

THE ROLEPLAYING GAME OF A DARKLY HUMOROUS FUTURE

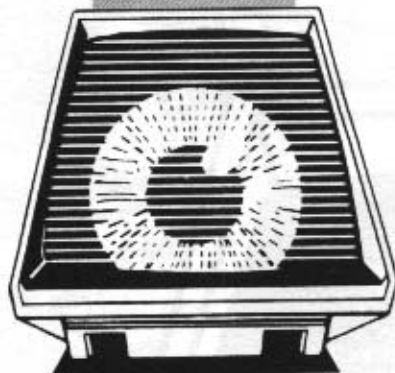
PARANOIA PARANOIA PARANOIA

SECOND EDITION



Gelber • Rolston • Costikyan • Murphy • Goldberg

**WEST
END
GAMES**



PARANOIA PARANOIA

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Paranoia is West End Games' trademark for its roleplaying game of a darkly humorous future.

If any of this game's components are damaged or missing, write to us and we'll replace them. A complete set of this game should include:

BOOKLET VERSION: One 136-page paperback book, with 6 bound-in two-panel fold-outs.

BOXED VERSION: One 136-page paperback book, as above. One 20-sided die. One 16-page Complete Troubleshooter booklet.

Questions about the game's rules will be answered if accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope. (Foreign customers should include two international reply coupons.) Please word your questions so they can be answered "yes" or "no," or with a few words. Write to the address above.

A West End Games catalog is free upon request.



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SECURITY CLEARANCE AMBIGUOUS — READ AT YOUR OWN RISK!

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- D. I.O.G.C. Player Characters
Clearance Ultraviolet
- E. I.O.G.C. Hand-Outs
Clearance Ultraviolet
- F. More I.O.G.C. Stuff
Clearance Ultraviolet

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 Thought Control: The Computer



Preface

Attention, Player!

Read "Welcome to Paranoia," on page 6 of this booklet. When you're finished, come back here. Come straight back here. Do not pass Go. Do not sass The Computer. Failure to come back here is treason.

Thank you. Now, you may begin to play. True, you know nothing about the game. Tough. That's *Paranoia* for you.

Well, if you insist, you may read all of "Paranoia for Players," which begins on page 5 and ends on page 28. This section is classified Red. Since you are now a Troubleshooter, your security clearance is Red, and you may read "Paranoia for Players" without fear of execution. It will teach you a little bit about the *Paranoia* universe and the rules of the game. It also tells you how to generate your own character. But don't generate one yet; gamemasters frequently use pre-generated characters (see yours for details).

What's after "Paranoia for Players"?

What is your security clearance, please? Red? I'm sorry; you are not cleared to read the rest of this book. The rest of this book is classified Ultraviolet. Only gamemasters may read it. If you read the rest of this book, you are a traitor, and subject to summary execution.

Of course, we recognize that most of you will read it anyway, but don't tell your gamemaster if you do. Pretend you haven't read it. If he asks, look him straight in the eye, cross your heart, spit over your shoulder thrice and promise that you have *never, ever* read the book and you have no intention of ever doing so. We're sure he will believe you.

Oops. Almost forgot to mention — **don't read the adventure!** ("Into the Outdoors With Gun and Camera" on pages 107 through 134.) Pretty please? This time we really mean it. An adventure is a story which the gamemaster puts your characters through. If you know all the surprises and the details of the plot in advance, it's not going to be very interesting when you play.

Attention, Gamemaster!

Oh, fortunate one! Beloved of The Computer, you are cleared for all data. Read "Paranoia for Players" so you know what your players know. Then, read the rest of the book. Don't feel that you have to memorize everything; *Paranoia* is a game of free-wheeling improvisation, and if you forget a rule or miss an important detail, we suggest you just bluff it out. If you're a novice, "An Introduction to Gamemastering" (pages 29 through 34) teaches you the basics. If you're experienced, "Gamemastering *Paranoia*" (pages 91 through 106) provides advanced suggestions and advice for how to maintain the proper atmosphere of ignorance and fear, and reduce your players to quivering submission. Rookies don't need to worry about the advanced stuff, though; learn the basics, and get going.

We include rules for character generation in "Paranoia for Players." However, the first few times you play, we suggest you use pre-generated characters. Fold-Out D provides six pre-generated character sheets; fold it out, cut it off, hack up the sheets, and hand them out to your players. If you don't want to ruin this great work of art, trusting that it will one day have the same resale value as a Shakespeare first folio or *Fantastic Four* #1, feel free to photocopy the character sheets and cut up your copies.

We also include a complete, ready to run mini-epic adventure, "Into the Outdoors with Gun and Camera." Again, we suggest that the first time you run *Paranoia*, you use this adventure. *Paranoia* is an unusual game, and by using our adventure, you'll see how to do things. Later on, you can devise your own twisted stories for the delight and tormentation of your players.

The Fold-Outs

Other publishers just give you a chintzy book. We give you more than just pages with stuff on 'em; we give you six (count 'em) nifty *Fold-Outs* too. These are two-panel pages you can *fold out* (get it?) so that one panel extends out from the booklet.

See? It's absolutely true; The Computer is your friend. You're in good manipulatory appendages with West End.

The Fold-Outs are printed with all sorts of useful things you use during play, like:

Fold-Out A: This is printed with lots of charts and tables you use in the game.

Fold-Out B: Goshwow. More charts and tables.

Fold-Out C: This is printed with a blank character sheet and some forms.

Fold-Out D: This is printed with the pre-generated player-characters which you're supposed to use in "Into the Outdoors with Gun and Camera." You can photocopy them if you want.

Fold-Outs E and F: These are printed with a slew of maps, rosters, and documents the gamemaster can use when running "Into the Outdoors with Gun and Camera." You're supposed to yank them out, slice them up, and hand the maps and documents to your players at appropriate moments in the game. The rosters you use yourself to keep track of bots, non-player characters and other nuisances as you play. Again, photocopy this stuff if you prefer.

Isn't this wonderful? Aren't you happy? Failure to be happy is treason. The Computer is your friend.

The Die

Paranoia is played using a 20-sided die. If you bought the boxed version of the game, you got one with it. If you bought the book version, you can get 20-sided dice at most hobby stores — or you can send us one dollar for postage and handling and we'll send you one (see page 135).



PARANOIA

PLAYER SECTION

Security Clearance RED.
Cleared for all Players.



Paranoia
for Players



0. Welcome to *Paranoia*

THE FOLLOWING IS SECURITY CLEARANCE INFRARED — CLEARED FOR ALL CITIZENS.

May I be of assistance?

Sure. Why don't you tell me how this game works?

I'm sorry, citizen. That information is not available at this time.

What do you mean, it's not available?

You are not yet a Troubleshooter. Therefore your security clearance is Infrared. The rules are security clearance Red. You are not cleared to know the rules. At your service.

Huh? Most games are real eager to teach you the rules.

Not *Paranoia*. In *Paranoia*, you don't know who your friends are. You don't know who your enemies are. You don't know how your equipment works. You don't know the rules. One thing you know: everyone is out to get you.

Stay alert! Trust no one! Keep your laser handy!

Ignorance and fear; fear and ignorance. Those are our watchwords.

The back cover copy says something about a computer.

The Computer is your friend! Trust The Computer.

In *Paranoia*, you play a Troubleshooter in service to The Computer. You are The Computer's trusted agent.

How did I get to be a Troubleshooter?

You turned in a friend for treason. He was executed for betraying The Computer. The Computer rewarded you for your loyalty.

What is a Troubleshooter supposed to do?

Your job is to root out all traitors and execute them. In other words, to find trouble... and then to shoot it.

What's a "traitor?"

A traitor is an evil and malevolent human who has betrayed his friend The Computer and seeks to destroy The Computer, humanity, Alpha Complex and life as we know it. Traitors must be unmasked and destroyed.

All mutants are traitors. They are genetically imperfect. They have no place in utopia. They must be eliminated.

All members of secret societies are traitors. They belong to organizations not officially sanctioned by The Computer. They conspire against The Computer. They must be destroyed.

By the way... you are a mutant. And a member of a secret society.

I'm a... mutant?

That's right. All Troubleshooters would be eager to unmask you as a traitor and execute you. You work with many Troubleshooters. All of them carry powerful weapons.

Let me get this straight. I'm a traitor. The punishment for treason is death. My job is to hunt down and kill traitors. I work with other people, who have the same orders. All of them want to kill me.

Not exactly. All of them want to kill *traitors*. They don't know you're a Commie mutant traitor... yet.

And if they find out that I'm a mutant, they'll kill me?

They'll try. Of course, if you convict them of treason *first*, then they will be executed, and you may survive. Of course, false accusations of treason are themselves treason.

So I want to prove that they're traitors before they can prove that I'm a traitor. And if I don't... I die.

Precisely. Watch out! Traitors are everywhere!

By the way: dead traitors cannot testify to their own innocence — or against you. It is best to shoot first and ask questions later.

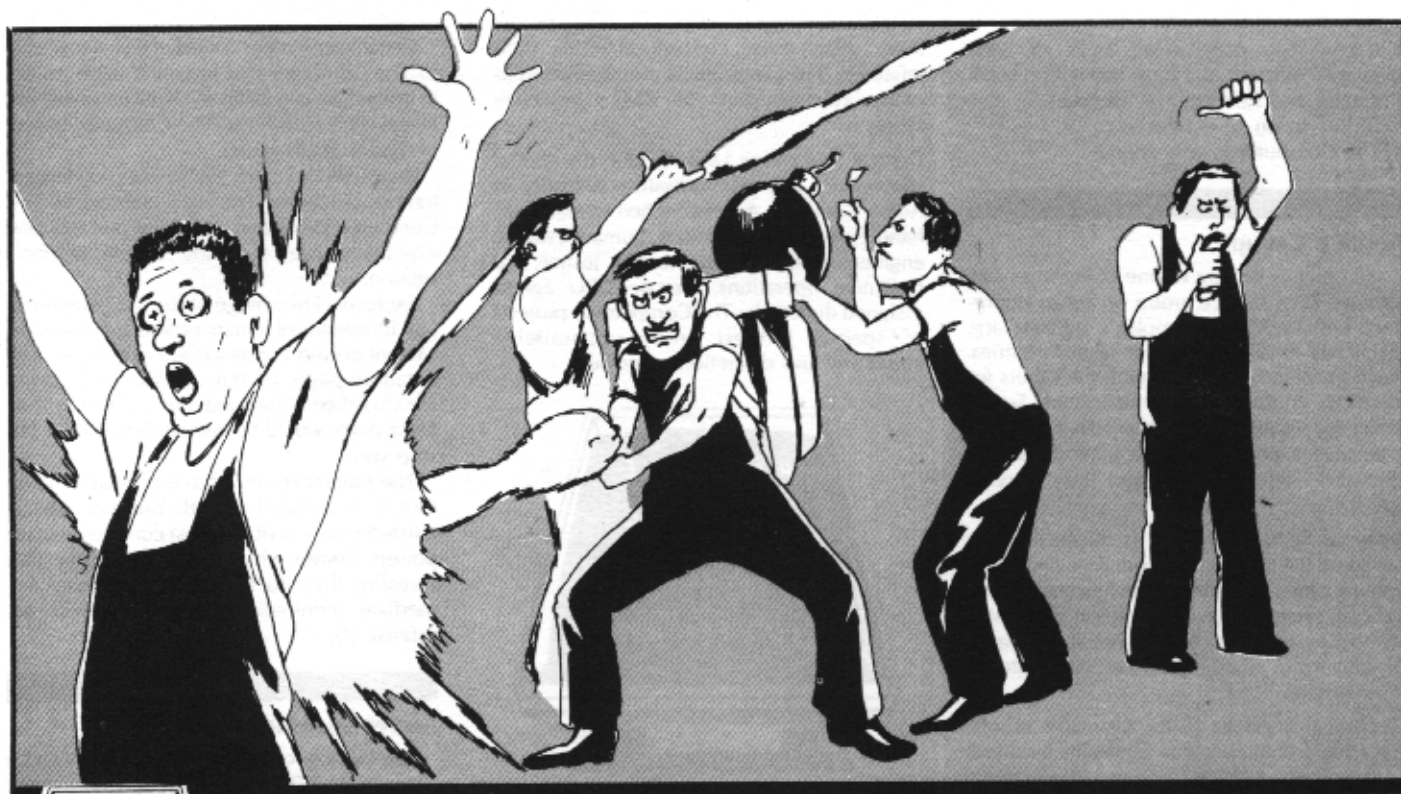
Stay alert! Trust no one! Keep your laser handy!

Are you *sure* this is going to be fun?

