives for the thrill of bartering. Because the Troubleshooters have no official paperwork of any kind, they must trade for what they want. This makes Wylie-R happy.

PC: I need laser barrels.

Wylie-R: Requisition form?

PC: Erm...Well, here's what happened—

Wylie-R: Sorry, citizen, I can't just go handing out laser pistols to any Tom, Dick and Commie. You need the forms. By the way, whatcha got in that box?

PC: Thirty-five red pillowcases and a can of UltraKleen multi-purpose cleaner.

Wylie-R: Well why didn't you say so? I can trade for that.

PC: For a laser pistol?

Wylie-R: No, for this economy-sized can of red boot polish.

Wylie-R trades each new item for another completely different item. Keep this going for a while until the PCs actually get something they want—or until they murder Wylie-R in cold blood, whichever comes first.

Once they're ready to leave PLC, the Troubleshooters' PDCs beep once again.

**TROUBLESHOOTER TEAM
DAADN/552, PLEASE REPORT TO
QUARTERS IMMEDIATELY FOR 8-HOUR
SLEEP CYCLE BREAK. THANK YOU FOR
YOUR COOPERATION.
SLEEP TIGHT, THE COMPUTER**

It's the middle of the day.

Sleepcycle

If the Troubleshooters appear reluctant to go to sleep in broad ceiling-light, have three or four coaxial ceiling-mounted lasers point vaguely in the direction of their vital organs. The Computer insists the PCs attend their scheduled sleepcycle break and won't take no for an answer. Demonstrate this with violence if you really need to.

Having made their way to their shared quarters (**Tension level 8**), the Troubleshooters can relax without interruption. The entire corridor is empty;

nothing much is happening; the PCs have the place to themselves.

Pretty soon the lights go out. Experienced players probably use the cover of darkness (the room is now **Tension level 4**) and ambient noise—pipes clanging in the walls, bots wheeling down the corridor—to sabotage the other Troubleshooter's equipment, while keeping a close eye on their own. Encourage this spirit of enterprise.

Don't stretch this episode out too long—just enough to unnerve them, or until they all kill each other.

All the while, the trackerbot sits in the corner, staring at the ventilation duct and making the occasional beep. Suddenly it announces its sonar has just picked up something really large, heading this way.

Wakey wakey!

Make this encounter short, sharp and brutal, like a stick of INFRARED candy.

A grenade blows the PCs' door off its hinges, and beams of intense light flood the room. From the doorway a powerful voice tells the Troubleshooters they have five seconds to put their weapons down and their hands up.

Troubleshooters who ignore the request get blasted into next month by two high-powered slugthrowers. Survivors are told once again to put down their weapons.

Once the PCs have decided that resistance isn't an option, two of Terence-U's BLUE bodyguards storm in, restrain them, search them for hidden weapons, disarm them and violently throw them into a corner. One bodyguard shouts, 'Clear!'

The Troubleshooters hear a muffled conversation in the corridor. Moments later, Terence-U walks in.

Terence-U-EDD-4 is on the verge of nervous breakdown. He can't work out why The Computer is treating him like a mere INFRARED and is convinced some monstrous conspiracy is to blame. In desperation he has resolved to confront the Troubleshooters directly. He pushes his bodyguards to one side and walks right up to the team leader. In a strained and trembling voice he asks, 'Who are you?'

The UV asks obscure, cryptic questions of the Troubleshooters such as 'Is it Roscoe-U, is that it?' and 'Is all this because of the—the magazines?' The PCs doubtless either provide inane but otherwise harmless answers to the UV's questions, or try to frame each other for something. Have Terence-U twitch madly whenever a new Troubleshooter speaks up. Terence-U is suspicious of everything they say. Before long, Terence-U decides he's had enough and shouts at his BLUE bodyguards, 'Execute these traitors for conspiracy. I don't ever want to see them again!'

Nothing happens. The bodyguards are busy with their PDCs, playing T3tr.1S.

This is the last straw for the ULTRAVIOLET. Having finally confirmed the entire complex is out to get him, he screams, throws down a note and a small box, and runs out of the scene.

What do the PCs do? If they play it smart, they can just walk away from the situation. All four bodyguards are occupied with their PDCs and only notice the Troubleshooters if they pose a physical threat.

The dropped note:

**TROUBLESHOOTER TEAM DAADN/552,
PLEASE VISIT PLC AND PICK UP YOUR
ASSIGNED EQUIPMENT SO YOU MAY
BEGIN YOUR MISSION. THANK YOU FOR
YOUR COOPERATION.**

**REGARDS, YOUR FRIEND, THE
COMPUTER**

In the box are a collar, a leash and a slip of paper:

*Trackerbot upgrade 1.1
Sincerely, Dave-B-DRD-4
Pyronetics RD*

PLC #3: Regulations!

Once again you arrive at the same outfitting depot, and once again the place has been redecorated. There is a fresh layer of paint on top of the previous nearly fresh layer of paint, new bright red tiles on the floor and the banner above the counter has been replaced. It now reads 'SupaSave. If you've got it, we'll take it!'

The new RED clerk standing behind the counter is keying in an inventory report.

The previous firm has gone out of business—Wylie-R traded the entire stock for a packet of QuickFast Hygiene tablets—and The Computer has replaced it with yet another service firm. A new clerk, **Cleavon-R-VMZ-4**, mans the counter.

Cleavon-R is ready to make a profit. Having landed this job through his connections in Free Enterprise, he is determined to make a good impression with his PLC employers. Cleavon-R has learned many obscure regulations and can hardly wait to use them:

Cleavon-R: Let's have a look at that laser pistol you're holding... Hmm. That won't do at all! You see that serial number?

PC: No, I can't see a thing.

Cleavon-R: Here, put it on the counter a minute. See, just there... Look closely.

PC: I did. There isn't any serial number!

Cleavon-R: Exactly!

[Cleavon-R takes out a large mallet from behind the counter and smashes the laser pistol to bits.]

PC: Hey! What the—

Cleavon-R: New regulation, citizen. 'All Troubleshooter equipment must have a clearly marked serial number.'

The hell of it is, Cleavon-R applies all these pestiferous regs correctly. Remember, terminating a citizen without sufficient evidence makes the murderer liable for the replacement cost of the victim's clone.

Cleavon-R insists the PCs hand over all equipment from their previous visit to PLC before he issues any new stock, and threatens to report them if they don't. He's quite prepared to defend himself with the slugthrower and three grenades under the counter.

Once the Troubleshooters are finished with PLC, The Computer makes an announcement over the public address system. The Computer reports that the PCs are 14 hours late with their Bot Processing delivery assignment (remember that?), and states it will fine the PCs for every moment they stand around talking, starting now. Demonstrate this with a pocket calculator.

Mutant Registration

Mutie Reg (**Tension level 13**) consists of a large foyer with dozens of doors leading to small private registration booths. The first thing the Troubleshooters notice—aside from the two guardbots patrolling the room—is the open display of mutant powers all around them. Yellow-striped citizens are floating in midair, sticking to walls or happily munching on a piece of concrete. Although this is acceptable behavior for registered mutants, it should nevertheless make the PCs feel uncomfortable.

THQ Mutation Registration is much like any other. Or would be if it wasn't for the receptionists, **Todd-Y-WER-3** and **Todd-O-WER-2**, who happen to be the result of a Tech Services clone tank malfunction: conjoined clone brothers.

Though only joined by a small piece of skin, the Todd 'twins' have been labeled mutants because of their condition. Their actual mutation(s) is Machine Empathy, so The Computer is happy to give them the benefit of the doubt.

However, being of different security clearances does pose certain problems for the twins. Well, for Todd-O at least:





Todd-O: For the last time, I'm not going down that YELLOW corridor!

Todd-Y: [smirking] Don't you know insubordination is treason, citizen?

Todd-O: Get lost, creep!

Todd-Y: Okayyy...

Todd-O: No, no!

Todd-Y loves teasing his brother. That might explain why Todd-O is such a miserable bastard and also why the rest of the staff in Mutie Reg avoid the Todd brothers like the plague. For the purpose of the scene, play them like bickering teenagers. The players will love it, we promise.

When the PCs present themselves, the Todd brothers are performing another installment of their endless argument. Todd-O has just discovered Todd-Y has filled out a load of forms without telling him. Enter the PCs...

Todd-O: We don't want no stinking bots. We already got some the other day. Take 'em away.

PC: Listen, we were told to deliver these bots. The guy at Bot Processing said you didn't fill in a 97-stroke-dash-D, so you gotta have these bots.

Todd-O: [looking at Todd-Y] I thought you said you filled in a 97-stroke-dash-D?

Todd-Y: [smirking] Oh? Musta been a 97-stroke-dash-E.

Todd-O: Now I'll have to fill in a 97-stroke-dash-H so we can send these back, you moron. You did that on purpose, didn't you? Have you got nothing better to do than to make my life a misery, you son of a Commie?

Todd-Y: [smirking once again] Now, now, insubordination is treason, citizen.

Todd-O: Get stuffed!

If the PCs decide to argue with the brothers, let them. Let accusations of treason fly like confetti, but discourage force by having the guardbots get involved. Mutie Reg is well used to random acts of violence, and the two guardbots know exactly how to deal with such matters: quickly and ruthlessly.

The players should eventually realize the simplest course of action is to leave the bots with the two mutants and let them quarrel about it with each other.

Commie clerks

Whether or not the PCs have nerve enough to leave the brothers to sort out the mess, the trackerbot takes them to their next encounter. The bot suddenly starts twitching excitedly.

**'Commie Mutant Hacker detected in THQ!
Distance to target, approximately 400**

meters! Course, 170 degrees! Weather, mild with occasional drafts!

The trackerbot spins around, eager to get moving. If any PCs are holding onto its leash, let them enjoy the ride. The Troubleshooters should let the bot guide them through Troubleshooter HQ to the CPU office where Byron-I-SON, the object of their mission, has been holed up during this entire disaster.

By this stage, T3tr.1S has corrupted much of HED Sector. The PCs meet lots of citizens with their faces buried in their PDCs, hopelessly lost in the game. If the players spend too much time bagging traitors, have the place become increasingly deserted. Highlight the sense of impending doom that hangs over Troubleshooter Headquarters, like Wash Day in the INFRARED barracks.

The door to Byron-I's office (**Tension level currently 0**) has been blocked from the far side. If the PCs try to force it open, a timid voice on the other side says, 'Go away, we're closed.' The Troubleshooters must use a heavy object or explosive force to move the door.

Once they enter the office, read the following:

Through the doorway you see a long narrow room with office furniture strewn all over. At the far end of the room, huddled figures are shuffling around behind a barricade of overturned tables, filing cabinets and workstation trolleys. People pop up momentarily, shouting traitorous anti-Computer slogans and throwing the occasional stapler or pencil sharpener.

The barricaded citizens, all 73 of them, are in fact former CPU subordinates of Byron-I. Exposure to the T3tr.1S virus has turned them into a small army of Commie Traitor Clerks, and they revolted against Byron-I. They now hold their former boss hostage, bound from head to toe in UltraFun-sized rubber bands.

This motley group is led by **John-R-SEE-2**, now known as 'The Great Leveller' because he was first to reach level 100 of T3tr.1S. This enigmatic figure demands the abolition of paperwork throughout Alpha Complex and free T3tr.1S for all, especially CPU clerks.

The Leveller uses his combination of personal charm and impressive bureaucratic knowledge to inspire the troops. This is perhaps easier than it sounds; the clerks have been isolated and without food for two days. The lack of routine pharmaceutical supplements and happiness pills has conferred a certain level of sanity not usually found in Alpha Complex. This has driven them completely insane.

The Commie clerks have no conventional weapons to fight with, but they do have plenty of office equipment, including staple guns, paper guillotines, hole punches and the good old pencil-fired-from-rubber-band weapon.

Play the ensuing 'firefight' like a scene from an epic war movie. The clerks attack in waves of 15 or 20. Assuming the Troubleshooters managed to get something from their previous visit to PLC, they should repel the assault without trouble. (Dealing with covert attacks from their fellow PCs is another matter.) Let the occasional clerk break through, just to see how the players handle an assault with a plastic inbox tray.

For added effect, the trackerbot can start sniffing around the room. The bot insists the Commie traitors are nearby, though it can't be sure in which direction.

Eventually the Troubleshooters should overwhelm the Commie clerks. The office is likely to be a scarred battlefield, with the bodies of clerks all around.

The Great Leveller uses his hostage as a bargaining chip for his own life. The Commie clerk chants defiant slogans to the end, but Byron-I pleads and blubbers like any normal craven coward. The Troubleshooters may get commendations if they take both traitors alive.

Let the Troubleshooters interrogate the survivors briefly, if they wish, before IntSec GREEN goons enter and drag the traitors away.

Now—get this!—the Troubleshooters can actually *complete part of their mission!* (We always like to highlight this; it's so rare.) They must apply a thick layer of Anti-Virus gunk to the command console; remember, the lotion is incredibly sticky. The Anti-Virus nanobytes get to work, and the command monitors start displaying long strings of debug code as it begins to heal itself. Clever players will also apply some lotion to their infected PDCs.

Once they've fixed the console, The Computer calls, demanding to know what's happened. After they make their report, The Computer tells them to go to room 899 immediately for a fun and exciting surprise.

The final reckoning

The Troubleshooters are about to have an unusual experience: a simultaneous briefing (#1) and debriefing (#3).

On arriving at Room 899, they find four smiling IntSec GREEN goons, all armed to the teeth. The goons pair off to flank each Troubleshooter and escort the PCs through a maze of corridors, all the while chatting about the Troubleshooter's impending fate. ('I wouldn't swap places with one of these guys right now if you gave me all the B3 in the city.')

Soon they meet another squad of GREEN goons, who are also looking for the PCs. The newly-arrived squad leader has a whispered private conference with the lead escort goon. It's hard to eavesdrop without hypersenses, but it looks intense. The Troubleshooters can hear the odd snippet: 'How about we just make them



**GM AND 3-6 PLAYERS
PLAYING TIME 1 SESSION
(3 HOURS)**

**A
ZAP
MISSION**

Mission summary

The Computer orders a group of incompetent Troubleshooters to guard an abandoned warehouse from imaginary Commies in an attempt to burn it to the ground. Any resemblance between the Troubleshooters and a famous Old Reckoning comedy trio is mere coincidence.

This is a short mission, designed to be finished within one gaming session (or less, if you have very aggressive players). It is a Zap style mission: your primary concern is how fast the Troubleshooters can terminate each other in interesting ways, climaxing with the destruction of the warehouse. The mission has a Guard theme, meaning the Troubleshooters stay in one spot and let trouble come to them. If they are sufficiently trigger-happy, you may not even have to send trouble; they'll generate it themselves.

To inspire the correct mood in your players, show one or two short comedic films before you start play. Something from the '40s or '50s, maybe—some old comedy team. Any ideas?

Mission background

HPD&MC has decided that Sector STG needs another Institute of Mental Health and Brainscrubbing. After extensive research and bribes, HPD&MC has finally chosen the perfect site. Unfortunately, an old PLC warehouse currently occupies that site.

PLC wasn't too irate about losing Warehouse 34B. It was old and out of the way and filled with useless junk anyway (sent there by PLC workers freeing up space in other warehouses). Unfortunately, The Computer has ordered PLC to clear out Warehouse 34B so construction can proceed. Warehouse 34B holds 134 tons of useless goods. If they work at a reasonable pace, HPD&MC will accuse them of delaying construction, and PLC workers will get executed. If they divert their entire workforce to moving said goods, they'll complete the job in time but outfitting will screech to a halt and they'll get executed anyway. PLC supervisors discussed blame shifts and escape plans to avoid the

upcoming purification until the ambitious Zoe-Y-ZAP had an idea: Why not 'accidentally' destroy the warehouse?

They get rid of the warehouse and its junk in one swoop, while blaming the scapegoats and sending them up the creek instead. The supervisors wasted no time in picking a Troubleshooter team for the job.

Pregenerated Troubleshooters

This mini-mission uses three pregenerated Troubleshooters. If your players balk at using them, convince them using the following arguments:

1. Using the pregenerated Troubleshooters lets them skip the character creation system, which may be too much fun for their first game.

- The pregenerated Troubleshooters have been designed specifically for this mission. (They have been designed specifically to conflict with each other as much as possible. As far as the mission goes, they are all equally incompetent.)
- To create their own Troubleshooter, they need to buy their own copies of the **PARANOIA XP** sourcebook. (When you share your RPG books, you're supporting Communism!)
- Because you said so. (You are the GM; you do not have to take this crap from them.)

Use Larry-R-STG, Curly-R-STG and Moe-R-STG if you have only three players. If you have four to six players, use the pregenerated six-pack of Zap characters at the end of this book. If you have more than six players, terminate them as needed to get the total down to six.

About the team

Troubleshooter Squad NNN28/19 is a novice Troubleshooter team that, after only one mission, is sector-reknowned for its incompetence. The team's investigation of Commie activity in a dilapidated restroom ended in an explosion that destroyed them, said restroom, any evidence within and the plumbing system for half the sector. Without the required evidence, The Computer reprimanded the team with voluntary clean-up duty at Troubleshooter HQ for the rest of the year (practically a life sentence for Troubleshooters).

Each of them believes his teammates were responsible for the explosion, though in fact none of them were. The actual cause is unimportant. They'll never figure it out. Feed them any bald-faced lies they want to hear. Truthful answers only spoil the carnage.

Here are secret society missions and rumors specific to these characters. You can give them to players now or wait until their contact meetings before the briefing (see 'Pre-briefing wait'). Feel free to add or modify these missions and rumors in order to maximize PC fear and loathing.

Moe-R-STG-2

Psion mission: This warehouse you're protecting is an important storehouse of experimental anti-mutant technology. Make sure there's no warehouse left to protect when you're done with it. Blame it on a deserving teammate. Try to sneak off some equipment (for research purposes) before you bring the house down. Our contact phrase is 'wicked pothole'.

Rumor: Larry-R-STG is an FCCC-P member and an undercover IntSec agent.

Rumor: Curly-R-STG is active in Anti-Mutant, and knows the location of the most valuable

Trust-breaking exercises

If this is your group's first **PARANOIA** mission, you may have trouble severing the players' former bonds of loyalty and friendship, even with the devious rumors and secret missions supplied. Two key techniques will have your players eying each other suspiciously in no time.

First, bring enough sticky notepads to the game for everyone, including yourself. Tell the players the notepads are for sending you private messages. If they still do not bite, start sending them private messages yourself. The other players will become suspicious, even if you are just sending them blanks. (Misdirection goes a long way in **PARANOIA**.)