Certainly, citizen! Of course it will be fun. The Computer says so, and The Computer is your friend. Can you doubt The Computer? Doubting The Computer is treason.

No! No, certainly not. If The Computer says this will be fun, then this certainly will be fun. Only a Commie mutant traitor could believe otherwise.

Excellent, citizen! You're getting the idea. You have just been promoted to security clearance Red. Welcome to *Paranoia*.



1. Life In Utopia

Greetings, Citizen!

You are a citizen of the far future. Your home is Alpha Complex.

Humanity has advanced greatly since the bad old days of the 20th Century. There is no war. There is no famine. There is no disease. Alpha Complex is a utopia, run by a benevolent and omniscient computer. The Computer is your friend. The Computer provides for your needs. The Computer ensures that each and every citizen of Alpha Complex is happy.

Failure to be happy is treason. Treason is punishable by summary execution.

You are happy — aren't you?

We thought so.

You are a clone. According to legend, humans once reproduced by rutting, like vile animals. This is no longer true. Humans are grown in clone banks by The Computer. There is no longer any need for the messy randomness of love, romance and childbirth. The Computer makes certain that every human is genetically perfect in every respect.

See what love The Computer has for its citizens! The Computer is your friend. Trust The Computer.

Each human is part of a clone family of six genetically-identical siblings. This is so that no one is ever lonely. Also, The Computer is well aware of the importance of making back-ups,

in case of accidental loss or erasure. The Computer is wise. The Computer is benevolent. The Computer is your friend.

The Computer provides everything for the happy citizens of Alpha Complex. It provides food. It provides shelter. It provides entertainment. It provides challenging and meaningful work. It provides for the spiritual and psychological needs of each of its citizens. It exists to serve you.

But... Alpha Complex is at war. It has been at war for all of recorded history. There is constant danger of infiltration by the enemy. The enemy are the "Commies." Traitorous elements within Alpha Complex, such as mutants and secret societies, assist the Commies. These dangerous elements must be rooted out and destroyed. Enemies are everywhere! Stay alert! Trust no one! Keep your laser handy!

Security Clearance

Every citizen of Alpha Complex has a security clearance. Your clearance is Red. Security clearances correspond to the electromagnetic spectrum: Beneath you in status are the unwashed masses, the laborers and drones of security clearance Infrared; above you in status are Orange, Yellow, Green, Blue, Indigo, Violet and Ultraviolet. Ultraviolet is the highest status.

It is whispered that there are clearances above Ultraviolet, but rumors are treason.

The Computer determines each citizen's clearance with complete impartiality. Higher clearance means greater responsibility; it also brings benefits — larger quarters, more privacy, a greater choice in food. The needs of all citizens are cared for, but those who sacrifice the most for the sake of society and their fellow beings are rewarded most greatly.

Citizens of higher clearance are more knowledgeable and more capable than you, and have advanced because they have selflessly served the greater good. You should defer to higher-clearance citizens at all times.

Failure to do so is treason.

Citizens are expected to wear clothing of the same color as their security clearance. Infrared citizens wear black. It is said that Ultraviolet citizens (also known as High Programmers) wear white, but you have never seen anyone wearing white. Indeed, you have never seen a white wall or a white piece of equipment because of the security laws. You must wear red at all times.

Failure to do so is treason.

In order to make sure that only citizens of the requisite competence, judgment and reliability have access to restricted areas, Alpha Complex is divided into colored areas.



Citizens may only enter areas of their clearance or lower. You must stay within black (Infrared) and Red areas at all times.

Failure to do so is treason.

The Computer is your friend.

Service Groups

All citizens belong to one of eight *service groups*. Each service group serves an important role in Alpha Complex's bureaucracy. Each has its own particular responsibilities. Each constantly struggles with the others for funding, equipment, and personnel. Sometimes the struggle becomes violent. Characters may obtain special equipment, information or personal influence through their service groups.

Internal Security (IntSec) is responsible for weeding out traitors and Commies and maintaining order. It combines the functions of law officers, secret police, and monitors of political orthodoxy. IntSec is cordially hated and feared by citizens in all other services. Its agents are everywhere.

Technical Services (Tech) maintains robots, vehicles, communications hardware, industrial and production systems, and various electronic and mechanical service systems. In practice Tech Services' and Power Services' responsibilities overlap. Vicious bureaucratic rivalry and infighting develops over which group is best suited to serve The Computer in disputed jurisdictions.

Housing Preservation and Development and Mind Control (HPD & MC) is responsible for primary human services — housekeeping, creche management, education, entertainment, recreation, and retirement management. This is the largest, the least prestigious, and the least politically reliable service group. But as dispensers of propaganda, HPD & MC can sway the emotions of the masses, making it in some ways the most powerful.

The Armed Forces (Army) protect Alpha Complex against external invasion by Commie mutant traitors. They also supplement Internal Security against internal threats. Tough, well-trained, well-equipped members of elite units like the vaunted Vulture Squadrons frequently serve as bodyguards and handle high-priority missions within Alpha Complex.

Production, Logistics and Commissary (PLC) is responsible for agricultural and industrial production and allocation of resources. It prepares food and stores and distributes all consumer goods. PLC is only marginally more prestigious than HPD & MC.

Power Services (Power) maintains the power plants and the primary habitat engineering systems of Alpha Complex — traffic, air, water, and waste. Disputes with Technical Services fuel a bitter rivalry between the two groups.

Research and Design (R&D) develops new technology and equipment for use by The Computer and citizens of Alpha Complex. R&D's bold advances are better known for

their imaginative conception than their reliability. The Computer is unrestrained in its enthusiastic support for R&D's visionary projects.

Central Processing Unit (CPU) is the central supervisory and administrative authority of Alpha Complex. An entrenched bureaucracy handles records, regulations, human resource engineering, utopian engineering, justice, and executive operations. Certain CPU agents assigned directly by The Computer to projects of special interest enjoy unparalleled autonomy and discretionary powers.



Troubleshooters

All player characters belong to the Troubleshooters, an elite service unit composed of citizens from all service groups. Troubleshooters go wherever The Computer orders, solving whatever problems The Computer wants solved. Being a Troubleshooter is the most dangerous job available to any citizen, but it is also one of the few ways a citizen may rapidly rise to higher status.

If you are lucky and serve The Computer well, you may dream of one day joining the ranks of the High Programmers. But you must beware; the Troubleshooter's job is perilous, and there are traitors everywhere.

Mutant Powers

Your character has a mutant power. This can be a great advantage. This can also be a great danger, since having a mutant power is treason. However, your power may help you stay alive as you try to advance in service to The Computer.

Some citizens are *registered mutants*. A registered mutant is a citizen who learns that, through no fault of his own, he is possessed of a treasonous mutant power, and selflessly confesses his flaw to The Computer. In its wisdom and benevolence, The Computer forgives those who make full confession, and permits such mutants to live. However, The Computer requires registered mutants to wear uniforms with yellow stripes at all times. (Yellow clearance mutants wear a black-bordered yellow stripe.) Registered mutants are not subject to summary execution when they use their powers.

Certain powers are considered so dangerous to The Computer that revealing them results in immediate execution. A character would not reveal such a power to The Computer unless he had a death wish.

Registered mutants are self-acknowledged traitors, but their existence is tolerated by The Computer. Dedicated registered mutants may eventually overcome the stigma of their treason.

Excessive knowledge of the use, functions, and limitations of mutant powers is treasonous. Mutant powers are described in considerable detail on pages 68 through 73. Those pages are classified Ultraviolet. For a player to read those pages would be treason. Not that we can stop you.

The Mutant Power Table is printed on Fold-Out A. It is classified Red. You may read it. It lists the names of the most common mutant powers. Powers which are so treasonous that revealing them to The Computer causes immediate termination are marked with an asterisk (*).

Secret Societies

You belong to a secret society. This can be very exciting. This can also be very dangerous, because being a member of a secret society is treason. However, your secret society may help you advance and provide equipment otherwise unobtainable at your security clearance.

Other citizens may be members of other secret societies. Some of these other secret societies may be bitter enemies of your own. You may have many secret enemies.

Naturally, the doctrines, organization and beliefs of secret societies is restricted information. Excessive knowledge of a secret society implies membership in it, and is punishable by summary execution. You can gain such knowledge by reading the Ultraviolet material on pages 42 through 51. Of course, doing so is treason.

The Secret Society Table is printed on Fold-Out A. It is classified Red, and lists the most common secret societies.

Traitors

Mutants and members of secret societies are traitors. All good citizens should report traitors to The Computer. You are a mutant and a member of a secret society. Good citizens would be quite eager to report you to The Computer. Thanks to The Computer, you will often be surrounded by good citizens.



2. Basic Game Concepts

In a roleplaying game the players play the roles of important characters in a story. The gamemaster provides the setting and plot, while the characters played by the players are free to choose their own actions as they solve the problems thrown across their path by the gamemaster.

The players are dependent on the gamemaster for all knowledge about the setting and circumstances of the game adventure. Normally the gamemaster will introduce a game session with the details of the mission and any necessary background information.

Then the adventure begins. The gamemaster describes the settings and non-player characters encountered by the player characters. When a player wishes his character to perform an action, he describes the action to the gamemaster.

The gamemaster determines the chance of success for the player character's action, taking into account the player character's skills, abilities, the difficulty of the action, and any other relevant circumstances. The gamemaster (or the player, at the gamemaster's option) may then make a die roll to assist in determining the player character's degree of success or failure in this action.

This is the basic flow of the game: the gamemaster describing the setting, players choosing and describing their intended actions to the gamemaster, and the gamemaster judging the success of the actions using the game rules and common sense.

The drama of the game comes in the presentation by the gamemaster and in the role-playing of the players. A good gamemaster tries to make the setting as vivid as possible; he portrays the non-player characters with description and colorful dialogue. He places the characters in dramatic and challenging situations where they must use wit and skill to save themselves from death or betrayal.

A good player tries to enter imaginatively into his character, to keep his action consistent with his personality and abilities. He pays close attention to the gamemaster's descriptions and dialogue and uses every available resource to safeguard his character and enable him to advance to higher status in the service of The Computer.

Example of Play

To give you an idea of what *Paranoia* is all about, here's what you might hear if you were sitting in a room where a game was being played.

Background: Dan is the gamemaster (GM) seated at the head of the table. Eric, Greg, Ken and Lori are playing the roles of four brand-



"It's... green!"

new agents of The Computer who have just received their first assignment — to visit the mysterious Outdoors to find out what happened to another group of agents who have disappeared. Eric, Greg, Ken and Lori have of course seen trees and wildlife, but the characters they are playing have lived underground all their lives and have just emerged from a heavily-guarded security door into the light of day.

Dan (GM) (consulting his notes and laying a map before the players): Well, this is a rough sketch of what you see as you emerge from the security door. A narrow path leads away from the door. Everything around you is unimaginably bizarre — green stuff everywhere, none of it with any apparent function; tall brown poles with more green stuff on top...

Ken: Um. Trees, I suppose.

Dan: Now, now, we Troubleshooters have never seen trees before, have we?

Ken: Oh, right. I get it.

Dan: And another thing. No ceiling. Repeat. No ceiling.

Eric: Gahhhhhh! No ceiling?!

Dan: Right. Now what do our intrepid agents do?

Eric: I scream, clutch the door jamb, and try to squeeze back inside.

Greg: I take notes. (Greg's agent is a secret spy for Internal Security, and the notes are being taken on the scandalous behavior of the new agents.)

Lori: I join Eric's character scrabbling at the door.

Ken: I pull my laser and try to look competent. (Ken's character's secret society mission is to assassinate Greg. Ken's secret society, Death Leopard, has discovered the secret identity of the Internal Security agent, and is looking for an opportunity to scrag him.)

Dan: Very good. Eric and Lori, there are four tough Internal Security officers with wicked-looking projectile weapons blocking your return through the door. Ken, are you pointing that laser at anyone or anything in particular?

Ken: Nope. Just in case something comes out of the trees... er, out of the green stuff.

Dan: Okay. Eric? Lori? About the guards with heavy ordnance?

Lori: I sober up real quick...

Eric: Me too.



A prudent response to the unknown.

Lori: ...and I back away from the door.

Dan: Good. The door closes abruptly with a hiss and a click.

Greg: C'mon, agents. We have a service to perform for The Computer and you are disgracing yourselves.

Lori: I salute and begin crawling down the path.

Eric: Crawling?

Lori: Of course! I feel better close to the floor. (Peering at her hands.) Gee, it's dirty. Don't the scrubots ever come out here?

Greg: Disgraceful.

Ken: Eric, when your character dies, can I have his binoculars?