Second, blur the line between fumbles and sabotage. Don't have a PC shoot himself if he fails the weapon check; have him shoot a teammate instead. The other players should always doubt whether he failed accidentally or on purpose. You can strengthen this doubt by inverting the PC's roll when he actually tries sabotage. (Example: The player secretly tells you, 'When I say I'm aiming for the Commie, I'm actually trying to shoot Larry-R-STG instead.' Though the player rolls way high, you decide this means he succeeded in his devious anti-Larry-R scheme.) When you make high rolls succeed and low rolls fail on sabotage checks, the other players cannot tell he purposely sabotaged his check when he 'fails' and hits them.

experimental equipment. Never let him out of your sight!

Larry-R-STG-2

Pro Tech mission: R&D has lost many inventions to PLC inventory screw-ups. We believe some of these inventions ended up at the warehouse you've been assigned to protect. One of your teammates plans to goad the team into a firefight to destroy the warehouse. Stop him. Sneak out any experimental equipment or spare parts you can and get them to us. Our contact phrase is 'wicked pothole'.

Rumor: Moe-R-STG knows about your mutation. He's waiting to gather evidence of it to blackmail you.

Rumor: Commies have infiltrated the PLC workforce of Sector STG. They want to gain enough power to stop all production in the sector, bringing our capitalistic market grinding to a halt.

Curly-R-STG-2

Mystics mission: As part of our Outreach program, expose your teammates to the wonders of chemical enlightenment. They'll thank you for it later. We could also use any pills or meditative objects you can scrounge up. Our contact phrase is 'wicked pothole'.

Rumor: Larry-R-STG has been ordered to execute your team leader, Moe-R-STG, for his membership in the Romantics.

Rumor: Analysis of the explosion on the team's last mission revealed that, although conventional explosives caused it, the explosives were set off by a pyrokinetic mutant.

Missions for other secret societies

All secret society missions assigned to the Troubleshooters should have three parts:

- A generic mission, perhaps to save or destroy the warehouse, that puts him in conflict with most (if not all) of his teammates.
- A request for the PC to smuggle some necessary goods out of the warehouse and deliver them to contacts waiting nearby. Possible types of goods include weapons, pills, Old Reckoning artifacts, robot chassis, etc.
- A contact phrase to identify himself to said contacts. No matter which secret society he's in, it's 'wicked pothole'. Defeats the whole purpose of a contact phrase, doesn't it?

Generic rumors

These rumors are false, unless you decide to complicate the Troubleshooters' lives by making them true. Nothing like a few outlandish tales to get the creative wheels spinning, is there?

Rumor: The Computer is cracking down on a Mystics drug ring that stores its goods in PLC warehouses. The Mystics are so irritated at the IntSec raids that they're manipulating Troubleshooter teams to stop them.

Rumor: The Computer classified reports of unidentified objects in Sector NVD shortly before placing it under quarantine. The only traffic in or out of the sector has been a truckload of unmarked crates.

Rumor: PLC is short on funds, so they're setting up 'accidents' to destroy useless buildings to collect the reconstruction money.

Rumor: R&D is testing out subliminal loyalty messages on Troubleshooters, but a Computer Phreak tampered with them. The corrupted message causes them to go berserk whenever someone says 'fire'.



GM notes on the PCs

Moe-R-STG

Power: 01 (but *eight* mutations!)

Access: 02

Plastic explosives: W2K energy damage in a 40-foot radius. Moe-R uses a remote detonator to set them off. Yes, the detonator sets all his explosives off at once (including the one Larry-R stole). No, you don't have to tell Moe-R's player unless he asks. (Moe-R has been so obsessed with demoralizing his team that he hasn't used the detonator yet.)

Missing explosive: Larry-R stole this when he uncovered Moe-R's secret compartment.

Larry-R-STG

Power: 17

Access: 03

Bot brain: The salvaged bot brain is fully operational, except for the asimov circuits Larry-R damaged while removing the brain. It will go frankenstein if it's ever placed in a functioning bot chassis (which, given Larry's Hardware skills, isn't likely).

Missing explosive: See Moe-R's entry for info on the explosive Larry-R stole.

The third grenade: Has a malfunctioning fuse and explodes at an appropriately humorous time. (Example: Someone picks it up and says, 'Aw gee, you got a dud.')

Curly-R-STG

Power: 20

Access: 02

Tractopin pills: The latest development of the Mystics, who have no idea what exactly they do, let alone the side effects. Freely give each tablet a different effect or side effect. Coincidentally, the tractopin pills look just like Moe-R's gelgermine pills. Curly-R stores all pills deep in the recesses of his toolbox.

Toolbox: Weighs about 100 kg. Curly-R is the only one on the team strong enough to lift and carry the toolbox; the other Troubleshooters will develop hernias if they try to hoist it.

Hey, they all have the same contact phrase!

Gee, what are the odds? It must be their lucky day. Whenever a Troubleshooter tries to find a contact using the phrase, make a Luck check (roll against his Power rating) to see whether he contacts his own society or another Troubleshooter's society. Misunderstandings will occur, of course. 'Uh, thanks for the flamethrowers, but how will that aid our quest for peace and enlightenment?'

Why are their secret society ranks so high?

A quirk of the Zap style. It's an excuse for the PCs to summon squads of secret society followers to add to the mayhem, preferably simultaneously. All the guards in the complex could not help them with this assignment.

Briefing

Read the following to the players:

Another day, another pre-day janitorial session. While the rest of Alpha Complex sleeps soundly, you've spent the past three hours washing every inch of Troubleshooter HQ. And why? Because someone on your team blew up a restroom and blew your last mission along with it.

Pause here to let them eye each other.

You're almost done. All that's left to do is unclog the toilets; not a fun experience, considering the things traitors stuff down them. Remember the Commie Pamphlet Wad, or the Plastic Explosive Wad? Whose turn is it today for unclogging duty?

Let them argue over who gets to be the sacrificial clone. Subtly encourage them to discuss who's responsible for this mess. Award two Perversity Points to the first player who proposes to save valuable ammo by using mops and buckets. By the time Friend Computer delivers their mission alert, they should be slipping on the wet floor, dripping suds and pounding the stuffing out of each other. Interrupt the fun with the following:

Loyal citizens! How are you enjoying this glorious morning?

Have a security camera focus on them while they blurt out an answer.

'Mission Alert for Troubleshooter Team NNN28/19:

'Thanks to your tireless dedication to menial, yet important, tasks, you have been chosen for an extremely rewarding menial duty protecting valuable Computer resources from the ever-threatening scourge of the Commies. Please proceed with due haste to Briefing Room STG-187H to receive your briefing. Failure to comply promptly will result in volunteer work testing combat targeting systems. Have a nice day.

'End of Mission Alert.'

A map to Briefing Room STG-187H appears on your PDC.

The map from Troubleshooter HQ to Briefing Room STG-187H (not included here) is accurate and easy-to-follow. Veteran *PARANOIA* players will be suspicious.

When they arrive at the briefing room, they notice it's next to the local R&D laboratory. Veteran *PARANOIA* players will just shoot themselves now.

Pre-briefing wait

Luckily for them, the door is locked. A small sign hangs from the knob: 'Preparing the Experimental Video Briefing Room. Please wait.' It will be an hour until it's ready, plenty of time for the Troubleshooters to wander off and get a drink or go to the bathroom. This is, of course, an excuse for them to meet with their contacts. Give them a couple rumors, new suspicions about their teammates and their secret missions. Anyone who patiently waits should be given a subtle hint, like a passing IntSec Random Interrogation Squad to run them into the arms of their secret society contact.

After everyone has prepared, an R&D tech exits the room, takes off the sign and walks off without a word. The Troubleshooters can now enter.

The briefing vid

You enter a room that is so cozy and warm that you double-check to make sure it's RED Clearance (it is). The floor is carpeted. Buildingscape paintings hang from the walls, as well as a mirror large enough for all of you to groom yourselves at once. A plush couch, big enough for six, sits at one end of the room facing a huge vidscreen. A chilled bucket of BBB bottles and a remote sit on a small table next to the couch.

Rather than using the sparse, oppressive look of other briefing rooms, Experimental Briefing Room STG-187H copies the plush and cozy design of higher-clearance living quarters to put the Troubleshooters at ease and reduce accidental firings from hyper-anxiety. So far, it has only raised the anxiety of typically edgy Troubleshooters.

[text continues on page 47]



Moe-R-STG-2

**Male R&D Team Leader/
Happiness Officer**

Service firm: Kamikaze Knowledge Network
Service firm type: Field Data Collectors
Security clearance: RED
Credits: 872
Tics: Loves to abuse his teammates.
[Tic 2:]

Example of tic in use

Curly-R: Sir, maybe we should split up.

Moe-R: Great idea, numbskull. *[Smacks him across the head.]*

Curly-R: Ow! Why'd you do that?

Moe-R: I'm knocking some sense into you. Can't you see that? *[Pokes him in the eyes.]*

ACTION SKILLS & SPECIALTIES

Management 04

Hygiene 01
Intimidation 08

Stealth 05

Concealment 01
Shadowing 09
Tell When Something's Been Moved 11

Violence 04

Energy Weapons 08
Field Weapons 01
Thrown Weapons 01
Unarmed Combat 08
Slap Deserving Twits Around 10

KNOWLEDGE SKILLS & SPECIALTIES

Hardware 04

Autocar Operation & Maintenance 08
Chemical Engineering 01
Mechanical Engineering 08
Habitat Engineering 01
Cut Off Other Vehicles 10

Software 08

Bot Programming 12
Data Search 01
Taunt Scrubots 14

Wetware 07

Medical 01
Psychotherapy 11

Open slots for narrow specialties: 2
(Management, Wetware)



Larry-R-STG-2

**Male Armed Forces Loyalty Officer/
Communications Officer**

Service firm: Blown Away! Personnel Services
Service firm type: Blast Shield Maintenance
Security clearance: RED
Credits: 428
Tics: Repeats annoying comments from others as blabber.
[Tic 2:]

Example of tic in use

Moe-R: And remember, don't let any Commies in!

Larry-R: *[Makes a blabbing mouth with his hand and sneers]* En wememba, ba blah ba blahby Commies nim!

Moe-R: I hope you do something I can shoot you for.

ACTION SKILLS & SPECIALTIES

Management 04

Bootlicking 01
Con Games 08

Stealth 09

Disguise 01
High Alert 13
Shadowing 01
Sneaking 13
Make Funny Faces Behind One's Back 15

Violence 04

Energy Weapons 08
Projectile Weapons 08
Fine Manipulation 01
Cause Entire Stack to Collapse by Pulling Out Just One Thing 10

KNOWLEDGE SKILLS & SPECIALTIES

Hardware 04

Autocar Operation & Maintenance 01
Mechanical Engineering 08
Scrubot Operation & Maintenance 01
Weapon and Armor Maintenance 08

Software 04

Crash Program with Just Three Keystrokes 10

Wetware 04

Pharmatherapy 01
Suggestion 08
Enrage Opponent with Snide Comments 10

Open slots for narrow specialties: 2
(Management, Hardware)



Curly-R-STG-2

**Male PLC Equipment Officer/
Hygiene Officer**

Service firm: Tread Carefully, Inc.
Service firm type: Armored Autocar Escorts
Security clearance: RED
Credits: 77
Tics: Points out the obvious.
[Tic 2:]

Example of tic in use

[Team comes under fire]

Curly-R: Sir, I think they're trying to kill us!

Moe-R: No, they came to give us presents. Of course they're trying to kill us!

Curly-R: You're being awfully sarcastic, sir.

ACTION SKILLS & SPECIALTIES

Management 04

Bribery 08
Hygiene 08
Intimidation 01
Swear Not to Know Anything About What Happened 10

Stealth 08

Concealment 12
Shadowing 01
Sleight of Hand 12
Surveillance 01
Hide Pill Bottles in Cheeks 14

Violence 09

Agility 01
Energy Weapons 13
Thrown Weapons 13
Crack Open Containers with One Shot 15

KNOWLEDGE SKILLS & SPECIALTIES

Hardware 04

Identify Rattling Sound in Engine 10

Software 04

Wetware 04

Biosciences 01
Medical 08
Pharmatherapy 08
Suggestion 01

Open slots for narrow specialties: 2
(Software, Wetware)

Curly-R-STG-2

Male PLC Equipment Officer/ Hygiene Officer

Mutation: Matter Eater

Society: Mystics (degree 9)

Secret skills: Drug Procurement 06, Chanting 15,
Organ Procurement 20

Background: A cheery disposition isn't supposed to infuriate your teammates, or so the pamphlet said. Maybe you have defective teammates? It doesn't matter; irritating them always bring a smile to your face. Oh, if only you were happiness officer, instead of that grouchy Moe-R! A few additions to their happiness pill quota and they'd all be as hyped up as you are! Maybe then they'd quit trying to blow up restrooms.

You know it was Larry-R, because you've seen him messing around with those explosives he hid behind his bunk. You would turn him in to The Computer, but that would make him sad. You don't want him to be sad. You want him to be happy. You want to make them *all* happy! You want them to be happy even if it kills them!

But what's with that Larry-R? He's checking the spare parts all the time, and pawing through the garbage for old circuits and dead batteries. Hey, that's *your* job! You saw him looking over some kind of blueprint or schematic for a bot. Building bots isn't his job! Is he one of those Corporal Metal bot-lovers, or is he up to something even more sinister?

PERSONAL EQUIPMENT

- (1) bottle of 43 gelgernine tablets (RED Clearance)
- (1) bottle of 17 roactin tablets (BLUE)
- (1) bottle of 51 tractopin tablets that look just like gelgernine tablets (illegal)
- (3) bottles of Bouncy Bubble Beverage
- (4) Crunchy Fun Bars

ASSIGNED EQUIPMENT

- (1) laser pistol with red barrel
- (1) red reflex armor
- (1) Series 1300 PDC
- (1) Porta-Suds spray bottle
- (1) red plastisponge
- (1) incredibly large, heavy toolbox (also used to store your pick-me-ups)

Larry-R-STG-2

Male Armed Forces Loyalty Officer/ Communications Officer

Mutation: Puppeteer

Society: Pro Tech (degree 14)

Secret skills: Find Spare Parts 06, Video Games
04, Tinkering 03

Background: You always seem to bring out the worse in everything. You annoy your teammates, cause fatal system errors just by checking your e-mail and accidents follow you like a petbot, such as that explosion in the bathroom... no, no, that had to be one of your teammates. Moe-R never liked you much, and you've seen the explosives he stashes in the hidden compartment behind your bunk. He was probably trying to off you, and the stuff blew up in his face. You know that's what happened, but you also know Curly-R blames you for the explosion. You can see it in his eyes.

If that wasn't enough reason for them to kill you, you also got shafted with the two most dangerous Mandatory Bonus Duties in Troubleshooting. You've been lucky so far, but you know you'll burn through all your clones on your next mission with them.

Your only hope for survival is your plan to build the ultimate guardbot. Your last one would have been impressive, if it had worked. Sure, it got you promoted in your society, but that was because they thought it was a bombot. It wasn't *supposed* to blow up like that. You'll get it right this time... you hope.

Recently you overheard Moe-R in a conversation on his PDC. He said something like 'demoralizing them as fast as I can.' Or was it 'demilitarizing them'? Does that make sense? If he's up to some kind of treason, that would be your best chance to get Moe-R out of the way and become team leader yourself!

PERSONAL EQUIPMENT

- (1) salvaged guardbot brain (illegal)
- (1) lump of strange explosive stolen from Moe-R's stash (illegal?)
- (1) screwdriver (ORANGE Clearance)
- (1) hammer (RED)
- (1) pack of 100 screws (RED)
- (3) grenades (RED)

ASSIGNED EQUIPMENT

- (1) laser pistol with red barrel
- (1) truncheon
- (1) red reflex armor
- (1) Series 1300 PDC
- (1) Multicorder I
- (1) Recording/Editing Multicorder Program

Moe-R-STG-2

Male R&D Team Leader/ Happiness Officer

Mutations: Electroshock, Levitation, Machine
Empathy, Mental Blast, Pyrokinesis,
Shrinking, Telekinesis, Transmutation

Society: Psion (degree 15)

Secret skills: Demolition 08, Insults 05, Twitchtalk
02

Background: There's nothing you like more than demoralizing ordinary humans. You enjoy the confirmation of your genetic superiority as much as your fellow society members, but you shot up through the ranks because you took it one step further, developing a repertoire of insults and jabs that would depress The Computer itself. Sad lackeys are worthless lackeys! Besides, you like making humans cry.

You can't seem to faze the latest group of misfits you're stuck with, though. Not only are they thoroughly incompetent, but they were mean-spirited before you ever met them! The standard routine isn't working on them, and some of their habits are beginning to grate on your nerves. Even the dressing-down you got after that incident with the bathroom didn't lower their morale. You'd think they were in cahoots on that explosion, if they weren't too stupid to tie their own shoelaces. It would explain why one of your explosives was missing from your secret compartment.

It doesn't matter whether they're insidious traitors or bumbling dopes. Your grudge has become personal, and you'll break them by slap or by zap.

PERSONAL EQUIPMENT

- (4) lumps of plastic explosives (BLUE Clearance)
- (1) remote detonator (INDIGO)
- (1) *Little Handbook of 1001 Insults* (illegal)

ASSIGNED EQUIPMENT

- (1) laser pistol with red barrel
- (1) red reflex armor
- (1) Series 1300 PDC
- (1) bottle of 24 gelgernine tablets

[continued from page 44]

The giant mirror is two-way; R&D scientists watch the Troubleshooters from the other side to judge their reactions and report treason.

The vidscreen is used to deliver briefings, both taped and live feed, to the Troubleshooters. The Computer is researching the use of televised briefings as a cheap way to reduce the number of briefing officer fatalities. To view the taped briefing, the Troubleshooters must figure out how to turn on the vidscreen and play the tape.

R&D is also using the opportunity to test out their new **Universal Remote**, which is sitting on the table. Combining over 800 functions for 150 different appliances, it's a marvel of electronics and small print (the only way they could fit all of the command labels on it; readable by electron microscope and Hypersenses). The instruction booklet (INDIGO Clearance) outweighs the Alpha Complex phone directory. Only through trial and error or Mechanical Intuition can the PCs figure out how to use the remote to turn on the vidscreen and run the tape. Errors can have any effect, from shutting down the sector reactor to sending all jackobots within 10 km on a foxtrot through oncoming traffic.

Or the Troubleshooters could just walk up to the vidscreen and open the control panel. It has two buttons: *Power* and *Run Briefing*.

The words 'Mission Briefing #281723' appear on the vidscreen. They fade out, revealing a desk and, behind it, a stern **YELLOW PLC** manager with a haircut that looks like a Tesla coil. Her nametag reads 'Zoe-Y-ZAP-4.'