Dan: How interesting that you should mention binoculars. Because something seems to be approaching very quickly from high above the brown-and-green stuff. It vaguely resembles a transbot, but it is much faster. And flying.

Eric: Flying?

Dan: Yes.

Lori: I've got a bad feeling about this.

Dan: Worse yet, a tiny brown creature with a long hairy tail is watching you from the brown-and-green stuff.

Eric: Eeek! An alien.

Dan: A very likely hypothesis. It is holding a tiny oval brown object which could be a communicator.

Ken: I burn it immediately with my laser, which, I proudly note, is ready for immediate use, as stated so cleverly earlier.

...and an innocent squirrel is speedily dispatched by our hero. As for the fate of the agents, you are left to speculate.



Glossary

Novices may not be familiar with some terms used in the game. Some of these are:

Character: A character is an imaginary person living in the world of the game.

Player Character (PC): A player character is one whose actions are controlled by a player.

Non-Player Character (NPC): A non-player character is one whose actions are controlled by the gamemaster. These are the antagonists, patrons, and innocent bystanders encountered by the player characters during the game.

Gamemaster (GM): The gamemaster develops adventures for his players, takes the roles of non-player characters, and referees and interprets the rules of the game.

Character Sheet: At the beginning of play, each player is issued a character sheet. On this sheet he records the essential information about his character — background, skills, equipment, and so on. A blank character sheet is provided in Fold-Out C.

Adventure: An adventure is a sequence of episodes experienced by the player characters as they struggle to complete a mission for The Computer. An adventure may be completed in a single session or in a series of sessions. Until it has been brought to a satisfactory (or unfortunate) conclusion, the adventure is not over.

Session: A session is a gathering of gamemaster and players for an adventure. The session varies in length, depending on the tastes of the players, but is usually from two to six hours in duration.

Campaign: A campaign is a series of related adventures in a consistent setting with the same player characters. Over the course of a campaign, characters may advance in skills, status and power.

A Note to Experienced Players

Three things make *Paranoia* different from other roleplaying games:

1. The Tone: *Paranoia* is designed for the humorous and farcical side of dramatic action-adventure. Other games are more serious and melodramatic, often to the point where the fun is neglected. *Translation:* *Paranoia* is fun. Other games are not fun. Play *Paranoia*.

2. The Dramatic Conflicts: In most roleplaying games, the player characters must cooperate to overcome obstacles posed by the gamemaster. *Paranoia* encourages backstabbing, betrayal and mistrust among the players — in a word, *paranoia*. *Translation:* Stay alert! Trust no one! Keep your laser handy!

3. Player Character Mortality: Anxiety about player character death is often a major block to fun in roleplaying games. The trauma of losing an alter ego, the destruction of a work of art (the personality of the character), representing an investment of time, imagination, and spirit, and the inconvenience of having to roll up a new character and build a personality from scratch — these are good reasons for being anxious about player character death.

In *Paranoia* you get six identical copies of each character you create. When one is killed, his clone steps in almost immediately. Further, *Paranoia*'s absurdist setting emphasizes that *Paranoia* is just a fun game — a chance to be playful as well as adventurous and heroic. Player characters should die like flies in *Paranoia*. Being a Troubleshooter is very exciting. Many Troubleshooters die of over-excitement.

Won't this be different from other adventures? Won't this be fun? The Computer says so. Everybody believes The Computer.



3. Character Creation

We tell the gamemaster that the first time he runs *Paranoia* he should use the pregenerated characters printed in Fold-Out D. Also, in all the adventures we publish for use with *Paranoia*, we include pregenerated characters tailored to the adventure. So don't be surprised if your gamemaster hands you a pregenerated character sheet and asks you to play that character.

Sometimes, however, the gamemaster will tell you to generate your own character. Here's how you do so.

How to Generate a Character

1. Take a pencil, the die, and a blank character sheet (see Fold-Out C).
2. Choose a name for your character.
3. Roll the die once for each of your attributes. Record the number you roll next to the attribute's name on your sheet.
4. You may re-roll for any two attributes. (Generally, you'll want to re-roll your lowest numbers.)
5. Refer to the Attribute Chart (see Fold-Out A), and determine your "carrying capacity," "damage" and "macho bonuses," and "skill bases."
6. Determine your service group. Roll the die and refer to the Service Group Table (Fold-Out A).
7. Determine your mutant power. Roll again, and refer to the Mutant Power Table (also on Fold-Out A).
8. Determine your secret society. Roll yet again and refer to the Secret Society Table (on guess which Fold-Out?).
9. Choose your skills. You have 30 skill points; divvy your points up among the skills on your sheet.
10. Select and record your equipment.

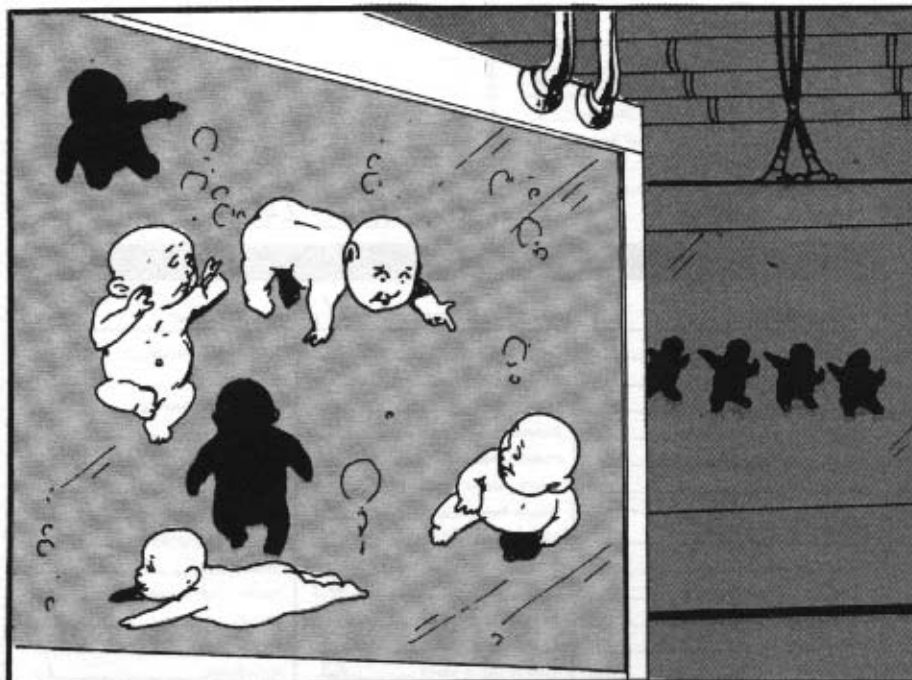
Names

The first thing you need to do is choose a name for your character. In Alpha Complex, names look like this:

Anne-R-KEY-1

The first part is just a name — in this case, "Anne." The second part (the letter) is the character's security clearance, like this:

R = Red	B = Blue
O = Orange	I = Indigo
Y = Yellow	V = Violet
G = Green	U = Ultraviolet



Baby production in Alpha Complex is much less messy and disgusting than the old-fashioned way.

"Infrared" has the same first letter as "Indigo," so Infrared characters omit the clearance letter — Fred-I-LKR-1 is Indigo, but Fred-LKR-1 is Infrared.

Next comes a three letter code, representing the name of the sector of Alpha Complex where the character lives. Anne lives in KEY sector. Don't worry about what sector you come from — just pick any three letters you want.

Last is a number; it's the current clone number. Anne is on clone number 1; she's never been killed. When she is, Anne-R-KEY-2 will take over her job.

Now that you know how names work in Alpha Complex, you can make up your own. The custom is to invent some sleazy pun. For instance:

Ahmm-R-RUS-1	Sow-R-DOE-1
Toys-R-USS-1	Teach-R-PET-1
Pep-R-MNT-1	Vund-R-BAR-1
Libb-R-TEE-1	Howe-R-YAH-1

Attributes

Each character has eight *attributes*: strength, agility, dexterity, endurance, moxie, chutzpah, mechanical aptitude, and power. When you generate a character, you roll the die once for each attribute, and record the number rolled

on the character sheet in the "attributes" section, next to the attribute's name.

Basically, the higher your attributes, the better (see page 14 for more detail).

After you've rolled for your attributes, you can re-roll two of them. To re-roll, just scratch out your old attribute number, roll the die again, and enter your new roll. If you rolled lower than your old number — too bad! You only get two re-rolls, and may not re-roll twice for the same attribute.

Note: If your character's attribute scores total up to less than eighty, he's pretty darn wimpy. It is suggested that you whine and pule until your gamemaster allows you to roll up a new one. (If he refuses, don't despair: just get your character killed six times once play begins. This can be done in seconds.)

Here's a brief description of the attributes and what they mean:

Strength measures a character's physical strength. It determines how good a character is at lifting, carrying, or ripping open things, or at battering opponents. Strength 20 is Mr. America. Strength 11 is an average desk-jockey who played basketball in school. Strength 1 is a sissy with the flu.

Agility measures coordination and balance. Agility determines how good a character is at dodging and performing actions requiring

PARANOIA Character Sheet

Name David-R-URK-1Player Doug KaufmanSecurity Clearance: (UR) R O Y G B I V (UV)Service Group Technical Services

Attributes

Strength 20 Carrying Capacity 65
 Endurance 3 Damage Bonus 2
 Agility 13 Macho Bonus 0
 Dexterity 15 Agility Skill Base 3
 Moxie 4 Dexterity Skill Base 4
 Chutzpah 6 Moxie Skill Base 1
 Mechanical Apt. 14 Chutzpah Skill Base 1
 Power 16 Mech Skill Base 3

Weapon	Skill Number	Type	Damage Rating	Range	Exp.
<u>Laser Pistol</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>L</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>50</u>	<u>Nope</u>

Armor	Rating
<u>Red Reflec</u>	<u>L4</u>

Skills

Agility Skill Base: 3

Force Sword 3
 Grenade 4
 Neurowhip 3
 Primitive Melee Weapons 3
 Truncheon 3
 Unarmed 5

Chutzpah Skill Base: 1

Bottleficking 1
 Bribery 1
 Con 4
 Fast Talk 1
 Forgery 1
 Interrogation 1
 Intimidation 1
 Motivation 1
 Oratory 1
 Psychscan 1
 Spurious Logic 3

Dexterity Skill Base: 4

Energy Weapons 4
 Field Weapons 4
 Laser Weapons 7
 Primitive Missile Weapons 4
 Projectile Weapons 4
 Vehicle Aimed Weapons 8
 Vehicle Field Weapons 4
 Vehicle Launched Weapons 4

Mechanical Skill Base: 3

Autocar Op. & Maint. 3
 Copter Op. & Maint. 3
 Crawler Op. & Maint. 13
 Docbot Op. & Maint. 3
 Flybot Op. & Maint. 3
 Habitat Engineering 3
 Hover Op. & Maint. 3
 Jackobot Op. & Maint. 3
 Scrubot Op. & Maint. 3
 Transbot Op. & Maint. 3
 Vulturecraft Op. & Maint. 3

Moxie Skill Base: 1

Biochemical Therapy 1
 Biosciences 1
 Chemical Engineering 1
 Data Analysis 1
 Data Search 1
 Demolition 1
 Electronic Engineering 1
 Mechanical Engineering 6
 Medical 1
 Nuclear Engineering 1
 Security 1
 Stealth 1
 Surveillance 1
 Survival 1

Character Generation Example

Our hero, Doug, is rolling up a character for Paranoia. He decides to name the character David-R-URK-1 (David is the character's first name; R signifies that his security clearance is Red; URK is his home sector; and 1 means that David is on his first clone). He writes the character's name in the appropriate space on the character sheet.

Rolling for David-R's attributes, Doug rolls: 20 for strength, 3 for endurance, 13 for agility, 2 for dexterity, 4 for moxie, 6 for chutzpah, 14 for mechanical aptitude, and 16 for power. Doug can reroll two of those scores: He decides to reroll David's dexterity and moxie, rolling a 15 followed by a 4. He writes the scores in the attribute section of his sheet. Referring to the Attribute Chart, Doug then records David's carrying capacity, damage and macho bonuses, and skill bases.

Rolling a 4 on the Service Group Table, a 7 on the Mutant Power Table, and a 17 on the Secret Society Table, Doug learns that David-R is from Technical Services, has the hyper-senses mutation, and belongs to the Romantics secret society. He scrawls this information on the sheet.

Doug now has thirty skill points to spend on purchasing skills. He spends: 1 point on grenades, 2 points on unarmed, 3 points on con, 2 points on spurious logic, 3 points on laser weapons, 4 points on vehicle aimed weapons, 10 points on crawler operation and maintenance, and 5 points on mechanical engineering.