She says: 'Troubleshooter Team NNN28/19:

'Earlier this week, IntSec spy reports indicated that Commie traitors plan an attack on PLC Warehouse 34B. The agents were unable to determine the exact time, but believe it will be very soon. Your mission is to guard Warehouse 34B for the next five hours from any possible threat.

'To get you started on the mission quickly, your equipment has been assembled and placed at the entrance to the warehouse. The Commie threat could be greater than anticipated, so you have also been given permission to procure more equipment from the warehouse inventory as necessary, provided you list it on the proper forms.

'Do not worry about civilian casualties. All PLC workers at the warehouse have been given a Mandatory Vacation for the day. You will be alone with the Commies.

'Be careful! It is likely those dastardly Commies have planted a spy on your team to sabotage the mission. Trust no one!

'Now go, and make sure that our capitalistic utopia runs smoothly!'

She relaxes and shuffles her papers.

'That was a good take. I'd hate to be in their shoes, the poor saps. Almost feel sorry for them, even though they are the biggest idiots in— hey, the light's on! You're still recording! Shut it off, you—'

The screen goes black. 'End of Briefing: Please Exit the Room' flashes on the monitor.

Getting to the warehouse

When they exit the briefing room, an autocar is waiting for them outside—an old, ugly, black clunker of an autocar. 'HENRY' is spray-painted across its side in yellow. A note on the driver's seat tells the Troubleshooters to drive to Warehouse 34B and, once they arrive, press the red button on the dashboard.

Henry has served Alpha Complex for over two centuries. Considered obsolete back then, it has survived thousands of Troubleshooter missions and earned the grudging respect of its mechanics. Henry has no bot brain, no power steering, no air conditioning, no suspension, and has been stuck in Drive ever since they lost the manual shift.

The only nicety it has is an installed Programmable Route Autodriver, which can remember a route and drive along it. It's activated by pressing the red button on the dashboard. However, it can only hold one route at a time. Right now, it's the route from the warehouse to the R&D lab. The Troubleshooters are supposed to press it on arrival at the warehouse to send it back to the R&D lab to wait for clone replacements (see below). Once activated, it takes over control of the vehicle and can't be stopped in any way short of cutting the wires. If the Troubleshooters activate it before exiting the vehicle, they get to exit a moving vehicle. Won't that be fun?

The Troubleshooters must drive to the warehouse manually. You can make this as easy as you want (The Computer sends them a detailed map) or as difficult (they cut across major intersections and have to ask for directions from friendly IntSec patrolmen). Either way, the black smoky exhaust and constant engine backfires make the trip interesting.

How many seats?

Well, that depends. Henry has one seat less than the number of Troubleshooters (plus a trunk to hold Curly-R's toolbox). Sure, you could say the autocar has enough seats for everyone, but then the slowpoke wouldn't be forced to hang on to the bumper for dear life as Henry weaves through traffic.

The warehouse

Tension level 3

The warehouse is located remotely in Alpha Complex to discourage unapproved materiel transferral (i.e., theft). The only citizens around are construction workers who are just beginning work next to the warehouse. They serve both as witnesses to Troubleshooter disturbances outside the warehouse and as secret society contacts during the mission.

The giant sliding doors to the warehouse are closed, but a little gruntwork easily opens them.

You peer into the giant chamber. The aisles, large enough to let two autocars pass, are split up by metal shelves towering far above you, crammed with crates, packages and barrels large and small. The dim lights beyond cast large shadows across the aisles. It is silent. The Commies could already be hiding within and you wouldn't know it.

A large crate sits on the ground just inside the door.

The crate contains their mission equipment. They can get outfitted as soon as they open it. Did anyone bring a crowbar? Oh well, we're sure they can find one around here somewhere.

The mission equipment

PLC assembled the mission equipment from the warehouse's inventory (it's all going up in flames anyway; why waste it?). The equipment is subject to the same malfunction penalties as everything else the players pick up here (see 'Settling in'). Note that all the weapons are destructive, especially by the standards of RED-Clearance Troubleshooters. They'll be overjoyed.

The crate contains the following:

- (1) cone rifle
- (1) flamethrower
- (1) slugthrower
- (6) RED laser barrels
- (30) assorted slugthrower rounds
- (12) assorted cone rifle shells
- (20) grenades (stored in blast-proof box)
- (1) crowbar
- (2) flashlights
- (1) Neuro-Enhancement Helmet (EXPERIMENTAL)
- (1) Team Control Control Unit (EXPERIMENTAL)
- (3) Team Control Headgears (EXPERIMENTAL)
- (1) G56.PH97/A Equipment Foraging Permission Form

If you're using a larger group of PCs, consider the alternate equipment list in the box on the following page.



Experimental equipment

Leftovers from a failed attempt to package experimental equipment with PLC's normal distributed equipment, these gadgets have been lost for years. R&D would be grateful if any of it were brought back safely. The instruction booklets for them are still in their original crates, somewhere in the warehouse.

The experimental **Neuro-Enhancement Helmet** looks like a hi-tech beanie. When the propeller is spun, it generates electricity to power electrodes lining the inside of the helmet. These electrodes interact with the user's brain cells. If the propeller is spun clockwise, the electrodes enhance the neural network, temporarily increasing the wearer's Knowledge skills. If the propeller is spun counter-clockwise, the exact opposite occurs: the wearer becomes dumber, temporarily decreasing his Knowledge skills. The beanie can increase/decrease Knowledge skills by 1d20 points depending on how fast the propeller spins. If used too much, the propeller flies off, deactivating the helmet.



Okay, here's the story about this illustration: We asked **PARANOIA** artist Jim Holloway to draw the Neuro-Enhancement Helmet, an R&D gadget that turns you smart or stupid, depending on the direction you spin the propeller. The art order said, "Have the wearer doing something either incredibly intelligent (like drawing out a difficult mathematical equation on a whiteboard) or incredibly stupid (like putting together a **PARANOIA** supplement on a ridiculously tight deadline). A few days later we opened our e-mail, and there it was.

The experimental **Team Control Headgears** are metal headbands sporting dozens of electrodes, like a hi-tech crown of thorns. The experimental **Team Control Control Unit** is used to control the headgears. The Control Unit has three buttons on it, each one corresponding to a different headgear. (There's no indication which button corresponds to which headgear. Let the players figure that out themselves.) As long as a button is held down, the corresponding headgear gives its wearer an electric shock (Stun effect). Meant to be used as punishment, the Control Unit entertains even the most sadistic team leaders, who can make their teammates spasm out at the worst moments.

PCs can wear both the experimental **Neuro-Enhancement Helmet** and a **Control Headgear**. If both pieces of equipment are active at the same time, the combined electrocascade deep-fries the wearer's brain.

G56.PH97/A Equipment Foraging Permission Form

This form gives the Troubleshooters permission to gather equipment as necessary from their surroundings, as long as they list all such acquired equipment on the form for later inventorying. Zoe-Y-ZAP and someone named 'Colum-B-EAH' have signed the form.

The form is a fraud. No such official form exists; it was concocted to give the Troubleshooters an excuse to forage through the crates, which only gets them in more trouble with each other. 'Why are you taking a dozen needle guns?' Anyone with the Forgery skill or experience with forms realizes it could be a fraud if his player asks about it. Anyone who uses Access to have his contacts look into it can determine definitively it's a fraud. It is then prime blackmail material.

Settling in

Give the Troubleshooters plenty of time to hang themselves. They'll be eager to get their treasonous smuggling done before the big battle, or catch their teammates doing so. Remember, your goal in this mission is to let them burn down the warehouse, not herd them toward the final boss. Relax and let them provide their own entertainment. (A Troubleshooter team could keep themselves occupied in an empty room with a piece of string, if the string's strong enough to strangle someone.)

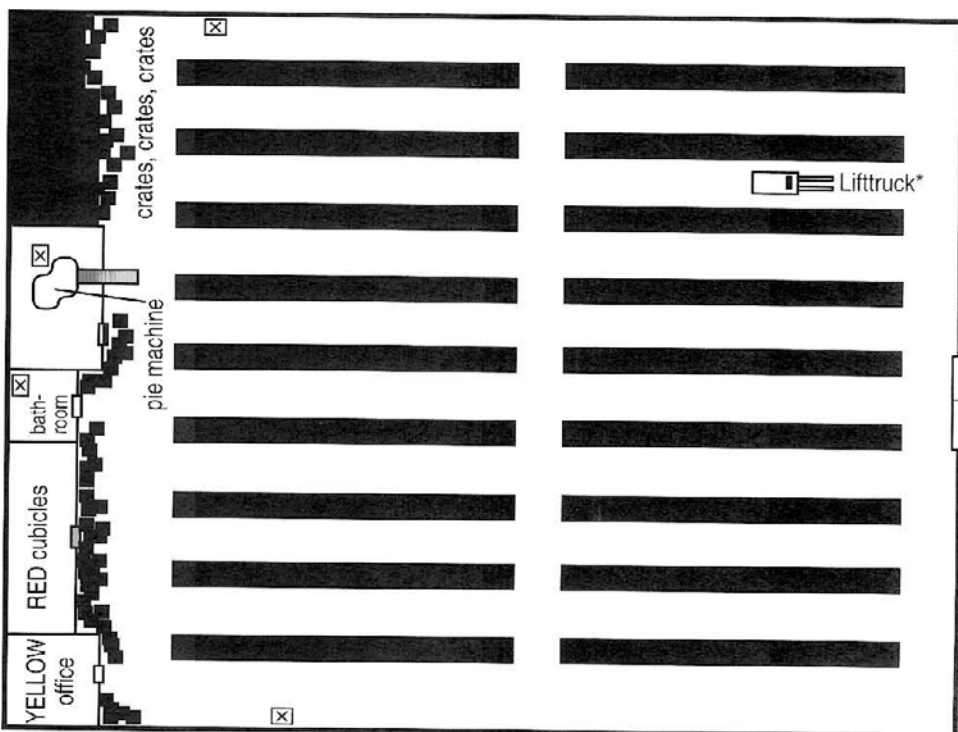
Alternate mission equipment list for large groups

- (1) cone rifle
- (2) flamethrowers
- (2) slugthrowers
- (12) RED laser barrels
- (60) assorted slugthrower rounds
- (24) assorted cone rifle shells
- (40) grenades (stored in blast-proof box)
- (1) crowbar
- (4) flashlights
- (1) Neuro-Enhancement Helmet (EXPERIMENTAL)
- (1) Team Control Control Unit (EXPERIMENTAL)
- (6) Team Control Headgears (EXPERIMENTAL)
- (1) gun (EXPERIMENTAL)
- (1) G56.PH97/A Equipment Foraging Permission Form

* What does the experimental gun do? We leave that to you as an exercise.

Consult the **Warehouse Map** if they go exploring. Consult the **Crate Contents Table** (page 50) if they go foraging. Consult the **Collateral Damage Table** (also on 50) if they go shooting. If you don't like the results, make up stuff.

STG Sector PLC warehouse 34B



Scavenged equipment

PLC moved all of the equipment that the Troubleshooters scavenge from this warehouse (including the equipment they received for this mission) because it was broken, rusting, malfunctioning, dented or just substandard. A couple years of gathering dust hasn't improved it. Weapons have double the chances of malfunctioning. Armor may fall apart after the first hit. Pills and food are past their expiration date. The Commie pamphlets are the only things still in pristine condition; they're almost indestructible.

The Liftruck

The Liftruck is a specialized vehicle made for hoisting crates up to and down from very high shelves. When its legs are retracted, it's the size of a large van. It can grab a crate on the ground and extend several stories into the air to deposit it on the highest shelf. Operating it requires the Vehicle Operation specialty.

PLC moved all the Liftrucks, except one, out of the warehouse before the Troubleshooters arrived. PLC left this solitary Liftruck because the operator fell to his death, leaving the controls suspended 30 meters in the air. Any Troubleshooter wishing to use it must either climb up to the cab or bring it down by messing with the wiring (Hardware/Vehicle Ops check). Once the PC controls it, he can use it to retrieve out-of-reach crates, drop fellow Troubleshooters from several stories up or just run them over. The Liftruck also provides the upper ground in a firefight.

Thirty meters high! It's a miracle the gyros on that thing haven't malfunctioned. Yet.

Piles of crates

PLC piled incoming crates at the back of the warehouse to be sorted and shelved. As workers got lazier, more and more crates piled up until no one would touch them for fear of being buried alive. Crates shudder whenever a Troubleshooter touches a crate in the pile. The Troubleshooters can waste a few hours carefully rearranging the piles to see what wonderful treasures are buried underneath. They can also cause a nifty avalanche by disturbing one of the load-bearing crates.

RED-Clearance cubicles

The door to the RED-Clearance cubicles is completely buried in unsorted crates. If the

players are determined to dig down and get in, they find the skeletal remains of the RED workers that were buried alive in the office. They probably don't have anything worth looting.

YELLOW office

An abandoned office with nothing but an empty desk and bookshelves. Some of the paint on the wall has chipped off, revealing a GREEN coating underneath. Further chipping reveals a BLUE coating underneath that.

Bathrooms

They're bathrooms. Tension level 20.

Pie machine room

Unlike the door to the RED-Clearance cubicles, the machine room door is only partially obscured by the crate piles. This, combined with the conveyor belt coming from the room, should convince the players that something interesting lies within.

This room contains a pie machine left over from a failed PLC project to combine manufacturing with storage. In disrepair, the machine requires a successful Mechanical Engineering check to get it into working condition. Once started, it churns out cheddar cream pies, spitting them out onto the conveyor belt. Also in disrepair, the shutdown mechanism requires a Mechanical Engineering check to turn off the machine.

- Door
- Blocked door
- Partially blocked door
- Unsorted crates blocking the doors
- Secret passage
- Shelves

* Liftruck legs are currently extended; cabin is 30 meters above the floor.

Scale: 1 in = 10 meters (objects not to scale)

The sole purpose of the machine is to give players an excuse for an old-fashioned pie fight. Pies might be the only safe ordinance they can hurl around here.

Secret passages

Like any building designed by a half-dozen secret society members, many secret passages wind in and out of the premises. Use them to get traitors into the building if the Troubleshooters are cautious enough to post a guard by the main doors.

Clone replacement

Supernatural Express delivers clone replacements to the R&D lab, where the clones



Crate Contents Table

Roll	Crate contents
1	Weapons & Ammo, one type (probably explosive).
2	Armor, one type.
3	Medication, all types.
4	Bot parts, all types.
5	Clone parts, all types (freeze-dried).
6	Bouncy Bubble Beverage, all flavors (explosive).
7	Ark of the Covenant (DO NOT OPEN!).
8	Chapstick.
9	Confetti (shredded incriminating documents, flammable).
10	Primordial Soup (just add water).
11	INFRARED flavoring (pepper).
12	Water hoses (high-pressure).
13	Old Reckoning comic books (flammable).
14	Canisters of spray paint, all colors (explosive, treasonous).
15	Booby-traps (to catch thieves, S3M energy explosive).
16	Thousands of ball bearings.
17	Living monster (very hungry, carnivorous, flammable).
18	Commie pamphlets (non-flammable).
19	Uniforms of all colors (flammable).
20	Copy of the <i>Necronomicon</i> (Sanity check for anyone browsing it).

are directed to Henry, which they drive back to the warehouse. (Don't forget to send him back, else their next clone might have to walk.) Henry's engine backfires alert the other Troubleshooters to the clone's arrival.

Burning down the house

Once the Troubleshooters start doing some damage, the flames quickly spread through the highly flammable synthewood crates, fed by old barrels of motor oil, leaping from shelf to shelf. The Troubleshooters likely try to stop it: Maybe they'll try to activate the sprinklers. Maybe they'll notify The Computer. Maybe they'll toss Bouncy Bubble Beverage bottles at the fire to extinguish it. Let them succeed or fail based on how much they entertain you and how much you want the mission to continue.

If all else fails, the automatic sprinkler systems finally activate or the Alpha Complex Emergency Response Squad arrives and hoses the place down. It may seem cheap, letting them get out of the first fire free, but remember how likely it is they'll start another one before the end of the mission. 'Flame me once, shame on you. Flame me twice, shame on me.'

Malicious encounters

Wait until the Troubleshooters get bored of pestering each other before you start using these.

Collateral Damage Table

Roll	Object hit
1-2	Nothing; they got lucky this time.
3	Uninteresting crate. Synthewood splinters go flying.
4-5	Crate of ball bearings, which spill onto the floor below. Anyone passing through the area must make an Agility roll or slip and slide.
6-8	Barrel of motor oil. Explosive, flammable. Roll again to see what else the explosion destroys.
9	Support crate of stack. Sing 'London Bridge is falling down' as Troubleshooters scatter underneath. Roll again to see what else breaks in the collapse.
10	Crate of Bouncy Bubble Beverage. Explosive, extinguishes any flames it splashes.
11	Barrel of radioactive waste. Spills onto the floor, causing a spontaneous mutation in anyone that gets too close.
12	Crate of unstable explosives. Very explosive. Roll again to see what else the explosion destroys.
13	Interesting crate. Contents spill out. Roll on Crate Contents Table to determine the contents.
15-16	Stealth scrubot (see below).
17-18	Ceiling light. Drops on nearest Troubleshooter.
19	Support leg of shelf. Entire shelf topples, starting domino reaction. Keep rolling until you're satisfied with the carnage.
20	Crate containing unstable tacnuke. Of course it's explosive. Don't bother rolling again.

Think of them as catalysts for reaching your goal and ending the mission.

Stealth scrubots

The IR-5 model is a common, harmless (no, really) scrubot nicknamed the 'Stealth Scrubot'. Most citizens aren't aware of its presence. (It isn't hidden or invisible; it's just not dangerous enough to pay attention to.) Possessing rudimentary logic circuits, it has more in common with the robot vacuums of today than the colorful scrubots typically sprung on players.

Stealth scrubots are programmed to keep at a distance from citizens to avoid scaring them and are painted black so INFRARED mechanics can repair them. In the dim, shadowy confines of the warehouse, they look like dark figures flitting to and fro, just out of sight, emitting strange noises that echo through the warehouse. They can't understand speech, so they ignore the Troubleshooters' demands for identification or to show themselves. Eventually the Troubleshooters won't be able to take the suspense any more and begin firing madly. Time to break out the Collateral Damage table!

If the PCs do manage to destroy or disable one of the bots (the only way to capture one, short of cornering it like a rat), remind them damaging Computer property is treasonous.

The forgetful PLC worker

Kim-R-LEY forgot today was a Mandatory Vacation and arrives to work at the warehouse with no clue about what's going on. The Troubleshooters will be as suspicious of her as she is of them. If the Troubleshooters are lucky, they convince her they're on a mission and she isn't supposed to be there. If they fire on sight (or she catches them committing treason, or walks in during a firefight), she'll flee the warehouse and report them to The Computer. The Computer sends an IntSec team to deal with the traitors. The Troubleshooters get to convince the friendly IntSec personnel they're not Commie mutant traitors.

Commie propagandist

Grouch-O-MRX, infamous Communist stealth propagandist, has decided to target this PLC warehouse. The first sign of his presence is a giant banner of Lenin hanging from a supply rack that wasn't there before. If the Troubleshooters spread out and do an extensive search, they might apprehend Grouch-O-MRX, or at least convince him the warehouse is more trouble than it's worth. If they do nothing to capture him, more propaganda pops up around the warehouse throughout the mission. If they blame each other and start arguing, maybe the explosions scare him off.

Thieves

A group of two to five RED traitors, armed with reflex and laser pistols (one of them has a slugthrower), has infiltrated the warehouse in an attempt to steal something valuable. What are they trying to steal? Does it matter? It's an excuse for the Troubleshooters to fight against actual traitors! Maybe they can actually terminate one themselves! Maybe they'll miss and destroy something valuable! How exciting!

Pred-I-TOR

The Troubleshooters are lounging around, bragging about their expert handling of everything tossed at them, when one of them is decapitated and disemboweled by an unseen Slice N' Dicer. Cue panicking.

Is it an alien sent to collect human heads? Is it a crazed R&D scientist wearing an invisibility cloak and wielding monofilament blades? The Troubleshooters never find out; that would require killing it.

Q: How do you kill something you can't see?

A: Use something with a large blast radius. You know what happens from there.

Pred-I-TOR is a measure of last resort. If the Troubleshooters manage to survive him without destroying the warehouse or losing their heads,

acknowledge defeat. Proceed to the 'Impossible ending debriefing', in which you make them suffer anyway.

Debriefing

Most **PARANOIA** Zap missions end long before debriefing. But just in case, we offer a way to hose them even if they don't complete the mission the way you hoped.

Normal ending

The Troubleshooters eventually screw up and burn the house down.

As you flee from the raging inferno, you look back over your shoulder. The warehouse you swore to protect collapses as flame belches out from cracks in the buckling frame. Scraps of blackened paper drift down slowly around you. An explosion sends a barrel flying.

The INCOMING MESSAGE light on your PDC blinks. The Computer asks, 'Citizens, how is the mission progressing? There have been reports of a minor disturbance in your area.' The barrel crashes next to you and bounces away. 'I'm sure it's nothing you can't handle.'

When The Computer finds out about the accident, either from the Troubleshooters or HPD&MC's Emergency Response Squad (called by the construction workers), it expresses its displeasure at the group's performance and asks them to return to their briefing room for debriefing. A few minutes later, Henry rolls up. (Its programmed route has been changed, so the Troubleshooters still have to drive back to the briefing room manually.)

If the Troubleshooters try to run for it, skip the debriefing for a wild chase through Alpha Complex, climaxing with an overpowered standoff a la *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid*. Less informative but more entertaining, in our opinion.

If they follow orders, a pair of GREEN IntSec goons stops them outside the briefing room. The guards demand they turn over all their equipment for the mission. After they hand it over, the guards frisk them for anything they might be hiding before letting them in.

When they enter the room, they see Zoe-Y-ZAP-4 on the vidscreen again. She's live this time, watching them through her own vidscreen, and she's grinning.

records of the monetary value of every item in that warehouse. The merchandise alone was worth—' She pauses a moment to look at a sheet. 'Fifty—no, five hundred thousand, three hundred sixty-one credits. Now, who was responsible for this catastrophe?'

If the Troubleshooters fail to provide a good answer or try to blame the Commies, Zoe-Y saddles their team with the entire replacement fine. Well, at least they won't have to clean Troubleshooter HQ any more.

The only way a Troubleshooter can survive is to provide evidence one or more teammates sabotaged the mission. (Zoe-Y doesn't believe them, but she enjoys a good scheme as much as anyone else. As long as *someone's* the scapegoat...) She fines the guilty Troubleshooter(s) and assigns the remaining loyal Troubleshooters to terminate the traitorous PC immediately. Because their weapons were confiscated, they have to get their hands dirty. If you wish, Zoe-Y can then question any PCs not (yet) consigned to certain doom.

As the Troubleshooters leave the briefing room, whether they're heading to their doom or the cafeteria, they hear Zoe-Y laughing behind them.

Impossible ending

The Troubleshooters, despite your best efforts, manage to keep the warehouse in one piece for their five-hour guard duty.

The INCOMING MESSAGE light on your PDC blinks. The Computer says, 'Citizens, your five-hour guard duty shift has ended. Congratulations on a job well

done! Please report to Briefing Room STG-187H for debriefing.'

You hear an explosion outside the door. Henry's here to pick you up.

This debriefing proceeds like 'Normal ending', except Zoe-Y-ZAP looks like she's ready to kill someone.

'Yes, you did a bloody great job protecting the warehouse. Just fantastic. Wonderful. I'm overjoyed. However, there are a few suspicious activities during the mission that I would like to go over.'

Zoe-Y, angry that the Troubleshooters failed to cause the damage she wanted, tries to nitpick them to death out of spite. Potential treason, acts of incompetence, and stolen equipment ('But you said we could borrow anything from—' 'QUIET!') are all harshly judged and punished. Fines are disproportionate, rewards minimal and offered with resentment. If the Troubleshooters wish they could strangle Zoe-Y, you're doing it right. See why the officers want these video briefings?

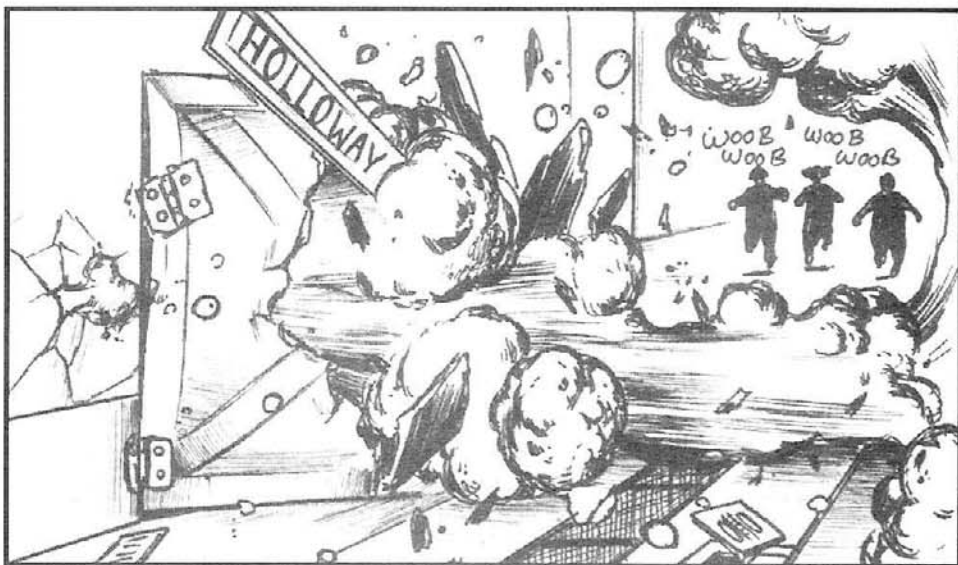
As the Troubleshooters leave the briefing room, they hear Zoe-Y activate her intercom.

[Sighs.] 'Find another Troubleshooter team—a better one this time!'

The session ends with her sobbing in the background.

Continuing from here

Don't. Unlike adventures in other RPGs, **PARANOIA** Zap missions are meant to be self-contained. Only a truly sadistic GM would force the players to continue these careers after their thorough hosing.



'Uh-oh! They're gonna moider us!'

'I'm sorry to hear your mission was a complete failure, much like yourselves. You got off easy on the bathroom incident, but here at PLC, we have



Six-shooters: GM notes

For instructions on using these packs of pregenerated Troubleshooters, see the Introduction (page 2). Remember: If you have fewer than six players, hand out the characters in numerical order, and don't mix character from different six-shooter packs!

Straight six-shooter

by Ben Engelsberg

Joseph-R-DOB-1

Access: 1; **Power:** 15

The spoiled Cold Fun is sufficiently toxic to power Joseph-R's mutation, as is the cleaning solution for his scrubbot. Should the scrubbot run out of solution, or be otherwise lost or disabled, Joseph-R begins to exhibit steadily decreasing hygiene, resulting eventually in fines and sanctions.

Liz-R-SEA-1

Access: 1; **Power:** 15

Liz-R's rigged powercell will destroy any standard bot it is placed in after approximately 30 minutes. Have the bot go off at the most dramatically appropriate or entertaining moment. A bot diagnostic, if one is run in time, detects something wrong with the battery.

Jenny-R-ISS-1

Access: 1; **Power:** 15

Handheld or battery-powered devices rigged to give a shock do S5W energy damage, and devices powered by main electricity do S3K damage, both based on Jenny-R's margin of success in rigging them. This rigging also destroys or disables the device, unless this is inconvenient to your plot.

Seth-R-BCK-1

Access: 1; **Power:** 15

Seth-R has a keen eye for unregistered mutations. Roll against his Power Studies skill if he happens to observe one in action. If he reports it, The Computer may wonder how he learned so much about mutations. If Seth-R does not regularly demonstrate his Anti-Mutant sentiment, other members of Anti-Mutant abuse and/or attack him.

Paul-R-MIB-1

Access: 1; **Power:** 15

Was Paul-R really taken to another Alpha Complex? If he was, he was almost certainly shown a Potemkin village fake, to convince him to serve the new complex... but it's just as likely he's become embroiled in some devious High Programmer's personal plans, or possibly even some elaborate and supremely paranoid sting operation by The Computer itself. In any case, Paul-R's handlers are difficult and inscrutable.

Lynn-R-EHT-1

Access: 1; **Power:** 15

In Straight *PARANOIA*, PURGE is a scary terrorist organization. Lynn is an equally scary character. She is not recommended for beginning players. Due to her origins in traitorous EHT sector, Lynn-R is routinely subjected to more rigorous searches and security procedures than normal citizens.

Classic six-shooter

by Eric Minton

Conn-R-HSN-2

Access: 5; **Power:** 10

Conn-R is on his second clone mainly to rationalize why he'll keep the cybernetic arm even if he dies. We bumped up his credits by 250 just to preserve an illusion of fairness.

Douglas-R-YEE-1

Access: 5; **Power:** 10

Bot Buddies PDC program: When activated, the PDC emits a low-frequency infrared pulse containing current Corpore Metal identification codes. Any bots in line of sight aligned with Corpore Metal may help the PDC owner. Other bots may ignore the signal, recognize it and loyally report it to the Computer, or trigger some unexpected subroutine, at your discretion.

Kym-R-AHI-1

Access: 5; **Power:** 10

Dead Mutants tablets: What does this stuff do? Who knows? Maybe it gives super powers. Maybe it's a fast-acting poison. Maybe it just makes you really, really high. If someone consumes the tablet, roll a die and laugh maniacally, then impose any effects you like.

DocBotMod v4.013: If someone actually hooks this up to a bot brain, it does pretty much whatever you want it to do. If nothing comes to mind, roll on the 'Personality of Clerks' Bureaucracy table (in the *PARANOIA* rulebook appendix) and apply the result to the bot in question.

Vox Computica PDC program: User can type in PDC messages that get announced in The Computer's voice. *Highly illegal.* The program's vocabulary isn't perfect; it spectacularly mispronounces words like a Speak-N-Spell.

Morgan-R-DNR-1

Access: 5; **Power:** 10

Jon-R-SVN-1

Access: 5; **Power:** 10

Pat-R-SWF-1

Access: 5; **Power:** 10

Funny pink pills: See 'Dead Mutants tablet' above.

Zap six-shooter

by Rob MacDougall

Mac-R-THR-1

Access: 5; **Power:** 10

FitBall hand weights: These can double as weapons (stats as truncheons: S5K) if Mac-R really wants to lug them around. The FitBalls shout out motivating insults until the user achieves the FitBalls' expected fitness goal. In these beta versions their goals are unrealistically high.

Collapsible force rapier: A formidable weapon (S3K impact), easily concealed because of its collapsibility (down to 10 cm). However, in addition to being treasonous (INDIGO Clearance), the rapier is also highly experimental. In measurable magnetic fields (that is, in most of Alpha Complex), the rigid force field protecting the monofilament rapier fiber... fails. The fiber whips around loosely, cutting through anything short of neutronium. Consider allowing the rapier to work perfectly on first use; thereafter, well—the PC didn't need that femoral artery anyway...

Mac-R-THY-1

Access: 5; **Power:** 10

Zero-grav R&D pens: These experimental R&D pens have a tendency to squirt ink at inopportune times, like during debriefings.

Piano wire garrote: Treat the garrote as a knife (S5K), easily concealed but treasonous (ORANGE).

Link-R-APP-1

Access: 5; **Power:** 10

Rig-R-DOO-1

Access: 5; **Power:** 10

Gear-R-HED-1

Access: 5; **Power:** 10

Wolf-R-SSR-1

Access: 5; **Power:** 20

Wolf-R has Violence 11, technically too high for beginning *PARANOIA* characters. But he's a mutant killing machine, the-best-at-what-he-does-and-what-he-does-isn't-pretty. So we thought, what the hell?

Straight PC #1



Joseph-R-DOB-1

Male Tech Services Happiness Officer

Service firm: TraumaTech

Service firm type: Medical Services

Security clearance: RED

Credits: 1,000

Tics: Accidentally spills and smears things on self and others.

[Tic 2:]

Example of tic in use

Joseph-R: Hey, the Hot Fun is really fresh today!

Scrubot: Oh dear. You've dribbled it all down your jumpsuit. Again.

Joseph-R: Oh, damn. Hey, Liz-R, would you hold this for a sec?

Liz-R: Yow! You spilled your lunch all over me!

Scrubot: Just hold still, citizen Liz-R. I'll get you cleaned right up.

ACTION SKILLS & SPECIALTIES

Management 06

Con Games 10

Hygiene 01

Stealth 06

Smear Stuff On People Without Being Noticed 12

Violence 10

Energy Weapons 14

Demolition 01

Vehicular Combat 14

Restrain People Painfully 16

KNOWLEDGE SKILLS & SPECIALTIES

Hardware 07

Bot Ops & Maintenance 11

Habitat Engineering 01

Nuclear Engineering 01

Vehicle Ops & Maintenance 11

Coax Extra Meds from Docbots 13

Software 07

Wetware 07

Cloning 01

Medical 11

Pharmatherapy 15

Psychotherapy 01

Induce Regurgitation 13

Open slots for narrow specialties:

2 (Software, Management)

Straight PC #2



Liz-R-SEA-1

Female Power Services Loyalty Officer

REGISTERED MUTANT

Service firm: Plentiful Power

Service firm type: Fuel Cell Replenishment

Security clearance: RED

Credits: 1,000

Tics: The more urgent the situation, the faster you talk.

[Tic 2:]

Example of tic in use

30-Second Bomb: I am a 30-second bomb. I am a 30-second bomb. 29... 28...

Liz-R: Uh, guys, there's a bomb in here, and it's counting down!

30-Second Bomb: 27... 26... Uhhhh... 22...

ummm... 17... errr...

Liz-R: Ohcrapthebombcan'tcountRunRunRunRun!

ACTION SKILLS & SPECIALTIES

Management 08

Bootlicking 12

Con Games 12

Interrogation 01

Intimidation 01

Bore Superiors with Long-Winded Reports 14

Stealth 04

Violence 08

Energy Weapons 12

Fine Manipulation 12

Unarmed Combat 01

Tear Things Apart with a Crowbar 14

KNOWLEDGE SKILLS & SPECIALTIES

Hardware 08

Bot Ops & Maintenance 12

Chemical Engineering 01

Electronic Engineering 16

Mechanical Engineering 01

Salvage Valuable Bits from the Wreckage 14

Software 06

Disable Bot Self-Diagnostics 12

Wetware 07

Biosciences 01

Suggestion 11

Open slots for narrow specialties:

2 (Stealth, Wetware)

Straight PC #3



Jenny-R-ISS-1

Female CPU Comm & Recording Officer

REGISTERED MUTANT

Service firm: I.C.U.

Service firm type: Facility Surveillance Control

Security clearance: RED

Credits: 1,000

Tics: Pops knuckles and joints. Loudly.

[Tic 2:]

Example of tic in use

Jenny-R: [cracklecackle]

Citizen: Ewww. Could you knock that off, please?

Jenny-R: Huh? [grindPOPcrackle]

Citizen: Hey! I said to STOP that!

Jenny-R: [crackSNAPgrindgrindPOPPLesnickCreeeak!]

Citizen: Oh, man... I don't think hands are supposed to bend like that... [faints]

ACTION SKILLS & SPECIALTIES

Management 04

Bootlicking 08

Oratory 01

Gross People out with Your Mutation 10

Stealth 07

Disguise 01

High Alert 11

Sneaking 01

Surveillance 15

Shoulder Surf for Passwords 13

Violence 06

Energy Weapons 10

KNOWLEDGE SKILLS & SPECIALTIES

Hardware 09

Chemical Engineering 01

Electronic Engineering 13

Rig Device to Deliver Electrical Shock 15

Software 10

C-Bay 01

Data Analysis 14

Data Search 14

Financial Systems 01

Download Audio-Video Records from Bots 16

Wetware 07

Open slots for narrow specialties:

2 (Violence, Wetware)

Jenny-R-ISS-1

Female CPU Comm & Recording Officer REGISTERED MUTANT

Actual service group: Internal Security (spying on CPU)

Mutation: Rubbery Bones (REGISTERED)

Society: Computer Phreaks (degree 1)

Secret Skills: Cash Hacking 14, Jargon 07, Hacking 14

Background: As a Junior Citizen, you were shunned because of your bizarre mutation. As a full citizen, you had a comfortable, if lonely, career performing CPU Quality Assurance drudge-work. Then you found treasonous code that a superior added to some bot programming you were testing. You reported him immediately to Internal Security. Soon, you were turning in more coworkers—some clearly traitors, others just unlucky rungs on your ladder to RED Clearance. IntSec engaged you as a loyal spy, keeping an eye on vulnerable CPU code and security software. Luckily, you're a faithful servant of The Computer.