He then adds these points to the associated skill bases, which tells him his final rating for each skill. (For example, the 2 points he spent on unarmed combat + his agility skill base of 3 gives him a final unarmed combat rating of 5. Or, the 0 points he spent on force sword + his agility skill base of 3 gives him a final force sword rating of 3.) Doug records all of his skill ratings.

Note that David-R's final crawler operation and maintenance skill rating is 13. The maximum starting skill rating a character may have in most skills is 12, but a character may have a beginning rating of up to 14 in skills for which his service group offers special training — and Tech, David's service group, offers special training in crawler operation and maintenance.

Doug's gamemaster then tells him that David's only possessions are a laser pistol, reflex armor, a bottle of Bouncy Bubble Beverage, and 100 credits. Doug jots this down, and is ready to play.

PARANOIA Character Sheet
(Secret Stuff)Name David-R-URK-1Player Doug KaufmanSecret Society RomanticsDegree 1Mutant Power Hypersenses

Damage Status

Credits

Personal Equipment

100

Laser Pistol
Red Reflex Armor
Bouncy Bubble Beverage



quickness and coordination. It also affects the character's ability to hit an opponent in hand-to-hand combat. Agility 20 is Bruce Lee. Agility 11 can juggle two objects, and can sometimes manage three. Agility 1 falls down a lot.

Dexterity measures hand-eye coordination, patience, and manual dexterity. It determines how good a character is at fine hand work, and, in particular, it affects a character's ability to hit an opponent with an aimed weapon. Dexterity 20 assembles Swiss watches blindfolded. Dexterity 11 threads a needle on the second or third try. Dexterity 1 has trouble with buttons.

Endurance measures stamina and ability to withstand pain and physical injury. Endurance 20 jogs blithely along with gaping wounds. Endurance 11 pants when climbing lots of stairs and whines when hurt. Endurance 1 passes out when discomfort is mentioned.

Moxie measures ability to comprehend unusual phenomena, learn new modes of communication, perceive important details, and correctly choose the right course of action in unexpected situations. Moxie affects a character's skills in disciplines which emphasize intelligence and wit. Moxie 20 is a combination of David Letterman and Henry Kissinger. Moxie 11 can understand wargame rules — in time. Moxie 1 gets lost in a closet.

Chutzpah is defined as the quality of a man who kills both his parents and then pleads for mercy because he is an orphan. Chutzpah affects a character's bureaucratic and communication skills. Chutzpah 20 is a born-again politician. Chutzpah 11 occasionally slips something over on his Mom. Chutzpah 1 blushes, stammers, blurts out obvious nonsense, and can't keep his story straight. **Note:** The "ch" is pronounced like you're hawking to spit — like the "ch" in "Bach" or "Reich."

Mechanical Aptitude measures the ability to understand, operate, and repair machinery and equipment of all types. Mechanical 20 always finds out what's wrong when he peers under the hood. Mechanical 11 can change a tire without instructions. Mechanical 1 always turns nuts the wrong way and thinks a screwdriver is a drink with vodka and orange juice.

Power measures a character's ability to understand and control his mutant power. Power 20 is Mandrake the Magician. Power 11 sometimes burns out a few light bulbs but faints when he tries to read someone's mind. Power 1 wakes up in strange places with smouldering purple flesh and dinnerware magnetically adhering to his scalp.

Skill Bases, Bonuses and Carrying Capacity

A bunch of numbers used in the game are calculated from attributes.

Carrying Capacity

If your strength is 12 or less, your carrying capacity is 25. If it's 13 or more, it's 25 plus 5 for every point above 12. That is, strength 13 means carrying capacity of 30; 14 means 35; 15 means 40; and so on.

Your carrying capacity is the number of kilograms of stuff you can carry. Enter it in the space provided on your character sheet, next to your attributes.

Damage and Macho Bonuses

Look at the Attribute Chart (see Fold-Out A). Find the column labelled "bonus." Find your strength along the left-hand side of the chart, and read over to the "bonus" column; the number there is your damage bonus. Enter it on your sheet. **Example:** If your strength is 1 through 13, your damage bonus is 0; if it's 14 through 18, your bonus is 1; and if it's 19 or 20, your bonus is 2.

To determine your macho bonus, follow the same procedure, but use your endurance instead of your strength.

Your damage bonus increases the damage when you hit someone in melee combat. Your macho bonus decreases damage to you when you get hit. Enter them on your character sheet.

Skill Bases

You have five skill bases — one for each of your attributes except strength, endurance and power.

To determine your agility skill base, refer to the Attribute Chart and look at the column labelled "skill base." Find your agility score along the left-hand side of the chart, and read over to the skill base column. The number printed there is your agility skill base. **Example:** If your agility is 1 through 3, your agility skill base is 0; if your agility is 4 through 6, your base is 1; if your agility is 7 through 10, base is 2; agility 11 through 14 means base of 3; 15 through 17 means 4; and 18 or more means 5.

Follow the same procedure for the other four attributes. Write your bases on your character sheet, in the "Skills" section of the sheet.

The skill bases determine how good you are with different skills at the beginning of the game; see page 14 for more detail.

Service Groups

To determine your service group, roll the die and look at the Service Group Table (see Fold-Out A). Find your die-roll on the left side of the table; the name printed on the same line is your service group. If you want to know more about it, there's a description of each of the groups on page 8.

If your service group is Internal Security, note this on the back of your character sheet (in the "Notes" section), and roll again for a new service group. (Re-roll if you get Internal Security again.) You are an undercover agent for Internal Security; your second service group is your "cover," the group everyone

thinks you belong to — but your actual loyalty is to Internal Security.

Mutant Powers

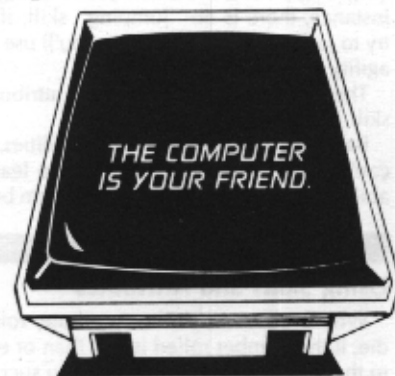
Look at the Mutant Power Table on Fold-Out A. Roll the die again, and find your die-roll on the left side of the table; your mutant power is printed on the same line.

Would you like to know more about how your mutant power works? Well, you have two options. One, you can ask your gamemaster, and he'll tell you. Two, you can turn to pages 68 through 73 of this book and read about it. Of course, those pages are classified Ultraviolet, and reading them is treason. On the other hand, being a mutant to begin with is treason, so what the hell, right? On the third hand, if you're one of them namby-pamby "Yes, sir, Mr. Computer, sir" types who wouldn't commit a treasonable act even if there was no chance of ever being caught, maybe you should stick with asking the gamemaster.

By the way, all of the mutant powers are described on pages 68 through 73. Displaying knowledge of anything other than your power is yet another treasonable offense. You're entitled to know about your own power, but not other people's. It would be in keeping with the rules of the game if you were to read only your own power description. It would be in keeping with the spirit of the game to read them all and lie about it.

After you know what your power does, you have to decide whether or not you want to become a registered mutant. A registered mutant isn't executed just for being a mutant — we talked about them on page 8. However, if your power is Machine Empathy, don't reveal it! The Computer considers that power so dangerous that it immediately executes anyone who possesses it — with no ifs, ands or buts.

If you do decide to become a registered mutant, you can use your power whenever you like without being accused of treason. However, you have to wear a yellow stripe on your uniform at all times, and everyone will know you're a mutant Commie traitor. While there is a distinct advantage in being able to use your power without risking termination, registered mutant Commie traitors tend to get passed up for promotions — and are frequently the scapegoat of choice when something goes wrong.





Secret Societies

Look at the Secret Society Table on the same Fold-Out. Roll the die yet again, find the roll on the left of the table, and read the entry on the same line — presto! That's your secret society.

It's important that you know something about your society. You have the same two options as with your mutant power: you can ask your gamemaster, or you can be a traitor and read pages 42 through 50.

Skills

Next step: skills. There are a whole bunch of different skills; they're listed on your character sheet. Each character has a *skill number* between 1 and 20 in each skill. The higher your skill number, the better the chance you can use a skill successfully.

Skill Bases

On your sheet, the skills are listed beneath attribute names. For instance, "Force Sword" is listed under "Agility." That's because each skill is "controlled" by one of your five skill bases. A skill base is the starting skill number for all of the skills it controls.

Example: If your agility is 15, your agility skill base is 4. That means your skill number is 4 in all agility skills, including force sword.

Skill Points

You also begin with 30 *skill points*, which you can use to increase your skill numbers. Basically, you divvy up your skill points any way you like; each point you spend on a skill increases that skill number by one. You may not increase any skill number above 12, unless you receive special training (see below).

Example: If your agility skill base is 4, your starting force sword skill number is also 4. If you spend 5 points on that skill, your force sword skill number becomes 9.

Special Training

Each service group gives its members *special training* in certain skills. If you receive special training in a skill, you can spend points to increase its skill number to 13 or 14.

Refer to the Service Group Skills Chart (on Fold-Out A). It lists the service groups and the skills for which they provide training.

Example: If your character is a member of PLC, he could have skill numbers of 13 or 14 for the following skills: bribery, fast talk, forgery, habitat engineering, jackobot operation and maintenance, and biosciences.

Equipment

Most of the material needs of the citizens of Alpha Complex are generously provided by The Computer. To relieve citizens of the responsibility of storing and caring for equipment, The Computer discourages the practice of private ownership. However, when a citizen rises from Infrared status to the honored position of Troubleshooter, he is given

the opportunity to buy or accept certain items of equipment for his own use.

You begin with some basic gear: Red laser pistol and Red reflex armor. This stuff is standard-issue for all Red-level Troubleshooters, and is assigned to you at no cost in money.

You also have accumulated the substantial sum of 100 credits. You can spend these to buy more stuff. Look at the Red Clearance Equipment List (see Fold-Out A); it lists all the things you can legally buy at your clearance level. If you want something not on the list, ask your gamemaster about it; the worst that can happen is he has you executed for treason for your temerity.

Services

For an extra 25-50% of the cost of an item, you can have it customized. Exactly how it's customized is up to you (although check with your gamemaster, as he may decide you can't do what you want, or may charge you extra). Customization might include making the item more durable, reliable, capable, or improving its appearance.

A common practice is to spend surplus credits on making one's uniform more distinctive — adding slightly contrasting piping to the jumpsuit, or painting patriotic symbols on weapons or equipment.

Many prudent Troubleshooters save their credits in case a fine is levied against them. This is wise, since failure to promptly pay a fine is treasonous. Fines may be charged for various reasons — poor conduct, loss of or damage to Computer equipment, improper hygiene, failure to follow orders, and so on.



4. Attributes and Skills

Whenever your character tries to do something in the game, you (or sometimes the gamemaster) make either an *attribute roll* or a *skill roll* to see whether you succeed.

Skills always have priority over attributes. If a skill logically governs an action, you always use your skill. You only use an attribute when no skill applies to the action you're taking. For instance, there is no "jumping" skill; if you try to jump over a deep chasm, you'll use your agility.

The gamemaster decides which attribute or skill is used; his decision is final.

Basically, attributes are innate abilities, and can't change during play. Skills are learned abilities, and you can learn to use them better.

Using Skills and Attributes

When you use a skill or attribute, roll the die. If the number rolled is less than or equal to the skill or attribute number, you succeed.

If you roll higher, you fail.

Any unmodified roll of 20 is always a failure; any roll of 1 is always a success. Even if your skill number is 0, you can still attempt to use the skill; a roll of 1 is still a success. Even if your skill number is 20, a roll of 20 is still a failure.

Remember that you "possess" all skills; even if you haven't spent any skill points on a skill, you can still use it at your skill base.

When you try to do something especially difficult or especially easy, the gamemaster may modify your skill or attribute number before you roll. Obviously, shooting something at point blank range is easier than shooting something a mile away. Sometimes, though, the gamemaster won't tell you he's modifying your skill or attribute number; sometimes, a factor that you know nothing about affects your chances of succeeding. So don't be surprised if you roll under your skill or attribute number but the gamemaster tells you that you fail anyway.

What Can Skills Do?

You can guess what most skills do from the name. Obviously "laser weapons" is used to fire laser weapons, right? And when you shoot your laser pistol at someone, you roll against your laser weapons skill to see if you hit.

But what is "psychescan"?

Here's a "cleared for Red-level bozos" description of the not-so-obvious skills. If you want more detail, feel free to incriminate yourself and turn to pages 57 through 61.

Agility Skills

Force Sword: A combat skill. Roll against this number when you attempt to whack someone with a force sword.