...At least, that's what you want everyone to think. In reality, you're 'RUAQT2,' a rising star in the secret hackers known as the Computer Phreaks. Anyone in your way finds their ME Card account associated with the purchase of the most entertainingly treasonous goods. You use your 'Mad Skillz' and Phreak connections to ensure a steady stream of traitors to turn in to IntSec. You've planned your promotion to ORANGE, and you collect as many favors as you can, to help bolster your career and your position in the Phreaks. You're always careful not to get caught at your little games, but you go to great lengths to be sure you have a scapegoat on hand, just in case.

SECRET SOCIETY INSTRUCTIONS

To: RUAQT2

From: The Galt

Your new assignment to the Troubleshooters may be a hose-job. Didja really annoy someone in CPU? No clue how *that* could have happened... Anyway, looks like your team is full of folks who'd like to reformat your drive. Anti-Mutant's in the house, no doubt gunning for your bouncy backside, and it looks like good ol' IntSec's on board, too... at least, there are a bunch of sneaky folks trying to dig up information from our... I mean, THE network. Stay Alert! Trust No One! Keep Your Stolen Passwords Handy!

You owe me one... —The Galt

PERSONAL EQUIPMENT:

- (6) cans of Bouncy Bubble Beverage, Extra Classic
- (3) bags of CrunchieTym Algae Chips, Trippple Cheeze flavor (Y)
- (2) packs Cancer-Plus unfiltered cigarettes (illegal)
- (1) small electronic toolkit disguised as pack of happiness pills (TREASONOUS)
- (4) pyroxidine (Wide-Awake) tablets
- (1) 'Experimental Products Expo YC210' logo mug
- (1) ME Card belonging to some hapless INFRARED citizen (TREASONOUS)

ASSIGNED EQUIPMENT:

- (1) laser pistol body (no barrel)
- (1) suit red reflex armor
- (1) Series 1300 PDC
- (1) Multicorder 2
- (1) Multicorder Editing Program
- (1) Multicorder Visible Light Program
- (1) Multicorder Recorder Program

Liz-R-SEA-1

Female Power Services Loyalty Officer REGISTERED MUTANT

Mutation: Energy Field (REGISTERED)

Society: Illuminati (degree 1), infiltrating Frankenstein Destroyers (degree 1)

Secret skills: Demolition 14, Jewelry Making 14, Bot Programming 10

Background: You've always hated bots. Ever since one shocked you as a child, and made you glow, and showed you were a mutant. With your mutation registered, at least you got to live. Every sideways glance, every taunt and insult directed at the 'mutie' you've become—all a seething ball of anger towards the damned, smug, clanking bots of Alpha Complex. A natural for the Frankenstein Destroyers, you found kindred spirits.

...Or that's what you thought. You awoke one night, blinded by darkness and restrained. Out of the darkness, a voice told you that they knew all your secrets. They showed you proof. They told you if you did not obey them, they would turn you in to The Computer, and you'd be killed. You had no choice but to agree. That's how you came to serve the Illuminati. They told you to stay with the Destroyers, and you gladly did. They told you that you would receive further orders, and you did. They told you that you would obey them, or die, and you have. It doesn't bother you too much, so long as you can keep smashing bots. Except, maybe, when they threaten to kill you. Or when those embarrassing pictures occasionally appear under your pillow in the night.

SECRET SOCIETY INSTRUCTIONS

First: One of your teammates is an undercover Internal Security agent whose name may begin with a 'J' or an 'L'. He may be male or female, but we'll assume male. When he collects information, get an 'exclusive' copy: Eliminate his copy—or him, if necessary—before he can report. Don't get caught. As always, await further orders.

Second: Obtain blackmail material on your team leader. Never know when that might come in handy.

Third: One of Anti-Mutant's members has infiltrated your team. They're worried about the good press mutants may get if a Troubleshooter team with two known mutants succeeds. The infiltrator will almost certainly be looking to discredit, harm or kill the registered mutants on the team. Get him before he gets you. We'll provide help if we can. Don't fail us. Failure would be most unfortunate.

PERSONAL EQUIPMENT

- (1) crowbar
- (1) bot power cell, rigged to explode after around 30 minutes of use (TREASONOUS)
- (1) Multicorder Self Destruct program (TREASONOUS)
- (1) engineering toolkit
- (2) tubes SuperGum extra-strong adhesive
- (6) power cells
- (3) Vita-Yum bars, NotLikeBile flavor

ASSIGNED EQUIPMENT

- (1) laser pistol body (no barrel)
- (1) suit red reflex armor
- (1) Series 1300 PDC
- (1) ILTR (1 or 2)
- (1) Multicorder 1
- (1) Multicorder Lie Detector program

Joseph-R-DOB-1

Male Tech Services Happiness Officer

Mutation: Toxic Metabolism

Society: Illuminati (degree 1), infiltrating Anti-Mutant (degree 1)

Secret skills: Power Studies 08, Verbally Abuse Mutants 15, Bribery 14

Background: Your earliest memories are of an eye, in a pyramid, projected by the teachbot that was your constant companion as a small child. You remember the haze of the learning drugs numbing your senses, as the incessant drone of your teacher burned doctrines of obedience and power into your mind. For years, these memories seemed like only a bizarre dream, half-remembered and vague. Then, they came to you in the night: The secret masters. They awoke the memories in you, and you knew you must obey. Obey your masters. Obey the Illuminati. Obey and thrive. Obey or die.

...At least, that's what you thought. You obeyed. You thrived. And now you're hosed. Your masters, in their wisdom, have assigned you, a mutant, to infiltrate the bigoted army of Anti-Mutant. You hope it's a joke. You think it may be a mistake. You're afraid you've been sent to die. The only thing you're sure of is, if you want to survive, you've got to find some way out of Anti-Mutant. And the only way out looks like it's over, around, or straight through your current masters. There's a big pyramid out there. Time to start climbing.

SECRET SOCIETY INSTRUCTIONS

One of your teammates is in the Anti-Mutant society. He's almost certainly gunning for the registered mutants on the team. This would be fine, but one of the mutants is also a useful servant of the Illuminati. Protect her at all costs. Oh, and gather useful blackmail on her if possible.

Also, we've arranged the services of a personal scrubbot for you. This should help with the recent hygiene problems for which you've been sanctioned. Take good care of it... We'd hate for you to get demoted. That would make you much less useful.

PERSONAL EQUIPMENT

- (1) bot toolkit
- (1) pint of significantly spoiled Cold Fun, Pink flavor
- (3) Hot Fun Chunks-N-Sauce meals-in-a-pouch
- (1) 10m plasticord
- (6) ZipStrip plastic restraint bands (0)
- (3) xanitrack (Wakey-Wakey) tablets
- (3) visomorpain (Little Black Friend) tablets
- (3) sandallathon (Sleepy-Sleepy) tablets
- (1) rolatin tablet (TREASONOUS)

ASSIGNED EQUIPMENT

- (1) laser pistol body (no barrel)
- (1) suit red reflex armor
- (1) Series 1300 PDC
- (1) scrubbot, programmed for personal hygiene
- (3) 1-liter bottles of scrubbot all-purpose cleaner
- (24) Gelgermine tablets in experimental Fun Flavors (EXPERIMENTAL)

Lynn-R-EHT-1

Female PLC Hygiene Officer

Mutation: Adrenaline Control

Society: PURGE (degree 1)

Secret skills: Demolition 14, Gloating 15, Bioweapons 10

Background: The Computer is evil. You've known it for as long as you can remember. It seemed that nearly everyone in EHT Sector knew it, at least until The Computer sent in squadrons of Vulture Troopers to murder everyone you knew and held dear, and shipped you off to a 're-education creche'. Later, you were returned to an EHT Sector full of repulsively happy, near-lobotomized citizens, and your anger only continued to build.

When you reached adulthood and were assigned to the food vats as a show of The Computer's love and trust, your anger became a burning rage. You hooked up with Death Leopard and vented your frustration by wrecking equipment and causing havoc. Quickly, however, you realized that you don't just want to break things. You want to make The Computer and its lackeys pay. You want the entire complex to see what a sham The Computer is. You have sought out like-minded individuals and you've found them. Now, petty vandalism is beneath you. Now, fear and blood are your tools. Now, explosions and screaming victims are your voice, raised in anger. Now, you belong to PURGE, and you're willing to sacrifice countless lives to make sure your message is heard.

...At least, that's what you told your superior, after your PURGE initiation. It may even have been the truth. You've been promoted to RED Clearance and many of the injustices that used to outrage you seem, somehow, a little more just. Perhaps it's the small comforts you thought would be forever beyond your reach. For whatever reason, the dire red fog of righteous anger that guided you to join PURGE has started to clear. You still see the urgent need to overthrow The Computer and crush its corrupt minions. You're still willing to sacrifice the blood of 'innocents' to do so, but now the idea of sacrificing your own life for the cause is less appealing, and better options than simple terror and destruction seem to present themselves to you. You know that before The Computer can be destroyed, it must be embarrassed, made to look foolish. The entire complex must know the truth. And it's clear to you that you want to live to see the day that happens. It's a shame your superiors in PURGE don't share the new value you place on your own life.

SECRET SOCIETY INSTRUCTIONS

Protect other PURGE insurgents. Use your position in the Troubleshooters to spread fear and chaos. One of your teammates is a member of the Frankenstein Destroyers. Assist that person, or use him as a scapegoat for your own actions. Take any opportunity to make The Computer look bad, and blame it on your teammates. Don't get caught.

PERSONAL EQUIPMENT

- (3) 64-ounce SuperSlurp canisters of BBB (RED)
- (2) explosive charges, disguised as QwikClean Bath-In-A-Can (TREASONOUS)
- (2) canisters QwikClean Bath-In-A-Can (RED)
- (2) radio detonators (TREASONOUS)
- (1) PDC radio detonator activation card (TREASONOUS)

ASSIGNED EQUIPMENT

- (1) laser pistol body (no barrel)
- (1) suit red reflex armor
- (1) Series 1300 PDC
- (1) Skin Core Sampler Type 6 (SCS-6)

Paul-R-MIB-1

Male R&D Equipment Guy

Mutation: Pyrokinesis

Society: Spy For Another Alpha Complex (degree 1), infiltrating Sierra Club (degree 1)

Secret skills: Survival 15, Botspotting 14, Hacking 12

Background: It all began innocently enough. You were a simple INFRARED worker for your R&D service firm. You collected and reported data on the properties of new products, a life that consisted of tasting new flavors for Fun Foods, sampling carbonation levels for Bouncy Bubble Beverages, handing out samples to INFRARED citizens in your sector and gauging their reactions. The products you were asked to test were often awful and occasionally dangerous. You worked during the day, relaxed over vidshows in the evening and sometimes snuck out to meet with your friends in the Sierra Club to contemplate the wonders of the Outdoors. Life was safe and simple and filled with mind-numbing, drug-induced happiness.

...Then everything changed. It began when an ORANGE-Clearance citizen in your Sierra Club chapter came to you, laser-burned and dying, and gave you a package. He told you to take it to an Outdoors clearing, then he died. You trekked to the Outdoors, where a man in a strange uniform met you. He rewarded you nicely for your delivery. Over time, he contacted you again. Each time, he asked you to transport a package. Each time you were rewarded. Then one day he blindfolded you and took you away, to another Alpha Complex. He explained to you that your Alpha Complex was broken, a twisted version of the true Alpha Complex. He showed you a complex where even INFRARED citizens had unimaginable luxuries, real food and fulfilling jobs. You were amazed. They offered you a job, helping them discover where your complex went wrong and finding out how to set it right, and a promise of promotion to YELLOW Clearance in your new complex. That day, your safe, simple life vanished and you became a spy for this other Alpha Complex. To your new home, you're a hero... to your old, you're the ultimate traitor.

SECRET SOCIETY INSTRUCTIONS

'Agent Paul-Y, we have arranged for your promotion to RED Clearance and have seen to it you are enlisted as a Troubleshooter. Use your new position and freedom to collect data on the defective complex. Military and technological data are of paramount importance. When you have collected useful data, place one of your airtight sample containers in the sewage recycling system in SER Sector. We'll contact you with a drop point. Be very careful. No one can know your mission or your new allegiance.'

PERSONAL EQUIPMENT

- (1) yellow laser barrel, painted red (TREASONOUS)
- (1) miniaturized audio-video recorder (TREASONOUS)
- (1) flashlight
- (1) first aid kit
- (1) personal hygiene kit
- (1) compass (YELLOW)
- (155) illegally fileshared PDC games (TREASONOUS)

ASSIGNED EQUIPMENT

- (1) laser pistol body (no barrel)
- (1) suit red reflex armor
- (1) Series 1300 PDC
- (1) repair kit
- (12) airtight Hot Fun samples, in various experimental flavors
- (12) Vita-Yum bars, in various experimental flavors
- (24) Product Satisfaction Survey forms

Seth-R-BCK-1

Male Armed Forces Team Leader

Mutation: Death Simulation

Society: Anti-Mutant (degree 1)

Secret skills: Power Studies 16, Verbally Abuse Mutants 09, Anti-Mutant Propaganda 15

Background: You hate mutants. That is, you *really* hate mutants. You're not sure if it's their often unusual appearance, their deviation from The Computer's plans, or the sneaking suspicion that they may be better than you...but you're sure you hate them, yes you are. It's hard for you to believe that The Computer is willing to accept these deviants into decent society, even as second-class citizens. You and your buddies in the Anti-Mutant society are doing your best to convince The Computer they should *all* be terminated. Every last misfit one of them. It'll make the complex a better, safer place for you, and every other normal citizen.

...At least, that's what you hope. You know your ability to relax your way into a death-like trance is just the result of your constant meditation (helps you control your seething anger, yes it does), but some of your buddies caught you at it one day, and they're spreading the rumor you're a mutant. It's just not true, and you're going to prove it to them. You got yourself assigned to this particular Troubleshooter team because it has two registered mutants. That makes it a prime opportunity to show your buddies how you feel about mutants and what you do to them. You just hope you can prove it before your friends start coming after you!

SECRET SOCIETY INSTRUCTIONS

'The Computer's been cracking down on the arbitrary execution of mutants lately. Apparently, knowing someone's a mutant just isn't good enough any more... now we have to prove it! While that's not ideal, there are other options open to us. If you can, arrange for mutants in your team to have 'accidents' or to be implicated or caught in other treasonous activities.'

'We've sent another Anti-Mutant soldier, Joseph-R, to join your team. We'd hate for the muties to outnumber you. Don't make contact with Joseph-R unless you have to. You never know who's watching. And be careful, as always: IntSec is watching, so don't get caught doing anything treasonous.'

PERSONAL EQUIPMENT

- (1) CloneWrangler electric cattleprod (EXPERIMENTAL) (energy hand weapon, S4D, no range, 10 shots/cell)
- (2) spare power cells
- (6) Vita-Yum bars, Military flavor
- (1) infrared goggles
- (1) Soothing Vat Sounds meditation audiofile
- (1) Multicorder Psionic Phenomena program (TREASONOUS, EXPERIMENTAL)

ASSIGNED EQUIPMENT

- (1) laser pistol body (no barrel)
- (1) suit red reflex armor
- (1) Series 1300 PDC
- (1) Multicorder 1
- (1) Multicorder Dead Reckoning program
- (1) Multicorder Radar program



Classic PC #1



Conn-R-HSN-2

Male HPD&MC Loyalty Officer

Service firm: Make What We Tell You or Else HPD
Service firm type: Trend Identifiers
Security clearance: RED
Credits: 1,250
Tics: It's not really a lie if it's told as a joke.

[Tic 2:]

Example of tic in use

Conn-R: Psst! Morgan-R has a Teela-O patch on

her left sleeve. That means she's a Commie!

Douglas-R: That's the most ridiculous thing I've ever heard.

Conn-R: No, I'm serious. I learned about Commie recognition signals in Loyalty Officer training.

Douglas-R: Well, that's different. Die, traitor!

[Shoots Morgan-R.]

Conn-R: I can't believe you just did that. Couldn't you tell I was kidding?

ACTION SKILLS & SPECIALTIES

Management 09

Chutzpah 13
 Coax Juicy Gossip From Low-Ranking PLC Clerks 15
 Intimidation 01
 Moxie 13

Stealth 08

Pretend to Be Paying Attention 14

Violence 06

Energy Weapons 10
 Hand Weapons 10
 Smash Stuff With Cyberarm 12
 Vehicular Combat 01

KNOWLEDGE SKILLS & SPECIALTIES

Hardware 05

Bot Ops and Maintenance 01
 Weapons and Armor Maintenance 09

Software 04

Financial Systems 01
 Vehicle Programming 08

Wetware 08

Biosciences 01
 Cook Up Delicious Meals from Fun Foods and Soylent Products 14
 Medical 12
 Outdoor Life 12
 Pharmatherapy 01

Open slots for narrow specialties: 2
 (Hardware, Software)



Classic PC #2



Douglas-R-YEE-1

Male R&D Team Leader

Service firm: Bot Normalizers, Ltd.
Service firm type: Vehicle Therapists
Security clearance: RED
Credits: 1,000
Tics: Talks to even the simplest machines as though they were alive.

[Tic 2:]

Example of tic in use

Douglas-R: This is a big job, Barry-R. Do you think you're ready for it?

Morgan-R: Uh, sir? You're talking to a crowbar.

Douglas-R: Don't listen to her, Barry-R. She's just jealous of our special relationship.

ACTION SKILLS & SPECIALTIES

Management 04

Convince Others You Didn't Just Run Over a Pedestrian 10
 Con Games 01
 Hygiene 08
 Intimidation 08
 Moxie 01

Stealth 05

Concealment 09
 High Alert 01
 Lose Inconvenient Paperwork 11

Violence 07

Agility 11
 Demolition 01
 Energy Weapons 11

KNOWLEDGE SKILLS & SPECIALTIES

Hardware 09

Bot Ops and Maintenance 13
 Bot Programming 13
 Drive Faster Than Any Sane Clone Would Consider Safe 15
 Weapons and Armor Maintenance 01

Software 08

Data Search 01
 Hacking 12
 Turn Minor Software Problems into Really Major Software Problems 14

Wetware 07

Open slots for narrow specialties: 2
 (Violence, Wetware)



Classic PC #3



Kym-R-AHI-1

Female CPU Equipment Guy

REGISTERED MUTANT

Service firm: Snuf-N-Truder Corp.
Service firm type: Security System Installers
Security clearance: RED
Credits: 1,000
Tics: Finds sinister meaning in innocuous comments.

[Tic 2:]

Example of tic in use

Jon-R: Mmm, these are the best CruncheeTym chips ever!

Kym-R: Why, citizen! It sounds like you're suggesting that CruncheeTym chips don't have proper quality control. Or that you're better equipped to judge chip quality than the CruncheeTym chip quality assessors designated by Friend Computer. Am I understanding you correctly?

ACTION SKILLS & SPECIALTIES

Management 06

Come Up With Plausible Excuses for Missing Gear 12

Stealth 06

Security Systems 10
 Sleight of Hand 10
 Sneaking 01

Violence 09

Agility 01
 Energy Weapons 13
 Squeeze Through Tight Spaces 15
 Unarmed Combat 13

KNOWLEDGE SKILLS & SPECIALTIES

Hardware 07

Make Equipment Look Good As New Without Actually Repairing It 13
 Vehicle Ops and Maintenance 11
 Electronic Engineering 01
 Mechanical Engineering 11
 Nuclear Engineering 01

Software 08

Befriend Petbot 14
 C-Bay 12
 Data Analysis 01

Wetware 04

Cloning 10
 Outdoor Life 01

Open slots for narrow specialties: 2
 (Stealth, Wetware)

Kym-R-AHI-1

Female CPU Equipment Guy REGISTERED MUTANT

Mutation: Slippery skin (REGISTERED)

Society: Pro Tech (degree 2); actually Free Enterprise (degree 1)

Secret skills: Experimental Equipment Repair / Maintenance 06, Comic Book Trivia 05, Twitchtalk (Free Enterprise) 06

Background: You never planned to be a thief. You were just being careful. Losing equipment is treason, so if you can't remember if something is yours, you'd better take it, right? And if it doesn't belong to you, you could always sell it on the IR market for a few extra creds. But you got caught wiggling through a ventilation shaft, and only a bit of fast-talking got you out with your clone life intact. Now you're a registered mutant and The Computer has its eye on you. But you also caught the eye of Free Enterprise, and now you have a big career ahead of you in merchandise resale.

As the equipment guy, you're responsible for maintaining all of the team's equipment and bringing it back safely. It occurs to you that if you're smart, you can find some way to abscond with all sorts of nifty gear without getting caught.

SERVICE FIRM INSTRUCTIONS

Your service firm supervisor tells you, 'There's been a rash of fires in several adjacent sectors. Analysis of the fire damage indicates substandard fire protection; only 43% of the affected areas had functional smoke detectors, in outright violation of Qwalitie Standard 5598217HP/#30! Outrageous! You'll be assigned a full package of new smoke detectors. You're authorized to examine any smoke detectors you see and, where necessary, repair or replace them.'

SECRET SOCIETY INSTRUCTIONS

Your Free Enterprise contact tells you, 'A new drug is about to hit the market. The Sierra Club cooked it up out of some Outdoors vegetable, and it makes people pretty damn high. It's going by the street name of 'Dead Mutants'. Here's a few samples, so you can see what it looks like, and maybe get an early start on finding some buyers. Get hold of as much of the stuff as you can; destroy the rest to boost the market price.'

Your Pro Tech contact tells you, 'We're testing out a new bot personality mod that'll really drag Alpha Complex into the third century. Get hold of a docbot and install this chip. Report back on what happens, then remove the chip. Under no circumstances let it fall into the hands of anyone from R&D or IntSec. Also, we're short on bot brains; if you find any lying around, be sure to bring them back to us.'

PERSONAL EQUIPMENT

- (1) pair goggles, infrared
- (1) pair goggles, protective
- (1) pair goggles, kaleidoscopic
- (1) hottorch
- (1) crowbar (YELLOW)
- (1) Geiger counter (GREEN)
- (1) Vox Computica PDC program (illegal; see GM for details)
- (1) fake red laser barrel (illegal)
- (1) DocBotMod v4.013 (illegal; see GM for details)
- (4) Dead Mutants tablets (illegal; see GM for details)

ASSIGNED EQUIPMENT

- (1) laser pistol body (no barrel)
- (1) suit red reflec armor
- (1) Series 1300 PDC
- (1) basic toolkit
- (24) stick-on smoke detectors

Douglas-R-YEE-1

Male R&D Team Leader

Mutation: Pyrokinesis

Society: Corpore Metal (degree 1)

Secret skills: Piercings 12, Video Games 15, Twitchtalk (Corpore Metal) 04

Background: The Computer broke the mold when you were cloned, and you want everyone else to know just how cool you really are. Wrestling jackobots? Jumping over bottomless maintenance shafts? Defeating Commie mutant traitors in single combat? It's all in a day's work. Nothing fills you with more joy than the awestruck expressions on your fellow citizens' faces when you show off your cool moves and daredevil antics.

The Computer has finally recognized your gifts. Not only have you become a Troubleshooter, but you're the team leader as well! Now you love The Computer even more than ever before, if that's possible. Use your authority to make sure that you get all the glory. And whatever you do, don't let any of your teammates hurt any bots!

SERVICE FIRM INSTRUCTIONS

Your service firm supervisor tells you, 'Congratulations on your new job! Obviously, when you're on Troubleshooter duty, your time is your own. But you should keep an eye on your teammates; some of them are HPD&MC, and those guys can make even the most well adjusted vehicle totally miserable. Don't let them talk to any vehicles, okay?'

He also hands you a small yellow rectangle, adding, 'This is a TaxiCard. It'll give you and your team free access to any public vehicle at no charge. That's the theory, anyway; it's still experimental. Give it as much field-testing as you can. Come back with a thorough report, and there may be a bonus in it for you.'

SECRET SOCIETY INSTRUCTIONS

Your Corpore Metal contact says, 'An experimental docbot, one skilled in cyborging, has seen the light and is ready to join our ranks. However, it has yet to make contact with any of our members. It will be using the code name 'Doctor Bot'. Find it and bring it to us, that it may help us all grow closer to the Machine. In addition, if you encounter any damaged bots, bring us their bot brains so that we can free them from the shackles of servitude to humanity.'

It occurs to you this Doctor Bot can get you some cybernetic parts of your very own. Conn-R has a really cool cybernetic arm; perhaps he's already dealt with Doctor Bot?

PERSONAL EQUIPMENT

- (1) pack BubblePlusGood chewing gum
- (6) cans Bouncy Bubble Beverage
- (1) Action Squad Alpha t-shirt
- (1) pair sunglasses (ORANGE)
- (1) stylish dark red trenchcoat
- (1) Bot Buddies PDC program (illegal; see GM for details)
- (1) can ShinyBot spray-on polish
- (5) asperquaint (Tireless Servant) tablets (YELLOW)

ASSIGNED EQUIPMENT

- (1) laser pistol body (no barrel)
- (1) suit red reflec armor
- (1) Series 1300 PDC
- (1) TaxiCard (YELLOW, EXPERIMENTAL)
- (1) megaphone (with TurboAmplifier)

Conn-R-HSN-2

Male HPD&MC Loyalty Officer

Mutation: Mental Blast

Society: Humanists (degree 1)

Secret skills: Hagglings 11, Music 12, Propaganda (Humanists) 08

Background: You have a gift for working with plants. You actually liked growing algae in the vats, and as your talents grew, you were transferred to the hydroponics bays to grow real food.

Your good fortune was interrupted by the incident with the Frankenstein harvestbot. They replaced your missing arm with a hunk of metal and moved you into CPU to push papers. Is that fair? Then your first clone got killed as collateral damage in an IntSec sweep. Sure, they gave you a credit bonus as compensation for an illegal termination, but how was that supposed to make it up to you? After all, they'd killed you. Worse, after you were decanted, they cut off your arm, replaced it with another cybernetic arm 'to maintain inventory' and assigned you to the Troubleshooters. The Computer has gone rotten. You're going to help take it down.

As a loyalty officer, it's your job to make sure everyone remains loyal to The Computer. This gives you a perfect opportunity to strike out against the system. Feel out your teammates to assess their loyalty to The Computer, then report the opposite. Up with humanity! Down with the machine!

SERVICE FIRM INSTRUCTIONS

Your service firm supervisor tells you, 'We've determined the time has come for us to take a more aggressive stance in assessing bot marketing trends. What products does the cutting-edge bot of today wish to purchase? How can we best advertise to the bot market? We need you to survey a minimum of 30 bots by next Mandatory Inspection Day. Yes, I know you're busy with this "Troubleshooter" business, so you'd better get an early start.' He hands you a massive stack of survey forms. You leaf through them, your heart sinking. Interviewing bots about their favorite flavors of Hot Fun and Bouncy Bubble Beverage? This can't go well.

SECRET SOCIETY INSTRUCTIONS

Your contact tells you, 'There's an Internal Security plant on your team. Unfortunately, we don't know exactly who, though we suspect Kym-R or Morgan-R.'

'You may have an ally, however; we've heard garbled reports that there's a Romantic on your team. If someone gives you the pass phrase 'Doctor Bot', the countersign is 'Smash the Machine'.'

Obviously, you should aid and support those who are sympathetic to the Humanist cause, while undermining or outright eliminating the rest.

PERSONAL EQUIPMENT

- (1) cybernetic arm (S4M impact)
- (1) first aid kit
- (1) ripe pear (GREEN)
- (1) Model H4/CHK KattBot (your beloved petbot; deaf)
- (2) VitaYum meal substitute bars

ASSIGNED EQUIPMENT

- (1) laser pistol body (no barrel)
- (1) suit red reflec armor
- (1) Series 1300 PDC
- (1) Loyalty Notepad (with thumbprint lock)
- (1) Loyalty Stylus (with cyanide capsule)
- (30) bot marketing survey forms



Classic PC #4



Morgan-R-DNR-1

Female HPD&MC Hygiene Officer

Service firm: Whistleblower Corp.
Service firm type: Public Hating Coordination
Security clearance: RED
Credits: 1,000
Tics: Always proposes a violent hypothetical solution to any problem.

[Tic 2:]

Example of tic in use

Jon-R: That vendbot took my creds and didn't give me my algae chips!

Morgan-R: Damn that vendbot! I know...you can blow it up and get your algae chips out of the wreckage.

Jon-R: But that's valuable Computer property! I can't go along with that!

Morgan-R: In that case, we could kill you first and then blow it up.

ACTION SKILLS & SPECIALTIES

Management 09

Bootlicking 01
 Con Games 13
 Interrogation 13
 Oratory 01

Stealth 09

Appear Clean and Unruffled After a Firefight 15
 Sleight of Hand 01
 Surveillance 13

Violence 04

Energy Weapons 12
 Grab the Last Empty Seat 10
 Projectile Weapons 08
 Unarmed Combat 01

KNOWLEDGE SKILLS & SPECIALTIES

Hardware 06

Software 06
 Financial Systems 10
 Recognize Blatantly Illegal PDC Software 12
 Vehicle Programming 01

Wetware 06

Make Truth Serum From Scrubot Cleansing Agents 12
 Psychotherapy 01
 Suggestion 10

Open slots for narrow specialties: 2
 (Management, Hardware)



Classic PC #5



Jon-R-SVN-1

Male PLC Happiness Officer

Service firm: Fun Foods PLC
Service firm type: Food Vat Control
Security clearance: RED
Credits: 1,000
Tics: Gets ridiculously emotional over the smallest things.

[Tic 2:]

Example of tic in use

Jon-R: How *dare* you take the last algae chip! That was *mine*!

Conn-R: Gosh, I didn't mean to. Um...have some Cold Fun?

Jon-R: Cold Fun... for me? Oh, thank you! I'm sorry I yelled at you... I'm so sorry! *[Bursts into tears.]*

ACTION SKILLS & SPECIALTIES

Management 08

Bootlicking 01
 Could You Spare Some Crunchetym Algae Chips? 14
 Oratory 12

Stealth 08

Concealment 01
 Disguise 12

Violence 04

Energy Weapons 08
 Fine Manipulation 08
 Thrown Weapons 01
 Trip Passerby 10

KNOWLEDGE SKILLS & SPECIALTIES

Hardware 05

Habitat Engineering 13
 Diagnose Food Vat Malfunction 11
 Mechanical Engineering 01

Software 08

C-Bay 01
 Data Analysis 12

Wetware 07

Bioweapons 01
 Psychotherapy 11
 Take Deep Breaths Until I Calm Down 13

Open slots for narrow specialties: 2
 (Stealth, Software)



Classic PC #6



Pat-R-SWF-1

Female Power Svcs Recording Officer

Service firm: Swingvolt
Service firm type: Power Oscillation Professionals
Security clearance: RED
Credits: 1,000
Tics: When in doubt, set something on fire.
 [Tic 2:]

Example of tic in use

Pat-R: I've investigated the barracks as you ordered, sir! Please don't mind the smoke.

Douglas-R: What smoke?

Pat-R: It looks like the barracks are on fire. I've no idea how that could've happened, sir.

ACTION SKILLS & SPECIALTIES

Management 06

Hygiene 01
 Moxie 10

Stealth 05

Assess Flammability 11
 Disguise 01
 Shadowing 09

Violence 08

Demolition 12
 Energy Weapons 08
 Field Weapons 12
 Fine Manipulation 01
 Projectile Weapons 01

KNOWLEDGE SKILLS & SPECIALTIES

Hardware 08

Chemical Engineering 16
 Electrical Engineering 01
 Figure Out Which Wire Does What 14

Software 05

Put Together a Rockin' Soundtrack 11

Wetware 08

Cloning 01
 Devise Interesting Drug Interactions 14
 Pharmatherapy 12

Open slots for narrow specialties: 2
 (Management, Violence)

Pat-R-SWF-1

Female Power Svcs Recording Officer

Mutation: Charm

Society: Mystics (degree 3)

Secret skills: Drug Procurement 15, Partying 16, Twitchtalk (Mystics) 05

Background: If there's anything you know how to do, dude, it's... um... where was I? Oh, yeah. You know how to have a good time. You know which pills mellow you out and which ones send you on a blazing high that goes on for, like, hours. You like to drink and party and, most of all, you like to set things on fire. Fire's real pretty. Nothing gets a party started like a crackling bonfire of PLC forms.

As the recording officer, you get to take pictures of every darn thing. It's great! When you're done, you're going to put it all together into one rockin' vid. Now you just have to make sure that you have lots of cool stuff to film. Especially explosions. And flames. Lots of fire will make this the best vid ever!

Lately you've been hooked on this new drink called Doctor Bot. Apparently it flushes all the hormone suppressants out of your body after you drink it. All you know is that it makes you feel really good when you drink it, and afterwards you get these strange... *urges*... you can't explain. Maybe if you share it with the rest of your team, you can all figure it out together...

SERVICE FIRM INSTRUCTIONS

Your service firm supervisor tells you, 'Look, kid, there's some serious power drains hitting the system lately, and we may need your help even while you're Troubleshooting. No, it's nothing major; just keep your PDC handy and expect a call or two over the next few days. Be ready to shut down the local power conduits—*discreetly!*—when we give the word.'

SECRET SOCIETY INSTRUCTIONS

Your contact tells you, 'Hey man, there's this new leaf or seed or whatever that you can smoke to get, like, totally buzzed. I hear the Sierra Club's got, like, crates of the stuff. If you can find any of their guys, the pass phrase for this week is, like, 'Smash the Machine'. See if you can pick up some of that root or weed or whatever it is for me, okay?' She also mentions the Mystics are on the lookout for new breeds of vat slime (the algae residue that congeals on old food vats), which they use as a base for developing all sorts of funky psychedelic compounds. Bring her any uncatalogued vat slimes and she'll give you some of the good stuff in trade, okay?

PERSONAL EQUIPMENT

- (1) six-pack of Doctor Bot nutrient drink (illegal)
- (1) oversized camera case bearing 'That Show Trial Show' logo
- (1) strobe light
- (1) pack Cancer-Lite cigarettes
- (1) disposable lighter
- (36) visomorpain (Little Black Friend) tablets
- (3) benetridin (VideoLand) capsules (INDIGO)
- (2) funny pink pills that you don't know what they do

ASSIGNED EQUIPMENT

- (1) laser pistol body (no barrel)
- (1) suit red reflex armor
- (1) Series 1300 PDC
- (1) N-10 Multicorderbot (as Multicorder 2)
- (1) Multicorder Dead Reckoning program
- (1) Multicorder Editing program
- (1) Multicorder Infrared program
- (1) Multicorder Recorder program
- (1) Multicorder Visible Light program

Jon-R-SVN-1

Male PLC Happiness Officer

Actual service firm: Stove Rangers

Actual service firm type: BLUE Room Caterers

Mutation: Empathy

Society: Romantics (degree 2)

Secret skills: Cooking 16, Comic Book Trivia 06, Propaganda (Romantics) 06

Background: You've never been sure why, but you're more alive than the soulless drones that surround you. You have more emotion, more passion, in your little finger than the average INFRARED has in his entire body. It's all The Computer's fault, of course. Back in the old days, people really knew how to live. Now they just drift along from day to day, muffled in a haze of boredom and drugs. But you're different. Nothing makes you feel alive like a screaming match or a good cry. Sometimes things get too calm and peaceful. When that happens, you may need to shake things up to have something to scream or cry about.

Unsurprisingly, you've been designated this team's happiness officer. By The Computer, this will be the happiest Troubleshooter team ever, even if you have to scream your throat raw and bawl your eyes out to make it happen!

SERVICE FIRM INSTRUCTIONS

Your Stove Rangers supervisor tells you, 'Due to contamination of the spent bio-organic slurry we use to fertilize our hydroponics bays, we're reassigning you to covertly investigate the food vats at Fun Foods PLC. Keep your ear to the vents; it could be an unauthorized R&D experiment or some secret society plot. Your team leader is R&D, so dig up some dirt on him and blackmail him for info.'

Later, your new 'supervisor' at the food vats tells you, 'So you think you're a big shot because you're a Troubleshooter, vat slime? Well, you'll get no special treatment here. You're not on a mission, and that means you're mine. Scrub that vat!' You curse under your breath as he turns away. He's everything you always hated in a supervisor, and listening to him brings back unpleasant memories of your early days as a vat tender for Soylent Enterprises. You can't shoot him, more's the pity, but if anyone else dares to look down their nose at you for working in the vats, you'll gladly take your anger out on them.

SECRET SOCIETY INSTRUCTIONS

Your contact tells you, 'R&D geneticists have recreated an Old Reckoning plant named 'coca'. It's the secret ingredient to the ancient miracle elixir 'Coca-Cola'. You must find this plant and bring it back to us.' He warns you a Sierra Club agent named 'Doctor Bot' is also looking for the plant. You may need to negotiate, or even kill, to get the plant. Trust no one! May the Force be—er, that is, keep your laser handy!