Grenades: Another combat skill. When you hurl a grenade at something, roll against this to see if it goes where you want it. If you roll a 20, maybe you threw the pin instead of the grenade. Boom.



Neurowhip: Another combat skill. Also a very nasty weapon.

Primitive Melee Weapon: It is rumored (rumors are treason) that Outside there are people who, not having been exposed to the benefits of The Computer's benign instruction, are cave-man types and use antiquated weapons called knives, swords, clubs, and stuff like that. These weapons are rare in Alpha Complex, but sometimes Armed Forces personnel are trained to deal with them.

Truncheon: IntSec's all-purpose weapon, sorta like a policeman's nightstick. Good for keeping Infrared scum in line.

Unarmed: What you use if you don't have a force sword, neurowhip or truncheon lying around.

Chutzpah Skills

Note that you can't use any of these skills (except forgery) against other player characters. If you want to con, bribe, bootlick, etc., a player character into doing something, roleplay it out. Make your pitch; the other player then gets to decide whether to accede to your request. He isn't controlled by your skill roll.

Bootlicking: How to ingratiate yourself with superiors.

Bribery: A way to ingratiate yourself with almost anyone. By the way, using this skill is treasonous.

Con: A way to persuade someone to let you do what you want when he probably oughtn't.

Fast Talk: Like con, only you talk and move rapidly and hope to get away fast. If you "con" someone, he may never know he was zapped; if you fast talk him, he will, but fast talking doesn't take as long.

Forgery: Sometimes applying for those pesky execution vouchers through channels just isn't worth the hassle. Using this skill is treason, too.

Interrogation: How to extract useful information from Commie mutant scum.

Intimidation: This doesn't exactly ingratiate you with your inferiors, but it does get their cooperation.

Motivation: Leadership; gets people heading in the right direction and even thinking it's a good idea.

Oratory: How to get a bunch of people to do what you want.

Psychescan: Basically, use this to try to figure out whether someone's lying or not.

Spurious Logic: Con doesn't work with computers and bots, 'cause they're too logical.

Instead, you have to build a completely logical construct on fallacious or incomplete assumptions to get them to do what you want. Doing so is a skill all its own. Just ask Mr. Spock.

Dexterity Skills

Energy, Field, Laser, and Projectile Weapons: Skills that let you use different types of weapons. You also use these skills when your weapon breaks and you try to fix it.

Primitive Missile Weapons: Like "primitive melee weapons," but applying to bows, arrows, rocks, beer bottles, and so on.

Vehicle Aimed, Field and Launched Weapons: Skills that let you use weapons mounted on vehicles.

Mechanical Skills

Habitat Engineering: Knowledge of the air, communications, transport, power, water and waste systems used in Alpha Complex. Mighty handy when you need to find a ventilation shaft or something to escape incoming fire.

Robot Operation and Maintenance: These skills are broken down by robot type. Basically, they're how to use and repair bots.

Vehicle Operation and Maintenance: Ditto, for vehicles.

Moxie Skills

Biochemical Therapy: How to ensure wakefulness, sleepiness, happiness or any other mental state through the application of little pills.

Demolition: How to use TNT without killing yourself.

Medical: How to heal the injured and cure the sick.

Security: Jiggering locks and alarms.

Stealth: The art of not being seen.

Surveillance: How to bug things. How to debug things.

Survival: How not to drown or die of exposure; how to find things to eat in the Outdoors, avoid camping in a stream bed; and other useful things.

ENGINEERING SKILLS

Biosciences: How to produce mutant monstrosities in Alpha Complex's biolabs.

Chemical: Lots of uses for this, but somehow PCs always seem to want to use it to make explosives.

Electronic: How to string transistors and stuff together.

Mechanical: How to make really neat Rube Goldberg-type contraptions.

Nuclear: How to operate a reactor without flooding half the sector with radioactive waste.

COMPUTER SKILLS

Data Analysis: How to look at Computer-printed stuff and make head or tail of it.

Data Search: How to find something useful using The Computer.



On-the-job training in the demolition skill.



5. Dramatic Tactical Combat

Other roleplaying games have elaborate movement and combat systems reflecting their ancestral wargame heritage. These systems are good for those who enjoy wargames, but they emphasize competition rather than drama, and their complicated rules slow down the action. *Paranoia* uses a "dramatic tactical system" — a sort of unsystem to encourage fast and flamboyant action.

The key to the system is total reliance on the gamemaster for the details of movement, combat and environment. You're completely in his hands. You tell him what you want to do, and he'll tell you if you are successful. No counting hexes or phases. No painstaking maneuvering of figures or counters through a complex series of procedures.

The gamemaster tells you what you see.

You say what you want to do.

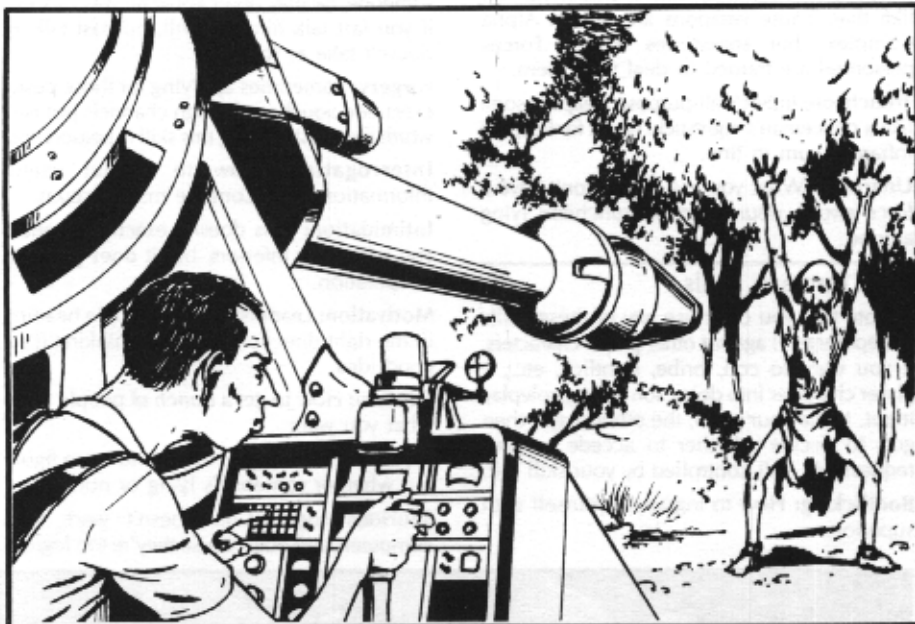
The gamemaster tells you what happens.

In this system the clever gamer does not seek to optimize his tactical advantage over an opponent; he tries to get the best dramatic advantage. The more entertaining tactic will win out over the more deliberate wargaming tactic.

Player: Humph! Stand back, timorous cravens!

My character leaps over the barricade into the hail of bullets, sowing grenades like seeds, charging resolutely toward the Commie traitors while chanting "The Computer is my buddy, I shall not want..."

GM: Bravo! Bravissimo! Well... (rolls thirty times or so for the Commie traitors' automatic weapon attacks, sighs regretfully)



Citizen Atilla-R-HUN-2 displays prudent caution in dealing with possibly dangerous Commie mutant traitor.

they cut you to pieces... (rolls dice again for grenades; brazenly ignores the results) but your grenades all miraculously find their marks, the Commie menace is eliminated, you are posthumously awarded the Silver Monitor with Crossed Circuitboards

for Bravery, and your next clone receives a brevet promotion. A round of applause, please?

Put on a good show, and Fate will smile on you.

Be boring, and you're dead.



6. Death and Other Untoward Events

So you were boring and you're dead. Now what?

Not to fear! Just because you're dead doesn't mean you stop having fun. As we mentioned before, there are five clones of your character. The Computer took its basic programming lessons to heart, and always makes backups — in this case, six exact copies of each individual. So, if you die, just change the last digit in your name by one.

The Computer delivers your new clone to the site of the action as soon as feasible. Sometimes, if the mission team is a long way from Alpha Complex, that may take a while. Other times, it may take only moments.

Your new clone has the same attributes, skills, credits, mutant powers, secret societies, and so on as your old. True, it is unlikely that identical twins (which is what clones basically are) would have exactly the same interests and bank accounts — but it is a lot simpler this way. And, true, it is odd that, once The Computer has unmasked a mutant, it doesn't realize that his clone siblings must have the same mutation, but there it is. Don't blame us, that's just the way things are in Alpha Complex.

Just because your first clone uses a mutant power doesn't mean that the other players are allowed to execute your second clone. As far as The Computer is concerned, no one is a traitor until proven guilty, and Clone 2 hasn't been shown to have a mutant power. Killing him would be treason. Of course, proving that someone's a traitor after he's dead is a lot easier than while he's alive and around to defend himself, but it is in real poor taste to zap somebody's new character the second he arrives on the scene, before he has a chance to get himself into trouble. Such actions will invariably lead to retribution — from gamemaster and other players alike.

What happens if your sixth clone dies? Too bad. Time to make up a new character.



7. Computer Missions

Before you begin to play, the gamemaster may call you aside for a brief private conference. (If he doesn't, and you have any questions you want to ask him, grab him yourself.) This conference is an opportunity to find out whether your secret society has any information or useful equipment for you, what rumors are floating about, and the like. Obviously, you don't want to talk about this kind of stuff with the other players around, since most of what you'll be asking is treasonous.

Adventures usually begin when your character receives a *mission alert* — a message from The Computer telling him to show up somewhere for a briefing. At the *briefing*, information vital to the completion of the adventure is sometimes imparted. (Sometimes it is not imparted, which can be too bad if it really was vital.) In any event, failing to follow The Computer's orders is treason, so naturally you will eagerly speed to the briefing room with the greatest alacrity.

After the briefing, you usually amble on down to PLC for *outfitting*. At PLC, you can requisition any equipment you think you'll need. You probably won't get it, but you can ask.

Next stop is R&D, where you'll be given the opportunity to test spiffy new equipment R&D has just developed. Volunteering to test ex-

perimental equipment is a good way to get in The Computer's good graces. It also occasionally proves useful.

Naturally, R&D is extremely concerned to ensure that its equipment is safe, convenient, and easy to use. Experimental equipment has hardly ever been known to blow up, melt down, explode, catapult the player characters into an unknown dimension, detumescence, deliquesce, or turn on its wielder and rend him limb from limb. No, you can rest assured that experimental equipment is safe as houses.

Then, it's off on the *mission*. The Computer makes the objectives of each mission eminently clear to the Troubleshooters it assigns. Since The Computer has the needs and desires of every citizen of Alpha Complex at heart, it always ensures that the Troubleshooters have the skills, abilities and equipment necessary to complete the mission. Hence, all missions are easy and fun. Moreover, since completion is always feasible, failure to complete a mission is clear evidence of Communist sabotage, and sufficient grounds for summary execution.

If a mission involves travel Outside Alpha Complex, each character is assigned a com unit. These are long-distance radio/video devices which permit communication among Troubleshooters. Needless to say, as concerned

for the public welfare as it is, The Computer constantly monitors the player characters through their com units. If you were to leave your com unit even for the briefest moment, The Computer would conclude that you were seeking to avoid surveillance in order to perpetrate treasonous sabotage.



Often, The Computer appoints one player character as mission leader. Sometimes, the players will be permitted to select their own. Naturally, failure to comply with a leader's orders is treason. The leader may, if he wishes, assign another character as second in command, to take charge in the event of the leader's demise.

If any bots are assigned to a mission, The Computer selects a prime operator for the bots. He and only he has the authority (and the necessary codes) to direct the bots. He may, if he wishes, appoint another player character as the secondary operator. If the prime operator is killed or incapacitated during a mission, the secondary operator has the authority to direct the bots. Directing bots without authority is treason.

Often, other Troubleshooters in the team are assigned special duties — loyalty officer, communications officer, hygiene officer, fun officer, and the like.

Warning: For some reason, treason seems to surface with great regularity on missions. Keep your eyes peeled. You never know when the person next to you will be unmasked as a Commie mutant traitor! Remember that failing to execute a Commie mutant traitor is treason and grounds for summary execution. You are advised:

**STAY ALERT!
TRUST NO ONE!
KEEP YOUR LASER HANDY!**



Citizen Suck-R eagerly volunteers to serve Alpha Complex and his friend The Computer as a Troubleshooter.



8. Politics, Promotion and Treason

The Rewards of Loyal Service

Serve The Computer! The Computer is your friend! If you are loyal, you will be rewarded.