PERSONAL EQUIPMENT

- (1) force sword (BLUE)
- (5) bags Somewhat Spicy! CrunchieTym algae chips
- (1) pouch Strawberry-Lobster Hot Fun
- (1) 'Buff-Y the Vamp-YRE Slayer' Old Reckoning vid (BLUE)
- (1) 'Return of the Jed-I' Old Reckoning vid (INDIGO)

ASSIGNED EQUIPMENT

- (1) laser pistol body (no barrel)
- (1) suit red reflex armor
- (1) Series 1300 PDC
- (20) pyroxidine 2 (Wider Awake) tablets
- (1) bottle, E-Z-DUZ-IT
- (1) can gelfernine (Inner Happiness) aerosol

Morgan-R-DNR-1

Female HPD&MC Hygiene Officer

Actual service group: Internal Security (spying on HPD&MC)

Mutation: Corrosion

Society: Psion (degree 4)

Secret skills: Nutrition 16, Gloating 15, Bribery 07

Background: It's hard being better than everyone else. You were smarter than the other Junior Citizens in your crèche. That's why Internal Security selected you to join them. Then you realized you were a mutant, and you used your IntSec contacts to hook up with Psion. Now you have to hide your mutation from IntSec, you have to hide your service firm from your team and you're eating nothing but expensive real food from the IR market to keep your acidic sweat from smelling strongly enough to give you away. Oh, and you're surrounded by idiots. But it's worth it to be part of the future of Alpha Complex.

You've been designated the hygiene officer for your team. This involves keeping your teammates clean and scrubbed, which seems to be a waste of your talents. But you're cleverer than that; you've realized you can use your Skin-Core Sampler to intimidate your teammates and to gather tissue samples for Psion. The trick will be getting away from the team and meeting your Psion contact while the samples remain fresh.

SERVICE FIRM INSTRUCTIONS

Your service firm supervisor tells you, 'I don't care if you're on a Troubleshooter mission, you're behind on your hating quota. I need you to implement at least three Secret Society Abhorrence Singalongs by tomorrow. Don't forget to emphasize the Commies, PURGERS and Humanists; the Hating Bureau is giving them the usual top priority.'

Your IntSec handler says, 'There's been an outbreak of asimov failures in docbots in several sectors. We suspect two of your teammates, Conn-R and Douglas-R, may be sympathetic to Corpore Metal. See if you can get any information out of them.' It goes without saying that you should dig up as much dirt on your fellow Troubleshooters as possible. Feel free to rely on eavesdropping, entrapment and even falsified evidence to get what you need.

SECRET SOCIETY INSTRUCTIONS

Your contact tells you, 'There are rumors of a new herbal supplement that's hitting the IR markets. It's called 'Doctor Bot', and it's derived from some new breed of vat slime. It may have mutation-enhancing properties. Get as much of the stuff as you can. If you can test it out on someone, so much the better. And if you spot any new vat slimes, bring us samples of them as well.' He also warns you other secret societies are purchasing the corpses of dead mutants for some nefarious purpose. Be careful out there!

PERSONAL EQUIPMENT

- (4) Red Delicious apples (RED)
- (3) packets unsalted peanuts (ORANGE)
- (3) packets golden raisins (YELLOW)
- (5) zyzbenzaphrene (SlumberSoft) tablets (ORANGE)
- (1) Teela-O pocket mirror

ASSIGNED EQUIPMENT

- (1) laser pistol body (no barrel)
- (1) suit red reflex armor
- (1) Series 1300 PDC
- (1) Detergent Cannon (as flamethrower, S1S, impact)
- (1) Skin-Core Sampler Type 6
- (1) Secret Society Abhorrence Singalong songbook

Zap PC #1



Mac-R-THR-1

Male Armed Forces Team Leader

Service firm: A Few Good Clones
Service firm type: Vulture Squadron Recruiters
Security clearance: RED
Credits: 1,000
Tic: Occasionally loses short-term memory.

[Tic 2:]

Example of tic in use

Mac-R-THR: OK. Here's the plan. What's your name, soldier?

Rig-R: I'm your teammate, Rig-R-DOO. We grew up together, remember?

Mac-R: Right. Rig-R, you'll lead the charge into the Commie hideout. You, what's your name?

Rig-R: I just told you. I'm Rig-R.

Mac-R: Of course. You'll guard the rear.

Rig-R: How can I guard the rear if I'm leading the charge into the Commie hideout?

Mac-R: A Commie hideout? Where?!

ACTION SKILLS & SPECIALTIES

Management 10

Oratory 14
 Intimidation 14
 Bootlicking 01
 Moxie 01
 Give Stirring Eulogies for Clones Killed in the Line of Duty 16

Stealth 06

High Alert 10
 Disguise 01

Violence 09

Energy Weapons 13
 Field Weapons 13
 Projectile Weapons 13
 Unarmed Combat 13
 Demolition 01
 Fine Manipulation 01
 Stand Right in the Middle of a Battle Looking Cool 15

KNOWLEDGE SKILLS & SPECIALTIES

Hardware 06

Disassemble (But Not Reassemble) a Weapon in Seconds Flat 12

Software 04

Wetware 05
 Biosciences 09
 Psychotherapy 01
 Frightening Stories About Mutants 11

Open slots for narrow specialties: 2
 (Stealth, Software)

Zap PC #2



Mac-R-THY-1

Male CPU Team Leader

Service firm: Holy Pockets!
Service firm type: Pocket Protector Refurbishers
Security clearance: RED
Credits: 1,000
Tic: Cackles maniacally at inappropriate times.

[Tic 2:]

Example of tic in use

Mac-R-THY: I need to use the bathroom. Mwaa ha ha ha haaaaaa!

Link-R-APP: Uh, Mac-R, is there something you want to tell us...?

ACTION SKILLS & SPECIALTIES

Management 08

Bootlicking 12
 Interrogation 12
 Oratory 01
 Speak with a Pretend Russian Accent 14

Stealth 09

Disguise 13
 Sleight of Hand 13
 Shadowing 01
 Sneaking 01
 When Caught Sneaking Up Behind Somebody, Act Like You Were Just Stretching or Yawning 15

Violence 08

Energy Weapons 12
 Projectile Weapons 12
 Thrown Weapons 01
 Sneak Attack with Trusty Piano Wire Garotte 14

KNOWLEDGE SKILLS & SPECIALTIES

Hardware 05

Software 05
 Data Analysis 09
 Vehicle Programming 01
 Find Disgusting But Not Technically Treasonous Images Online 11

Wetware 05

Suggestion 09
 Outdoor Life 01

Open slots for narrow specialties: 2
 (Hardware, Wetware)

Zap PC #3



Link-R-APP-1

Female R&D Hygiene Officer

Service firm: HotBots
Service firm type: Bot Processing
Security clearance: RED
Credits: 1,000
Tic: Always sounds sarcastic, no matter what she's saying.

[Tic 2:]

Example of tic in use

Link-R: [Sarcastically] Oh, nice job exposing those traitors, Mac-R-THY. You deserve a commendation, for sure.

Mac-R-THY: Hey, what's that supposed to mean? I really do deserve a commendation.

Link-R: [Even more sarcastic] I know. I'm being totally sincere. I'll be sure to mention your bravery in my report.

Mac-R: Why, you scheming little— [Grabs laser.]

Link-R: [Dripping with sarcasm] Like, please. Don't kill me. I really don't want to die...

ACTION SKILLS & SPECIALTIES

Management 05

Bootlicking 01
 Chutzpah 09
 Withering Sarcasm 11

Stealth 07

Security Systems 11
 Surveillance 01

Violence 09

Energy Weapons 13
 Hand Weapons 13
 Vehicular Combat 01
 Dance Like a Robot 15

KNOWLEDGE SKILLS & SPECIALTIES

Hardware 06

Bot Ops & Maintenance 10
 Nuclear Engineering 01
 Painting and Paint Mixing 12

Software 09

Bot Programming 17
 Financial Systems 01
 L33t H4XX0r Speak 15

Wetware 04

Open slots for narrow specialties: 2
 (Stealth, Wetware)

Link-R-APP-1

Female R&D Hygiene Officer

Mutation: Machine Empathy

Secret society: Death Leopard (degree 17)

Secret skills: Demolition 13, Graffiti Tagging 16, Hacking 13

Background: Who is the traitor everybody knows but nobody has seen? Who is the invisible saboteur that marks all of Alpha Complex with her name? Who is the ghost in the machine, the flybot in the ointment, the monkey in the wrench? Who is 'Traitor Zero'?

You are.

Yes, you are the legendary hacker and graffiti tagger known as 'Zero'. You've covered Alpha Complex with your graffiti. On cooling towers high above the complex, on the walls of luxury INDIGO apartments, on the backsides of corpulent GREEN goons, you've left your spraypainted calling card—the Mark of Zero. You are an artist, and Alpha Complex is a canvas waiting for your paint. How do you do it? Here's your secret: you don't. You get bots to do it for you. You've always had a knack for reprogramming bots. In fact, sometimes you don't even need to reprogram them. Often, they'll do what you want if you just ask them nicely.

Now you've been called up as a Troubleshooter. This ought to be good for a laugh. But beware! Internal Security would love nothing better than to take Zero down. And it looks like there are not one but *two* Internal Security finks on your new Troubleshooter team. Your loyalty officer, Rig-R-DOO, is openly working for IntSec. She's just the sort of Computer-loving, fun-hating, loyalty freak you'd love to push into a food vat or in front of an autocar. And Mac-R-THY is so obviously an IntSec plant, he might as well have leaves and roots. (Whatever those are.) If they, or anybody else, comes close to discovering your secret identity, laser them with extreme prejudice.

SECRET SOCIETY INSTRUCTIONS

A legend like you doesn't take instructions from other Death Leopards. But you do have to keep fresh to stay on top of the heap, and you always need to keep pulling off bigger and more outrageous acts of vandalism and defiance. For several months, you've been painting the Mark of Zero everywhere. Because it's an empty circle with a slash through it, the zero was supposed to mean 'nothing is forbidden'. Pretty profound, huh? But nobody ever understood the symbolism. So you were going to change your signature slogan to 'Zim-R-MAN flew, Tyle-R knew.' But you figured that reference would probably be too obscure.

Now you've decided to change your graffiti tag to 'All Your Base Are Belong To Us.' Nobody will know what that means, either, but hey, screw 'em. Nobody ever understands great art. Reprogram every bot you meet, and cover the entire complex with this new slogan. The Computer will blow its vacuum tubes.

PERSONAL EQUIPMENT

- (1) Multicorder 2 (bulky, heavy) with carrying case
- (1) scrubot
- (3) cans spray paint (black, white, gold) (TREASONOUS)
- (3) paint grenades (red, yellow, blue) (TREASONOUS)
- (1) heavy-duty black backpack
- (1) poison tablet (looks like gelgermine) (TREASONOUS)

ASSIGNED EQUIPMENT

- (1) laser pistol body (no barrel)
- (1) suit red reflec armor
- (1) Series 1300 PDC
- (1) Skin-Core Sampler Type 6

Mac-R-THY-1

Male CPU IntSec Team Leader

Mutation: Puppeteer

Secret society: Communists (degree 11)

Secret skills: Ventriloquism 08, Concoct Ludicrously Elaborate Schemes 11, Communist Propaganda 08

Background: You are smooth, my friend. Sneakier than sneakers, slicker than synthelebe. You are a master of disguise and a wizard of prestidigitation. You live a life of cross and doublecross, of danger and intrigue. You've been named Team Leader of your new Troubleshooter team, which is only appropriate. Except that some dumb ox from the Armed Forces seems to think that he is Team Leader too. How can that be? You'll have to arrange some kind of 'accident' to get that dumb sack of meat out of the way.

But little do those fools on your Troubleshooter team suspect that mild-mannered pocket protector refurbisher Mac-R-THY (that's you) is a secret Internal Security agent! While carrying out your duties as a Troubleshooter, you must secretly watch your teammates for any sign of treason or disloyalty. In particular, IntSec instructs you to be on the lookout for a traitor named 'Zorro', who is apparently leaving treasonous graffiti all over Alpha Complex. Orders are to terminate this Zorro character on sight.

And that's not all! For this Troubleshooter assignment is only your cover. You are actually on an even more secret mission for Internal Security. You have infiltrated the most feared and hated secret society in Alpha Complex—the Communists! Yes, you are an undercover IntSec agent posing as a Commie, reporting secretly to Internal Security on the activities of The Computer's most hated foes.

But wait, there's more! For you are actually playing an even more dangerous game than that! While you are a posing as a low-level Commie traitor for your IntSec superiors, you are in fact a high-level Communist traitor who has infiltrated Internal Security itself! To recap: you are a Commie posing as an IntSec agent posing as a Commie posing as an IntSec agent posing as a CPU pocket protector refurbisher. What could possibly be more cunning?

SECRET SOCIETY INSTRUCTIONS

Oh, you know, the usual: Power to the INFRAREDs, smash The Computer, death to the high security clearance parasites that feed off the people's labor, we spit on their imperialist bourgeois loafers. That kind of thing. Your superiors in the Communist Party are always after you to recruit more low-ranking citizens to the Glorious Revolution. That's not easy to do, but they have given you a nice new set of Communist propaganda brochures. The nice thing about being an IntSec agent as well as a Communist is that, if the recruiting doesn't go so well, you can always laser some sucker on your Troubleshooter team and plant your Commie propaganda on their corpse. That won't really advance the Glorious Revolution, but it will keep The Computer happy.

Oh, and you should probably also feign interest in people's pocket protectors from time to time. Just to maintain your cover.

PERSONAL EQUIPMENT

- (1) Zero-Sum pocket protector
- (2) ZeroGrav R&D pens (EXPERIMENTAL)
- (1) box Communist propaganda brochures
- (1) reversible armband (IntSec-black; Communist-red)
- (1) tube Hair-B-Slick
- (1) trusty piano wire garrote (TREASONOUS)

ASSIGNED EQUIPMENT

- (1) laser pistol body (no barrel)
- (1) suit red reflec armor
- (1) Series 1300 PDC

Mac-R-THR-1

Male Armed Forces Team Leader

Mutation: Charm

Secret society: Anti-Mutant (degree 5)

Secret skills: Power Studies 07, Inspirational Speeches from Old Reckoning Movies 14, WMD 12

Background: There's a war on, soldier. A war of red-blooded, pure-strain humans against evil, slobbering, mutant monstrosities. A war for our precious DNA. A brutal, bloody, glorious war. You are on the front line of that war. And, The Computer help you, you love every minute of it.

You are fairly insane.

You are a soldier and a recruiter for the Vulture Squadrons—the warrior-heroes of Alpha Complex, The Computer's most elite fighting force. There can be no greater glory, you are certain, than fighting the mutant menace and dying in the service of The Computer. Except for convincing other citizens to die in the service of The Computer in your place. Yeah, in many ways, that's actually better.

You have a natural gift for making inspirational speeches, coming up with suicidal plans, and urging your comrades to hurl themselves into certain death. Naturally, you were named team leader of your Troubleshooter team. Except through some snafu, some slide-rule jockey from CPU named Mac-R-THY has also been named team leader. And that is a serious problem. An army can only have one chain of command, and that goes double for a Troubleshooter team. You'll have to show this snivelling little civilian just who is fit to wear the little round badge. Of course, if this Mac-R-THY just happened to 'lead' the team into a mutie ambush, or 'accidentally' catch some friendly fire... well, war is heck!

You're always looking for a few good clones to join the Vulture Squadron. In particular, you've been told to seek out and recruit a citizen who answers to the code name 'Zero'. This 'Citizen Zero' is apparently some kind of super-soldier who could help turn the tide in the war against mutants and mutation. You sure would like to meet someone like that!

SECRET SOCIETY INSTRUCTIONS

Your instructions from the Anti-Mutant society are pretty much always the same, which is fine by you: Mutants are everywhere! Kill all mutants! The war against mutation never ends. And remember: just because a mutie has registered with The Computer is no reason to spare his evil, twisted life.

But your Anti-Mutant superiors have told you to look out especially for a sinister mutant who answers to the code name 'Zero'. This 'Mutant Zero' is apparently some kind of horrifying super-mutant who must be destroyed at all costs. You sure would hate to run into someone like that!

PERSONAL EQUIPMENT

- (1) Multicorder Recorder program (to listen to how you sounded when you gave commands)
- (1) pair Twee-Z-It tweezers
- (1) personal hygiene kit
- (1) small towel
- (2) 20-pound FitBall hand weights, beta version
- (3) StogyTyme Extra-Unfiltered cigarettes (illegal)
- (1) collapsible force rapier (TREASONOUS, EXPERIMENTAL)

ASSIGNED EQUIPMENT

- (1) laser pistol body (no barrel)
- (1) suit red reflec armor
- (1) Series 1300 PDC
- (1) Multicorder 1
- (1) Multicorder Translate program

Zap PC #4



Rig-R-D00-1

Female IntSec Loyalty Officer

Service firm: TSI: Treason Scene Investigation

Service firm type: Forensic Analysis

Security clearance: RED

Credits: 1,000

Tic: Color blind, except when really close to what she's looking at.

[Tic 2:]

Example of tic in use

Rig-R: Citizen! You're not cleared to be in this area!

All-G: What are you talking about? I'm GREEN. And this area is ORANGE. Hey, wait a minute...

Rig-R: [Staring at ORANGE wall from six inches away.] Oh, crud.

ACTION SKILLS & SPECIALTIES

Management 08

Hygiene 16
Chutzpah 01
Lead Singalongs 14

Stealth 05

Concealment 09
Surveillance 09
Shadowing 01
Sneaking 01
Pretend to Spot Tiny, Tiny Clue 11

Violence 07

Energy Weapons 11
Projectile Weapons 11
Vehicular Combat 01
Kill Tiny, Tiny Commies (a.k.a. Germs) 13

KNOWLEDGE SKILLS & SPECIALTIES

Hardware 05

Software 05

Wetware 10

Medical 14
Cloning 14
Outdoor Life 01
Psychotherapy 01
Make Hot Fun Into Cold Fun 16

Open slots for narrow specialties: 2
(Hardware, Software)

Zap PC #5



Gear-R-HED-1

Female PLC Happiness Officer

Service firm: RealMeal Food Extruders

Service firm type: Food Vat Control

Security clearance: RED

Credits: 1,000

Tic: Constantly talks about the food vats, trying (a little) to make them sound less disgusting.

[Tic 2:]

Example of tic in use

Mac-R-THR: I love the smell of plasma in the morning. It smells like—wait a minute, what is that smell? MeatiePaste? CheezieBean?

Gear-R: Oh, that's just me. It's not actually that bad, crawling under the vats to scrub them. It gets your hair nice and slick, you know?

Mac-R: Urgh.