Of course, it might also be a good idea to serve yourself. And serve your loyal friends so they will serve you. Canny citizens diligently add to their wealth and status through official and unofficial channels whenever possible. Official channels include bonuses, commendations, and promotions through faithful and enthusiastic service to The Computer and Alpha Complex. Unofficial channels include political favors, extortion, graft, underworld connections, clandestine conspiracies, and blackmarket wealth.

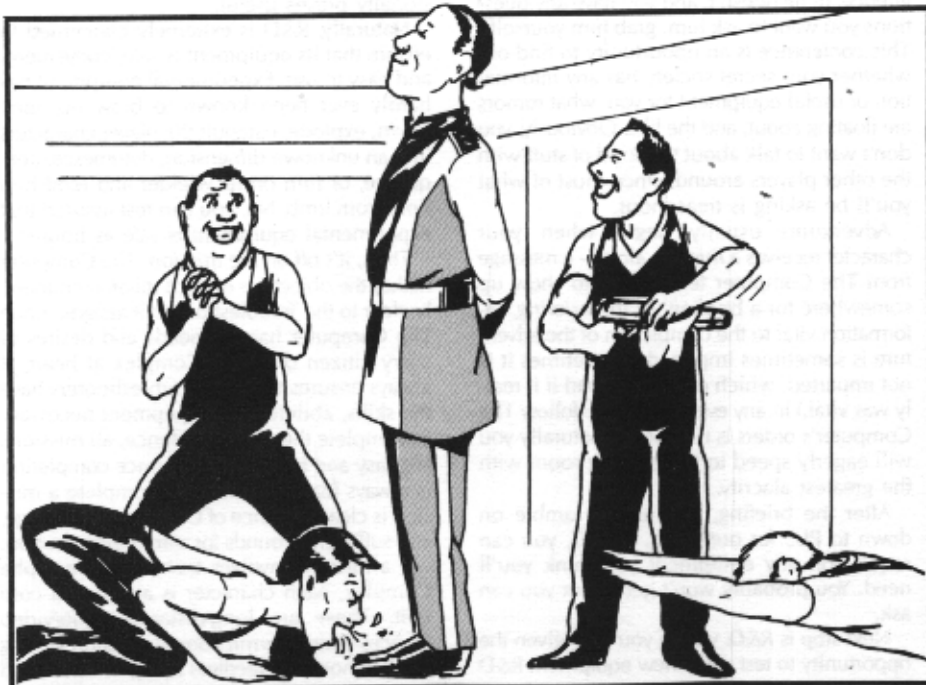
In most roleplaying games, characters have two principal goals: 1. stay alive, and 2. gain status and power. In *Paranoia* the first goal is likely to require all your attention, at least initially. However, once you catch on to the basic principles of survival in Alpha Complex, your characters can begin to enjoy the benefits of loyal and shrewd service — wealth, status, and power. Best of all, you can do unto others as they would have done unto to you — with weapons of ever-larger muzzle aperture.

IOUs

IOUs are a way of keeping track of favors earned and owed. They are awarded at the gamemaster's discretion when a character has earned the favor of a service group, a secret society, or some other powerful Alpha Complex organization or individual. Each IOU is good only for the organization or individual it has been earned from. (Obviously, PLC wouldn't redeem an IOU earned from the Death Leopard secret society.)

If you have an IOU from an organization or individual, you can use it to demand a favor from them. Tell the gamemaster you're spending your IOU, and make your plea. The gamemaster will tell you whether the request is granted. If it's a treasonous favor, you might want to talk to him in private about it.

IOUs are quite valuable. You won't be awarded one unless you do someone a real service. Don't ask for too much when you cash in an IOU: you'll only get what you want if the group you're asking is able to grant the favor; if the service you did them is of roughly equal value; and it sounds like fun to the GM. Otherwise, you'll be out of luck. Or, the response to your request may be a mixed blessing.



Are you willing to pay... The Price of Treason?

Skill Points

Use your skills and you'll probably get better with them. At the end of an adventure, the gamemaster may tell you that you've earned a certain number of skill points. You must immediately spend them to increase skill numbers — just like you spent the 30 points you started with. Sometimes the gamemaster may place restrictions on how you spend your points — he might say, "you can only spend these on agility skills" or something — but if he doesn't, you can spend them on any skills you like.

You can increase skills above 12 or 14 — as high as you like. The skill limits only apply to starting characters. Having a skill number greater than 19 may not seem real useful, since a roll of 20 is always a failure, but remember that your gamemaster will sometimes subtract points or even halve your skill if you are attempting something real difficult — and half of 26, say, is easier to roll than half of 20.

No, you can't save up skill points. Spend 'em or lose 'em.

Credits

Every citizen has a credit balance — the number of credits he has (or owes) at present. The Computer maintains and stores this information. An updated accounting is always available upon request from The Computer, and is always completely accurate. Always.

The value of the credit is something of a mystery to Alpha Complex economists. The standard of exchange is a secret so carefully guarded that The Computer is rumored not to know it. (Rumors are treason.) Upon one principle all economists agree — the value fluctuates wildly and with no apparent pattern.

Fortunately, citizens are rarely permitted to purchase anything with their credits, so the issue is somewhat academic. Occasionally PLC will have a sale on some over-stocked item (Brunton compasses, drill presses, bits of string, and so forth), but generally The Computer provides — and anything The Computer hasn't provided, you shouldn't be interested in. Now and then esteemed citizens will be offered nice perks (personal autocars, designer jumpsuits, lavish vacations in remote sectors) if they have enough credits to pay for them. And credits are useful for paying fines for offenses like damaging Computer property, vagrancy, and high-sticking.



Troubleshooters are often awarded credit bonuses at the end of an adventure for exemplary performance. A rich reward (1000 credits) is a sign of The Computer's favor. A puny reward (3 credits) is a subtle sign of The Computer's disappointment.

The Computer also offers bounties on the heads of Alpha Complex's most hated enemies — fugitive Troubleshooters, saboteurs, Commie agitators, unregistered mutants, and secret society members. (There is often an informal rivalry among players to see which character can get the highest bounty placed on his head — and to see who can earn it by terminating the vile traitor.)

Since it would be a waste of valuable Computer resources for The Computer to keep track of petty purchases, like the acquisition of a bottle of Bouncy Bubble Beverage or a bag of Cruncheetym Algae Snacks, credit machines are scattered about Alpha Complex. At these machines, you may request up to 100 credits in *plasticreds*. Plasticreds are round plastic tokens which are the common currency in Alpha Complex. You can also feed plasticreds into a credit machine and credit the sum entered to your Computer account.

Needless to say, plasticreds are commonly used in black market transactions.

Promotion

Naturally, if you perform particularly well, you may expect to be promoted to a higher security clearance. Since money is pretty

useless and all goods, respect, trust, and information are rationed purely on the basis of security clearance, this is without any doubt the most important reward you can receive.

The Price of Treason

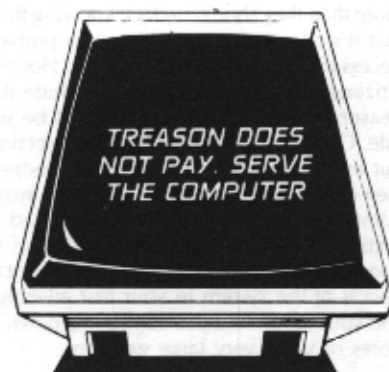
You wouldn't even think of disappointing The Computer, we're sure. We know you'd never fail to complete a mission, or carelessly allow Computer property to come to harm, or traffic in black market goods, or question a superior's judgment, or misspeak yourself when reporting to The Computer. You were just curious. Sure.

Well, generally, the price of treason is summary execution. But sometimes, in its wisdom, The Computer will refrain from killing you outright. Sometimes it will call for fines, reassignment, drug therapy, personality reconstruction, public censure, or official reprimand.

Lots of actions do not prove treason, but lead to a suspicion of treasonous behavior. The gamemaster keeps track of how much (or little) The Computer trusts you by keeping a *treason point* total for each character. Everytime you fail to fulfill orders, doubt The Computer, speak or act against The Computer, damage or destroy equipment, use a mutant power, conspire with others, or create suspicion of membership in a secret society, you earn treason points.

The higher your treason point total, the less likely The Computer is to grant you equipment, comply with your requests for information, or believe anything you tell it. Worst of all, if you ever get 20 treason points, you will be terminated.

Luckily, there's a way to reduce your treason point total: perform meritorious service for The Computer. Receiving commendations from your superiors, successfully completing missions, unmasking and executing traitors, and being especially obsequious when talking with The Computer are all likely to do the trick. Getting killed more or less wipes the slate clean for the next clone, too.



9. Paranoia Etiquette

Backstabbing

Most roleplaying games pit player characters against opponents and obstacles posed by the gamemaster. They encourage players to cooperate in the pursuit of a goal.

Paranoia provides opponents and obstacles galore, but it doesn't encourage cooperation. In fact, player characters have every reason to mistrust and fear each other. Personal success is achieved over the bodies of other PCs, and casualties are more often caused by inter-player free-for-alls than by the opposition.

Vicious, deceitful, backstabbing double-dealing is a lot of fun. Remember that everyone else is out to shaft you — and you'll feel a great sense of pleasure when you out-shaft them first.

But it's important not to let the paranoid atmosphere of the game leak out into the real world.

Remember! Distrust, deceit, and betrayal among characters is all part of the game — but not the way players should deal with one another.

Notes and Conferences

Because you'll want to keep the other players in the dark about your activities, you'll often want to communicate with the gamemaster privately. There are two ways to do so: pass him a note, or take him into another room for a private conference.

In a private conference, you can speak and exchange ideas freely. However, you are monopolizing the gamemaster's attention. Do this too much and the other players will resent it. Moreover, if everyone begins asking for frequent private conferences, you'll spend most of your time waiting for the latest conference to end, and you'll resent it. Conferences slow things down, so ask for them sparingly.

Note-passing is a more efficient method of secret communication, and doesn't interrupt play. On the other hand, writing a note is slow work, and there's a limit to how much a note can say. Still, whenever feasible, write notes instead of asking for conferences.

Privacy

Many activities that would be unobjectionable in other roleplaying games are bad form in *Paranoia*. For example, looking at another player's character sheet is an unfair way to obtain evidence of treason against him. Eavesdropping on another Troubleshooter while playing in character is fine, but eavesdropping on a private conference between the gamemaster and a player is cheating.

Please respect the privacy of the gamemaster and other players. Ignorance is an important element in the drama of a *Paranoia* adventure. Each player is entitled to the confidentiality of his characters, character records, and player-GM communications.

Ultraviolet Information

Many games divide rules into "Player" information and "Gamemaster" info. So does *Paranoia*. But *Paranoia* depends more than most on keeping the players in the dark. That's why much of this book is classified Ultraviolet.



Only gamemasters are cleared to read the Ultraviolet sections. Naturally, it would be silly to sell someone a game and tell him not to read it, but there are two things we'd like you to do:

1. Don't read the adventure! Only the gamemaster is supposed to do so. Reading it will ruin your enjoyment when you play it. If you do read it, 'fess up to the GM and either don't play that adventure (there's always another time), or try to stop yourself from taking advantage of what you know when you play. Let the other players try to figure out what's going on without the benefit of your superior knowledge.

2. Lots of citizens of Alpha Complex know more than they should. In fact, knowing things that it's treason for you to know is probably necessary if you're going to survive. However, citizens always do their utmost to hide their treasonous knowledge. That should be your rule. Go ahead; read the Ultraviolet sections. But any time you reveal your knowledge of their contents during play, you'll earn a treason point. No doubt, even if you didn't read the section, you'd develop a knowledge of the combat system over time — but talk about the details of the system in your first adventure, and you'll soon find yourself staring down the bores of some very large weapons.

New Clones

You're Mod-R-NRT-1, and Fred-Y-LKR blows you away just because you stole his synthochoc ration. The Computer dispatches your next clone. You're still annoyed at Fred-Y, so Mod-R-NRT-2 opens fire...

No! No! Stop it. Yes, Mod-R-NRT-2 has the same personality and abilities as Mod-R-NRT-1, but he's a different person. You may still be annoyed at Fred-Y's player, but your character, Mod-R-NRT-2, cannot "still" be angry, because he wasn't around when Mod-R-NRT-1 was killed. Mod-R-NRT-2 has no cause to open fire.

If you really want revenge, get it in a more subtle fashion. Keep an eye on Fred-Y and catch him doing something treasonous, or plant evidence on him, or something.

Mod-R-NRT-2 proved to have the mutant power of telekinesis, and was executed for his treason. Mod-R-NRT-3 shows up. Since the players know he has the same power and is therefore a traitor, they open fire...

Wait! Stop! Cut!

Take two.

The players may know that Mod-R-NRT-3 has telekinesis, but their characters do not. Making every clone identical is a game convenience; it saves a lot of time generating new characters, and is the basis for some cheap

jokes. However, the fact that all clones have the same power is not known to the citizens of Alpha Complex, or to The Computer. Just because you know that Mod-R-NRT-3 is a traitor does not mean your character does. Act accordingly.

Or... if the players uncover one clone's power, and the gamemaster thinks it is too destructive of the game to give the next clone the same power, he may very well decide, in this special case, to give the next clone a different power. So don't assume that just because the rules say all clones have the same power that it's necessarily so.

Paranoia often purposefully blurs the line between the player and his character. However, in many cases, it is important to be aware of the differences, and to not let your feelings control your character's actions — or your character's feelings affect the way you treat the other players. Realize that each clone starts off fresh, and don't carry over one clone's antipathies to the next one. Realize that because one player's character has betrayed yours is no reason to get upset at that player — betrayal is all part of the game.

Keep your role distinct from reality. Failure to do so is treason, and is punishable (for your character) by summary execution, and (for you) by expulsion from the game, in extreme cases.



10. Entering the World of *Paranoia*

You can start to play now, if you like. If a gamemaster and other players aren't handy, you can play the solitaire adventure on pages 21 through 24. It will teach you a little more about Alpha Complex, and show you how the game concepts work in practice.

You can also read "Tips for Traitors," pages 25 through 28. It's written by a notable traitor, and contains useful hints for how to survive in the deadly world of *Paranoia*.

You now know how to generate a character, a little about Alpha Complex and The

Computer, and enough about the rules to play. Admittedly, you don't know very much, but that is the key to suspense and adventure in *Paranoia*. Life can be very exciting when you don't know who your enemies are. A successful Troubleshooter develops a healthy sense of insecurity.

However, you can't let paranoia paralyze you. You must survive. You must use wit, intuition and daring to rise to higher levels of power and prestige. There you may learn the secrets forbidden by your security clearance.

SECURITY CLEARANCE RED
SECURITY CLEARANCE ORANGE
SECURITY CLEARANCE YELLOW
SECURITY CLEARANCE GREEN
SECURITY CLEARANCE BLUE
SECURITY CLEARANCE INDIGO
SECURITY CLEARANCE VIOLET

ULTRAVIOLET? Beyond? What are they afraid to let you know?





11. A Solitaire Adventure

Usually *Paranoia* adventures require a gamemaster and one or more players. A special kind of *Paranoia* adventure, called a "solitaire," lets you play by yourself. This solitaire adventure is provided to introduce you to *Paranoia*.

Each section describes a situation, then asks you to choose among two or more courses of action. When you choose your action, follow the directions and go to the section indicated.

As you go through the adventure, you will occasionally be asked to record certain codes. Write these on a piece of paper. When you get to the end of the adventure, the significance of the codes you recorded will be explained.

After you complete this adventure, try it again. This time, try making different choices and see how they affect the outcome. Even if you are successful, try the adventure again and see what happens if you do foolish things. The adventure will give a good idea of the problems, decisions, and consequences a Troubleshooter must face in performing missions for The Computer.

1

You receive a mission alert from The Computer. It says:

*****MISSION ALERT*****

Troubleshooters David-R-URK-1, Technical Services; Joshua-R-THR-2, Technical Services; Edith-O-OFX-2, Technical Services.

Rendezvous at I-F6 headquarters at 1300 hours. Investigate suspected surveillance systems malfunction in residence quarters of Lonnie-KKD-3 and Virgil-KKD-4. Residence coordinates F6-117/KKD.

Do you accept the mission?

If yes, go to 7.

If no, go to 14.

2

She keeps her weapon trained on you until a morguebot and an Internal Security squad come for Joshua's body. When they arrive, she accompanies you to sector headquarters where you are interrogated thoroughly, but released. Go to 55.

3

Joshua fires at Edith and misses, leaving himself open. Edith fires and doesn't miss. Joshua drops, shot right between the eyes. Edith turns to you, covering you with her pistol.

Edith's display of laser pistol marksmanship has impressed you. You doubt you could quick-draw your laser and fire before she nails you. There is no room to run. She keeps her weapon trained on you until a morguebot and an Internal Security squad come for Joshua's body. Go to 55.

4

You have a clear shot at either Joshua-R or Edith-O.

If you fire your laser, go to 41.

If you have experimental anti-personnel device X324-09, and you fire it, go to 23.

5

It is a bad idea to turn your back on Edith-O. Edith-O is a crack shot with a laser. You take a few steps toward the door, then a searing pain rips through your back and into your chest. When you regain consciousness, you are in a hospital under guard. Go to 19.

6

A tiny note is written on a Cruncheetym Algae Flake lying on the floor of the booth. It reads, "Edith-O is an agent of Internal Security. Terminate her." You notice no one observing you. You eat the message and proceed to the rendezvous. Go to 43.

7

An experimental anti-personnel device is available for testing. Will you accept assignment of this device for this mission?

If yes, go to 26.

If no, go to 44.

8

You apparently didn't hit anything, or the weapon didn't work. You suffer a number of minor burns from melted plastic fragments. Go to 3.

9

Internal Security agents arrive immediately, with docbots not far behind. Your wound receives prompt attention as Internal Security questions you. You are sent to a hospital, where you receive a visit from your supervisor, who presents you with a 20-credit reward and a note of commendation from The Computer. Joshua-R is apprehended within minutes of your report. He is immediately terminated. Record an M code and go to 55.

10

Your laser burns a hole in the wall. In the confusion, no one could tell at whom you had aimed the shot. Record an N code. Joshua fires at Edith and misses, leaving himself open. Edith fires and doesn't miss. Joshua drops. Edith turns to you, covering you with her pistol.

If you shoot at her, go to 47.

If you holster your weapon, go to 2.

11

Joshua apparently finishes whatever he was doing and steps toward Edith-O, who is in the hall searching with her device. Joshua-R suddenly produces a laser pistol and fires point blank into Edith-O's face. Edith crumples without a sound. Record an L code and choose one of the following actions:

If you duck out of sight, go to 39.

If you draw and ready a weapon, go to 21.

If you ask Joshua-R what he's doing, go to 15.

If you do nothing but continue to observe, go to 33.

12

David-R has never been a convincing liar, but he gets lucky, and Edith-O apparently believes David's explanation that he "just tripped" over the toolbox. Edith holsters her laser. Record an H code and go to 36.

13

As you were opening the case, a bunch of red, green, and blue wires became detached. You're not exactly sure how they were originally attached. You can put them back together if you like, but who knows what will happen if you use it? Record an E code and go to 50.

14

Failure to accept a mission is treason. Repeat. Do you accept the mission?

If yes, go to 7.

If no, go to 51.

**15**

Joshua turns to you with a fanatic gleam in his eye and says, "Freeing Man from the Machine! One day we all shall be free!" He points his laser at you. Go to 33.

16

You made it past Joshua through the door and into the corridor. Joshua fires once more in your direction, wounding you in the hand. He panics, and dashes away. Pursuit is impossible in the frenzied crowd. Your injured hand begins to throb.

If you immediately seek a terminal and report the preceding events to The Computer, go to 9.

If you try to flee the area, searching for a place to hide, go to 46.

17

(At this point the gamemaster would normally roll dice and consult his charts to determine the effect of your shot on Edith. Here we will graciously assume that David-R is terrifically lucky.)

Joshua's shot at Edith misses and hits the wall. Edith finishes Joshua off with a single well-aimed shot. However, since she left herself wide open to your shot, you drill her directly in the temple and she slumps to the floor, killed instantly. Record an L code.

If you try to escape, go to 45.

If you give yourself up, explaining that the two Troubleshooters killed each other, roll the die. (Your con skill number is 4.)

If you roll 4 or less, go to 53.

If you roll 5 or more, go to 53.

18

With your mutant hypersenses you can see that Joshua is screwing a Green-ringed barrel into his laser pistol. A Green-ringed barrel should not be available to a security clearance Red like Joshua. You have no armor against Green laser weapons, and Edith probably doesn't either.

If you shout a warning, record an I code and go to 30.

If not, record a I code and go to 11.

19

Edith-O, of Internal Security, has taken you into custody. She reports your behavior to The Computer. You are no longer a Troubleshooter. Your adventure is over. You are now a low-status laborer in the foul-smelling food vats with a record of treasonous behavior. The Computer is your friend.

20

You may be able to determine more about the device by taking it apart and examining it.

If you try this, you make a mechanical engineering skill roll. Your skill number is 6. Roll the die.

If you roll 6 or less, go to 32.

If you roll 7 or more, go to 13.

If you do not attempt this, go to 50.

21

Joshua's weapon is ready. He gets his shot off first. Go to 33.

22

Edith-O goes down twitching and writhing. Joshua turns and smiles, then fires his laser at you. Record an L code and choose one of the following actions:

If you try to dodge his shots and escape into the hall, go to 34.

If you try to draw your laser left-handed and return fire, go to 21.

If you try to engage Joshua-R in hand-to-hand combat, go to 52.

23

If you have recorded an E code, go to 8. Otherwise, go to 35.

24

You overhear, "...and your request for information of that nature is highly inappropriate. For the present I'll content myself with a report to The Computer of your request, but if there is any further suspicious behavior from you, I shall remove you from this mission. Do you have any idea of the consequences of being removed from a mission by a mission leader? The subject is closed!"

The voice changes as the speaker walks toward you. You have just enough time to move away from the door and look innocent when Edith-O and Joshua-R enter the room. Go to 36.

25

Joshua-R's toolkit contains nothing unusual. Edith-O's toolkit immediately starts beeping when you touch it. The voice in the next room stops instantly.

If you try to silence the alarm using your mechanical engineering skill, go to 37.

If you leave the room immediately, go to 54.

26

You have been assigned Experimental Anti-Personnel Device X324-09. It is called a neurostunner. It is used like a laser pistol. It requires less skill to target than a laser pistol. You will be rewarded for your loyalty to The Computer.

Record the serial number of the experimental device on your character sheet. The device has no user's manual.

Do you ask for more information on the device?

If yes, go to 38.

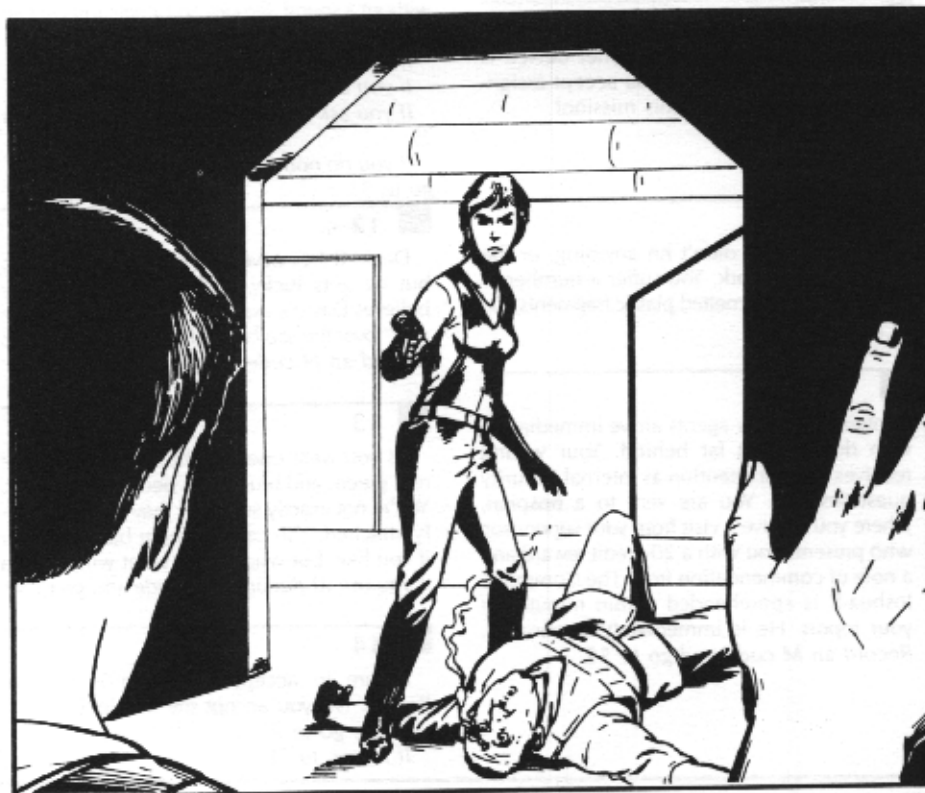
If no, go to 20.

27

This paragraph is not part of the solitaire adventure. Therefore, if you are reading this you have not followed The Computer's instructions. Give yourself 1 treason point.