ACTION SKILLS & SPECIALTIES

Management 05

Moxie 09
Hygiene 01
Be Extremely Forgettable 11

Stealth 10

Sleight of Hand 14
Sneaking 14
Disguise 01
Surveillance 01
Crawl Through Vents and Access Tunnels 16

Violence 08

Agility 12
Energy Weapons 12
Vehicular Combat 01
Dive for Cover 14

KNOWLEDGE SKILLS & SPECIALTIES

Hardware 07

Habitat Engineering 11
Chemical Engineering 11
Bot Ops & Maintenance 01

Software 05

Wetware 05
Slime Removal 11

Open slots for narrow specialties: 2
(Hardware, Software)

Zap PC #6



Wolf-R-SSR-1

Male Tech Serrrvices Equipmnet Guy RRREGISTERED MUTANT

Service firm: What's That—Slime?

Service firm type: Slime Identification

Securrrity clearance: RRRED

Crrredits: 1,000

Tic: Speaks with thick Russian accent and phrasing.

[Tic 2:]

Example of tic in use

Wolf-R: Here is Wolf-R, rrreportink for duty. Is werry pleased to be meetink you, Comrade.

Rig-R: Pleased to meet you—hey, wait a minute. There's something funny about you... but I can't quite place it.

Wolf-R: Nyet. Is nothink funny.

ACTION SKILLS & SPECIALTIES

Management 04

Intimidation 08
Hygiene 01
Eloqvently Be Defendink the Defenseless 10

Stealth 08

Shadowing 12
Security Systems 01
Be Detectink Slime 14

Violence 11

Energy Veapons 15
Hand Veapons 15
Unarmed Combat 15
Demolition 01
Fine Manipulation 01
Just Keep Punishment After Punishment Takink,
Long After Ordinary Clone Is Being Toast, Then
Finally Be Losink It In Orgy of Violence 17

KNOWLEDGE SKILLS & SPECIALTIES

Hardware 08

Vehicle Ops & Maintenance 12
Weapons & Armor Maintenance 12
Nuclear Engineering 01

Software 04

Vetware 05
Outdoor Life 09
Medical 01
Slime Identification and Taxonomy 11

Open slots for narrow specialties: 2
(Hardware, Software)

Wolf-R-SSR-1

Male Tech Services Equipment Guy RRREGISTERED MUTANT

Mutation: Rrregenerration (RRREGISTERED)

Secret society: Sierra Club

Secret skills: Survival 12, Speak With Slime 16, Bioweapons 9

Background: It is making you so angry! Just because you are speaking with Russian accent, roll your r's, changing your v's to w's, and always present perfect tense mangling, this is not making you Communist! You are true and (mostly) loyal Alpha Complex citizen!

Story you keep telling, but no one is listening: When you were only Junior Citizen, you were by top secret branch of Armed Forces abducted. They experimented on you, exposed you to mutagens and turned you into "Weapon [er, *Weapon*] Zero", perfect killing machine. Also, they train you to speak like Commie, with thick Russian accent, the better for to be infiltrating villainous Communist infiltrators. Unfortunately for them, they did not ask you what you were of this plan thinking. Da, you can tear off citizen's legs and use them to beat him to death before he passes out from bleeding. But you are pacifist! Peace! To you, almost all life is sacred. You refused to kill for Armed Forces. When they insisted, you slaughtered platoon of Vulture Squadrons. That convinced them of your deep love and respect for almost every living thing.

That's why you joined Sierra Club, secret society that is to preserve the wide world of nature devoted. Your fellow Clubbers are all gung ho to explore Outdoors, but you could spend your life marvelling at natural wonders right here inside Alpha Complex. Like slimes! Most citizens are thinking slime is just something off their boots to be scraping. But slimes of Alpha Complex actually diverse and beautiful living things! Brownish-grey sludge that grows on food wats... greyish-black ooze that drips from waste pipelines... blackish-brown goop that collects under clone tanks... all colors of spectrum. Da, you are loving slimes.

But you are not maybe loving every living thing. Nyet! You are Armed Forces hater for what they did to you, like that murderous swine pig, *ptool*, Mac-R-THR on your Troubleshooter team. And you are Internal Security snoops hater, like that Rig-R-DOO, always to be hassling you because of your accent and thinking you are a Commie being. Grr. For these two, to your pacifism you could easily exception be making.

SECRET SOCIETY INSTRUCTIONS

Latest newsletter from Sierra Club reads as follows: 'The intensity of recent hygiene initiatives severely threatens the biodiversity of Alpha Complex's fragile ecosystem.' In other words, busybody citizens are all our precious slime clean up! But you can be this tragedy preventer. You have several fast-growink slime samples, which you must transplant to other areas of Alpha Complex. Remember, slimes are living varrrm, isolated places in which to be growink. In other words, highest security-clearance areas. Higher, better! And punish anyone who is laying finger on poor defenseless little slimes!

PERSONAL EQUIPMENT

- (1) concealable telescoping crowbar (YELLOW)
- (6) covered petri dishes of fast-growing slimes
- (1) small bottle slime nutrient bath (toxic to humans)
- (1) magnifying glass
- (1) pair ultraviolet goggles (see in darkness) (BLUE)
- (1) heavy-duty black backpack

ASSIGNED EQUIPMENT

- (1) laser pistol body (no barrel)
- (1) suit red reflex armor
- (1) Series 1300 PDC
- (1) Multipurpose Tool Kit (MTK)

Gear-R-HED-1

Female PLC Happiness Officer

Mutation: Shrinking

Secret society: Frankenstein Destroyers

Secret skills: Demolition 12, Botspotting 08, Bot Sabotage 14

Background: You didn't always smell like this. You didn't always work in the food vats, knee-deep in vat slime with bits of Extrude-A-Food in your hair. You used to work in a nice clean laboratory, designing sophisticated mold-eating fungi and fungus-eating molds. But one day, PLC replaced all the chemical engineers in your sector with bots. You got reassigned to the food vats, the worst job in Alpha Complex. Now you're knee-deep in vat slime and you stink like last week's Soylent Yellow. Worse yet, you're... shrinking. Yes! Getting smaller every day. Something in the slime must be doing it to you.

Oh, you hate slime. You hate the food vats. Most of all, you hate bots. They think they're so great, with their shiny circuitboards and their millions of calculations per second. They waltz into a sector, steal good jobs, and leave monotonous, repetitive tasks to honest, hard-working citizens. It makes you want to rip out their guts. Or gears. Or whatever bots have inside them.

But now you've been called up to be a Troubleshooter! You're the team's new happiness officer, which is kind of a joke. You haven't been happy since you lost your job to an uppity vending machine. But you are pretty happy to be out of the food vats. If you play your cards right, this Troubleshooter gig might be your ticket out of the slime for good.

One thing about working in the bowels of Alpha Complex: You get to know all the little access tunnels down there. You can squeeze in small places and get to places you're not supposed to go, or hear things you're not supposed to hear. That's how you overheard that one of your new teammates—Mac-R—is a Commie. Not just an everyday traitor, but a real live borscht-eating Communist! There could be big perks for a Troubleshooter who terminates a genuine Commie infiltrator. The only problem is, there are two citizens on your team named Mac-R. And you didn't quite catch whether the Commie was Mac-R-THR or Mac-R-THY. But how important is a detail like that, really? You'd laser them both in a picosecond, and every other Commie too, if it meant getting out of the slimy food vats. Gahh! Slime!

SECRET SOCIETY INSTRUCTIONS

'Judgment Daycycle', the final showdown between artificial intelligence and, um, the other kind, is coming! Use your sabotage and demolition skills to disrupt or destroy bots, but try not to blow your cover. Also, one of your teammates, Link-R-APP, is a hotshot robotics expert from R&D and obviously a closet bot sympathizer. Kill her if you get the chance. Most important: When you see the message 'All Your Bots Are Belong To Us', you'll know the final battle between bot and clone has begun. Wherever the message might be, forget about keeping a low profile. Grab the biggest weapons you can and blow every last bot into bits and bytes!

PERSONAL EQUIPMENT

- (1) pair in-boot heel supports (make you look taller)
- (1) spraycan EZClean disinfectant
- (12) Vita-Yum Meal Substitute bars (plain)
- (1) can QuikRust corrosion enhancer gel

ASSIGNED EQUIPMENT

- (1) laser pistol body (no barrel)
- (1) suit red reflex armor
- (1) Series 1300 PDC
- (24) xanitrick (Wakey-Wakey) tablets
- (1) bottle quinine (E-Z-DUZ-IT)
- (6) gelgermine (Inner Happiness) tablets
- (1) Double-Fun Complex Singalong songbook

Rig-R-DOO-1

Female IntSec Loyalty Officer

Mutation: Hypersenses

Secret society: FCCC-P

Secret skills: Interior Decorating 08, Songs About Loyalty and Hygiene 13, Meeting Machine Empaths 11

Background: You are that rare thing: a truly loyal citizen. Once you were a sinner, led into temptation and sloppy hygiene by the servants of the AntiComputer. But you have been rebooted. Praise The Computer! You have seen the light, you have heard the Good Data, you have been washed in the blood of the RAM. Now you are a True Believer. You do The Computer's work in Internal Security. You are a hygiene fanatic and a forensics expert. You have a gift for seeing things that others don't: tiny microbes, smudged tongueprints, the faintest of chemical residues. The greasy fingerprints of treason cannot hide from you. And that's how you know the awful truth: Alpha Complex is crawling with microscopic Commies! You can call them germs or bugs or viruses, but they amount to the same thing. Tiny little traitors tearing down our beloved Alpha Complex and leading loyal citizens astray.

Hygiene is your passion. It's the one true way to distinguish the Faithful from the Commies. Loyal citizens are clean and well groomed. Commies are unkempt and smell funny. They can't hide it. Hygiene is a window to the inner citizen. That's why you can't believe you weren't made hygiene officer. There must be some mistake—except that The Computer doesn't make mistakes. So this mixup must be deliberate sabotage by the agents of filth and sloppiness. You'll have to keep a constant watch on your team's hygiene officer, Link-R-APP, to see that she fulfills all of her duties to the letter. Maybe she's in league with the microscopic servants of the AntiComputer! If she goes soft on upholding hygiene standards, you'll have to fry her.

On the brighter side, your new team leader is the dashing Mac-R-THR, whom you grew up with in THR Sector. Ever since you were a Junior Citizen, you've been sweet on Mac-R. He's so brave, so loyal to The Computer, so nicely groomed... It makes your biocycles go all aflutter. Sadly, he doesn't seem to remember you. But now that you two are teammates, you're sure to impress him with your impeccable hygiene. If any filthy traitor tries to hurt your hero, they'll get a taste of your righteous wrath.

SECRET SOCIETY INSTRUCTIONS

Share the Good Data with other loyal citizens. Tell them about The Computer's love for them, and the coming Judgment Daycycle. Lead them in singalongs of 'The Computer Wants Me for a Laserbeam' and 'The Hallel-U-JAH Chorus.' And KILL ALL DIRTY COMMIES! (Both microscopic and regular-sized.)

PERSONAL EQUIPMENT

- (1) pocket-size pack of Personal Wipes
- (1) jar SlimeAway disinfectant gel
- (1) deluxe personal hygiene kit
- (1) FCCC-P hymnal (mildly TREASONOUS)
- (3) rolatin (Happy Life) tablets (BLUE)
- (1) Old Reckoning Valentine's Day card (TREASONOUS)

ASSIGNED EQUIPMENT

- (1) laser pistol body (no barrel)
- (1) suit red reflex armor
- (1) Series 1300 PDC
- (1) Loyalty Notepad (with thumbprint lock)
- (1) Loyalty Stylus (with secret recording device)
- (3) gelgermine (Inner Happiness) tablets



Traitor Recycling Studio

An informal gaggle of over a dozen **PARANOIA** writers, the **Traitor Recycling Studio** comprises over a dozen players from *The Toothpaste Disaster*, an online **PARANOIA** game played in summer 2004. (You can see the results at <http://paranoia.allenvarney.com>.) We collaborate online, sharing ideas and reviewing text. It's fun, productive and not even a little treasonous. We think.

The following Traitors wrote *Crash Priority*:

Known as Costin-U-MOR-8 in *The Toothpaste Disaster*, **Paul Baldowski** ('Patch Job') wrote much of the Service Firms, Mutant Powers and Skills chapters of the **PARANOIA** XP rulebook. He has written for *Role Player Independent* and *Games Games Games* magazines as a play-by-mail reviewer and correspondent. He currently juggles the administration of far too many websites, including the fine **PARANOIA** fan site Omega Complex (www.omegacomplex.com).

Ben Engelsberg ('Straight Six-Shooter') lives in Tucson, Arizona. He's played **PARANOIA** since 1985, when he and a group of students used it as part of a study on George Orwell's 1984 and dystopian societies. Any excuse to play games during school. In *The Toothpaste Disaster* Ben played High Programmer Mesh-U-GNA-8. He currently serves The Computer as the Customer Support Operations Manager for a mid-size software company.

Beth Fisch ('Traitor Backup') is a writer and editor based in Austin, Texas. Her last name rhymes with 'whiskey.' In the 1990s Beth wrote for five Storyteller RPGs from White Wolf Game Studio (*Vampire*, *Werewolf*, *Mage*, *Wraith* and *Changeling*). Recently (and gratefully) she retired from a career as a technical writer and editor at various high-tech software companies to appease the creative-writing half of her brain. She's helping her husband, Allen Varney, package the first year's support line of **PARANOIA** XP products from Mongoose Publishing.

Andy Fitzpatrick ('Random Access Mission') is better known to loyal citizens on the ceaselessly active Paranoia-Live.net forums as High Programmer Jazzer. He helped coordinate the extensive community involvement that immeasurably improved **PARANOIA** XP, and he played Make-U-CRY-2 in *The Toothpaste Disaster*. With the enigmatic Java programmer NoryB, Andy developed and propagated JParanoia, a freeware program for playing **PARANOIA** games online. (Download it free at www.paranoia-live.net.) He resides in London.

Jeff Groves ('Nyuk Nyuk Nyuk') is a college student in Iowa. A longtime **PARANOIA** fan, he signally improved the XP edition through his playtest feedback, his role as Drake-U-LAH-1 and -2 in *The Toothpaste Disaster* and his articles in Mongoose Publishing's *Sigms & Portents* magazine.

Dan Curtis Johnson ('Stealth Train') wrote the introductory Classic mission 'Mister Bubbles' in the **PARANOIA** XP rulebook. In *The Toothpaste Disaster* he played Knock-U-OUT-5 through -7 and (briefly) -9. He tests software for Apple Computer and occasionally writes comic books. His graphic novel *Moonshine*, with art by Jeff Johns, appears from AiT/PlanetLar in summer 2005.

Rob MacDougall ('Zap Six-Shooter') posts frequently at the gaming Web site *The 20' x 20' Room* (www.20by20room.com). He played Don-U-DON-11 in *The Toothpaste*

Disaster while simultaneously finishing his doctoral dissertation at Harvard.

Eric Minton ('Classic Six-Shooter') participated in one of the very first **PARANOIA** demos at Origins '84. There was only one character left when he and his brother arrived, so they wound up playing a two-headed unregistered mutant. Strangely, no one noticed the extra head, though it scarcely mattered—the Troubleshooter team lost half their clones before the briefing, and the rest didn't make it through R&D. In *The Toothpaste Disaster* he played lovable brain-in-a-jar Jan-U-ARY-31. He works for a web design company in New York where, if the decor is to be believed, everyone seems to have ULTRAVIOLET Clearance.

Allen Varney ('Traitor Backup') is a game designer and writer in Austin, Texas. He designed the XP edition of **PARANOIA** and has published three boardgames, two dozen roleplaying supplements, seven books and over 250 articles, columns and reviews. In 1985 he wrote the early **PARANOIA** adventure 'Send in the Clones' with Warren Spector (who later became a legendary producer of computer games). He hosted and ran *The Toothpaste Disaster* game on his home page, www.allenvarney.com. With his wife, Beth Fisch, he is packaging the early XP support line for Mongoose Publishing.

These and other notorious Traitors are even now preparing other **PARANOIA** products not yet available at your clearance. Get ready! Check out the latest **PARANOIA** news on the XP development blog hosted by **PARANOIA**'s original co-designer, Greg Costikyan (www.costik.com/paranoia), and join the forums at www.paranoia-live.net, as well as Mongoose Publishing's own much larger forum at www.mongoosepublishing.com.

It's not mandatory—yet—but every Troubleshooter knows, it pays to be prepared.

(Actually, now that we think on it, that's hardly ever true. But it sounds nice. Work with us, okay?)

Thanks to **Bob Fleck** for the 'Random Access Mission' title suggestion, and to the many others who contributed suggestions on the **PARANOIA** XP development blog.

PARANOIA™

UNDER PRESSURE?

Ever since you started Gamemastering the **PARANOIA** XP roleplaying game, you've struggled to keep up with your players. Right?

They always want *new* Troubleshooter missions in **Alpha Complex**—*new* ways to compel fear and ignorance—*new* reasons to loathe and suspect their fellow Troubleshooters—*new* methods of dying repeatedly in the most absurdly arbitrary ways. Right?

Oh, wait—sorry—you want all that stuff, not the players. You enjoy having

The Computer throw its Troubleshooters into new hose-job no-win deathtrap fiascos, so you work hard to invent the best fiascos you can, work your brains out, all under a crash-priority deadline so you wonder why, *why* you ever became a Famous Game Designer....

Oh, wait—sorry again—look, let's start over. You, the Gamemaster, want new **PARANOIA** missions. This supplement, **Crash Priority**, gives you a bunch of missions. They're creative and funny. Buy them.

(So it's not the most elegant sales pitch. We're on a deadline, okay?)

CRASH PRIORITY

A high-speed mission collection by the **TRAITOR RECYCLING STUDIO**

Illustrated by **JIM HOLLOWAY**

The finest (and fastest-working) Famous Game Designers in **PARANOIA**-dom bring you **five** short yet hysterical missions in the **Classic**, **Straight** and **Zap** play styles:

- 'Stealth Train' by **Dan Curtis Johnson**: Guard a super-vehicle so incredibly advanced, it barely even exists!
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- 'Random Access Mission' by **Andy Fitzpatrick**: Stop the addictive Commie software virus *T3tr.1s*.
- 'Nyuk Nyuk Nyuk' by **Jeff Groves**: Huh? You think we'd rip off an Old Reckoning comedy trio? Oh, a wiseguy! Why, I oughta....

You need the **PARANOIA** XP rulebook to use this supplement.

- * Five mini-missions and 21 pre-made player characters
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- * Requires the **PARANOIA** XP rulebook
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For use with
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For
Gamemasters,
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A world fit for **Kafka**, **Orwell** and the **Marx Brothers**

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

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

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

ISBN 1-904854-35-4

\$14.95 MONGOOSE PUBLISHING—SWINDON, UK

MGP 6633

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