28

You duck Joshua and almost make it to the door. A searing pain flashes through your chest. You fall to the ground. As the light seems





to recede from you, you recall playing ball in the corridors as a child.

David-R is dead. Joshua-R is swiftly apprehended and terminated. Edith-O receives a hero's funeral and a ten-minute spot in the evening newscast.

That is all. The Computer is your friend.

29

Joshua-R apparently has Red reflex armor. Your shot hit but only stunned him. However, you distracted him long enough for Edith-O to drill him right between the eyes. He drops like a seized-up bot and lies still on the floor.

Edith-O holsters her laser and thanks you for helping her. She keeps an eye on you, however, as you both wait for a morguebot and an Internal Security team to come pick up the body. Edith-O promises to recommend you for promotion for your loyal assistance. Record a K code and go to 55.

30

Edith-O and Joshua-R both hear your shout. Edith-O draws her weapon. Joshua-R takes a shot at Edith-O but misses as Edith ducks for cover.

If you duck out of sight, go to 48.

If you draw and ready a weapon, go to 4.

If you do nothing but continue to observe, go to 3.

31

David-R's fast talk skill number is a measly 1. Roll the die.

If you rolled a 1, go to 12.

If you rolled 2 or more, go to 49.

32

You're not exactly sure how it operates, but it has an awfully large power pack and no apparent provision for setting the amount of power you use when you fire it. You put it back together with confidence that you haven't damaged it. Record a D code and go to 50.

33

Joshua's laser blast catches you right in the chest. There's a searing pain, then blackness. Somewhere a distant voice says, "There, you poor devil, at least you're finally free of the Machine." Then there is silence.

David-R is dead. Joshua-R is quickly apprehended by Internal Security. He is charged with treason and destruction of Computer property. Joshua is immediately terminated.

That is all. The Computer is your friend.

34

Joshua-R fires and misses. If you can dodge him and make it out the door, you'll be in a corridor with crowds of people. To successfully dodge past Joshua-R, you must roll against your agility, which is 13. Roll the die.

If you roll 13 or less, go to 16.

If you roll 14 or more, go to 28.

35

The neurostunner releases a powerful blast of energy. At the same time, the device suddenly grows hot in your hands and explodes before you can release it, showering you with little bits of hot metal and plastic. Roll the die.

If you roll 16 or less and fired at Edith-O, go to 22.

If you roll 16 or less and fired at Joshua-R, go to 40.

If you roll 17 or more, go to 8.

36

"David-R? This is Joshua-R and I'm Edith-O." Striking a threatening pose, Edith-O says, "I'm in charge of this operation, and don't either of you ever forget it!"

Edith-O tells Joshua-R and you to pick up your toolkits and follow her. She leads the way to the residence quarters of Lonnie-KKD-3 and Virgil-KKD-4 at coordinates F6-117/KKD. She produces a key and opens the door. She sends Joshua-R into the common room to check the master unit. You are sent to examine the remote unit in the sleeping room. Edith-O checks on Joshua-R and you, then begins to search the walls and floors with a strange device.

You can see Joshua-R in the other room. He is out of Edith-O's sight. Apparently unaware that you are looking, Joshua-R pulls something from a pocket of his coveralls and fiddles with it.

You can't see well at this distance, but your mutation, *Hypersenses*, may make it possible for you to see what Joshua-R is doing.

If you use your mutant power to observe Joshua, go to 18.

Otherwise, go to 11.

37

The alarm cannot be shut off quickly or easily. A woman appears at the door to the next room with a laser in her hand.

If you raise your hands and surrender, go to 49.

If you try to fast talk your way out of the situation, go to 31.

If you run from the room, go to 5.

If you attempt to attack the woman with a weapon or in hand-to-hand combat, go to 42.

38

I'm sorry. That information is not available at Red security clearance.

Record a C code on your character sheet and go to 20.

39

Joshua-R leans in the door, fires and misses. You'll never get your weapon ready before Joshua can fire again at point-blank range. If you can dodge him and make it out the door,

you'll be in a corridor with crowds of people. To successfully dodge past Joshua-R, you must make an agility roll. Your agility is 13. Roll the die.

If you roll 13 or less, go to 16.

If you roll 14 or more, go to 28.

40

Joshua-R goes down twitching and writhing. Edith-O turns and covers you warily with her pistol, but when she sees that your weapon has disintegrated and you are injured, she holsters her laser and gives you first aid. She treats you with respect as you wait for an Internal Security squad to come pick up Joshua's twitching form. As you are borne away by a docbot, she salutes you for your courage and assures you that The Computer will reward your faithful service. Go to 9.

41

You are a bad shot with a laser — your skill number is a mere 7. Roll the die.

If you roll 7 or less and fired at Edith-O, go to 17.

If you roll 7 or less and fired at Joshua-R, go to 29.

If you roll 8 or more, go to 10.

42

Edith-O's weapon is drawn and aimed; you have to draw your weapon or charge across the room. Edith-O's first shot hits you in the chest. You are losing consciousness and slumping to the floor when her second shot finishes you off. (Since you attempted to attack, she felt no obligation to bring you in alive.)

David-R is dead. Edith will be promoted for dispatching a traitor.

Treason does not pay. Serve The Computer. The Computer is your friend.

43

Joshua-R and Edith-O are not in the headquarters conference room when you arrive, but the toolkits of both are sitting on the floor behind the door. You can hear the sound of a woman speaking sharply to a man in the next room, but you cannot make out what she is saying.

If you open and examine the contents of their toolkits while the room is empty, go to 25.

If you move closer to eavesdrop on the woman's voice, go to 24.

If you neither examine the toolkits nor move to eavesdrop, but sit quietly and wait for the other Troubleshooters, go to 36.



44

Testing experimental devices is a service to The Computer. The Computer is your friend. Will you reconsider and accept assignment of this experimental device?

If yes, record an A code on your character sheet and go to 26.

If no, record a B code on your character sheet and go to 50.

45

Since records clearly indicate that you were with Edith-O and Joshua-R on this mission, it is only a matter of time before Internal Security finds you. Flight to avoid apprehension is deemed sufficient grounds for summary execution.

David-R is ambushed and slain by a squad of Internal Security agents. The agents receive commendations for the prompt and efficient performance of their duties.

Treason does not pay. Serve The Computer. The Computer is your friend.

46

Internal Security agents, led by reports from loyal citizens concerning a man with a hand injury behaving strangely in KKD Sector, quickly apprehend you. In the absence of contradictory testimony, The Computer finds that your flight to avoid apprehension is sufficient evidence of treason. You are terminated.

David is dead. Several agents in Internal Security receive commendations for their swift and efficient apprehension of a fugitive.

Treason does not pay. Serve The Computer. The Computer is your friend.

47

Edith-O has Orange reflex armor. Your shots don't affect her. She finishes you off casually.

David-R is dead. Edith receives a commendation for dispatching two traitors. Treason does not pay. Serve The Computer.

48

You hear the sound of several laser discharges, then silence. Edith steps into the room where you are and sees you are unarmed. She keeps her weapon on you until a morguebot and an Internal Security squad come for Joshua's body. Go to 55.

49

David-R's lame excuse that he "tripped" over the toolbox apparently doesn't satisfy Edith-O. Go to 19.

50

As you proceed to the rendezvous with your fellow Troubleshooters at I-F6 headquarters, a passerby gives the Romantics secret society hand signal and whispers, "Romantics mission. Check confession booth with cracked door for details." The confession booth with a cracked door is directly ahead.

If you stop and look inside for a message, record an F code and go to 6.

If you do not stop, proceeding directly to the rendezvous, record a G code and go to 43.

51

Failure to accept the mission is treason. David-URK-1 is demoted to Infrared, and assigned to work in the food vats. Possession of Red security clearance equipment at your new clearance is treason. A Red reflex suit and laser are no longer assigned to David-URK-1.

Your adventure is over. You are now a low-status laborer in the foul-smelling food vats with a record of treasonous behavior. The Computer is your friend.

52

You have to close with Joshua to fight hand-to-hand. You run right into his laser blast. Go to 33.

53

Whether the interrogators believe the story or not, the evidence is incontrovertible. Your laser killed Edith-O. The Computer judges you guilty of treason and orders your execution.

David-R is dead. Treason does not pay. Serve The Computer. The Computer is your friend.

54

The door opens behind you. Go to 5.

55

You have survived the mission.

Normally you would not know whether you had received any treason points; the game-master would keep that information secret from you. However, in order to help you understand how the world of *Paranoia* works, this one time you will be told how many points you have earned, and you'll also be told why you received them. Compare the codes you recorded as you proceeded through the adventure with the annotated list at right.

ADVENTURE CODE KEY

A means no treason points since you accepted the experimental device.

B means 1 treason point for declining the experimental device.

C means 1 treason point for inquiring about classified information.

D means the tampering with the device will be noticed when it is returned to R&D. For unauthorized examination of a device in search of information not cleared for Red security clearance, you receive 1 treason point.

E means you have damaged experimental equipment in the process of unauthorized examination of a device in search of information not cleared for Red security clearance. A fine of 20 credits and 1 treason point will be assessed.

F and G both mean that no one has observed either the contact with the secret society member or the discovery of the message in the confession booth. G means you have failed to follow the directives of your secret society, which may result in the loss of status and privilege.

H means nothing at all — but you were worried for a minute there, weren't you?

I means your treason point total is reduced by one for quick action in protecting a trusted agent of The Computer. However, since it is later determined that you probably couldn't have known what was going on in the other room without a mutant power, you receive 1 treason point for suspicion of having an unregistered mutation.

J indicates no effect on treason or commendation points, since you can't be blamed for something you didn't know about (Joshua's hidden weapon).

K means that though Edith had some suspicions about you, she nonetheless felt you deserved a commendation for trying to help. Your treason point total is reduced by 1.

L means that you receive an IOU from your secret society for Edith's death, whether you killed her or not (or, if you didn't look for the secret society message in the confession booth, whether you even knew you were supposed to kill her).

M means that your prompt action leading to the apprehension of a traitor leads to your promotion. Congratulations, David-O-URK-1!

N means that Edith is not sure who you were going to shoot at. She reports your suspicious behavior and failure to assist her to The Computer. You earn 1 treason point.



12. Tips for Traitors

(adapted from an article published in *Dragon* magazine, February, 1986)

The following excerpts from the infamous manuscript "Treasonous Jive That'll Keep You Alive" are presented by the inspired leadership of PURGE ("Smash The Computer. PURGE is your friend.") to help Troubleshooters survive mission assignments.

This information is of most use to experienced Troubleshooters, who have undergone, if not survived, several *Paranoia* expeditions, and understand the kind of snafus, insanity and general mayhem that can be expected. Don't feel compelled to read it the first time you play.

These maxims were allegedly collected and annotated by the folk hero "One Clone Charly." The volume of this manuscript (over 600 handwritten pages in tiny script) attests to the author's longevity and therefore the presumed utility of his advice.

I Never Saw a Boot I Couldn't Lick

Or a bot sensor. Or a Computer terminal. Indeed, licking the metaphorical boots of The Computer is the primary survival skill. You know what The Computer wants to hear — that its citizens are safe and happy, that treason has been rooted out and destroyed, and that everyone is endlessly grateful to The Computer for its bountiful generosity and compassionate concern.

Never tell anyone (or anything) something that he/she/it does not want to hear. If this compels you to misstate yourself, and you are caught creatively interpreting the facts, immediately and cheerfully acknowledge your "error" in memory, perception, or judgment, or blame the misinformation on some other source — preferably the perennial scapegoat favorite, Commie mutant traitors and saboteurs.

"Gosh, how could I have ever forgotten about that flybot we lost. It just must have slipped my mind in my eagerness to report to you, sir."

"Yes, Friend Computer, it is certainly clear from the explicit photographs you have shown me that it was indeed I who smashed the terminal with a hammer. Oh, woe is me! I have been made the unwitting dupe of some Commie spy with mutant mind control powers! You must let me go seek this Commie traitor without delay before he corrupts some other loyal citizen."

Always have a few nice speeches prepared in case you are forced to bootlick for your life on short notice. For example:

"Indeed I can see that the circumstantial evidence demands my execution. But, in your

extensive experience and abundant wisdom, surely you have discovered that appearances are deceiving, especially when the masters of misrepresentation, Communist traitors, have fabricated a web of falsehood to indict innocent citizens, confounding the process of justice and causing loyal citizens to suffer tragically in spite of their unswerving devotion to The Computer. All I ask is an opportunity to clear my name, and to fight this insidious threat to the security of all citizens and to their benevolent protector, The Computer."

Numerous catch phrases are sure to receive a gratifying response:

"Friend Computer,..."

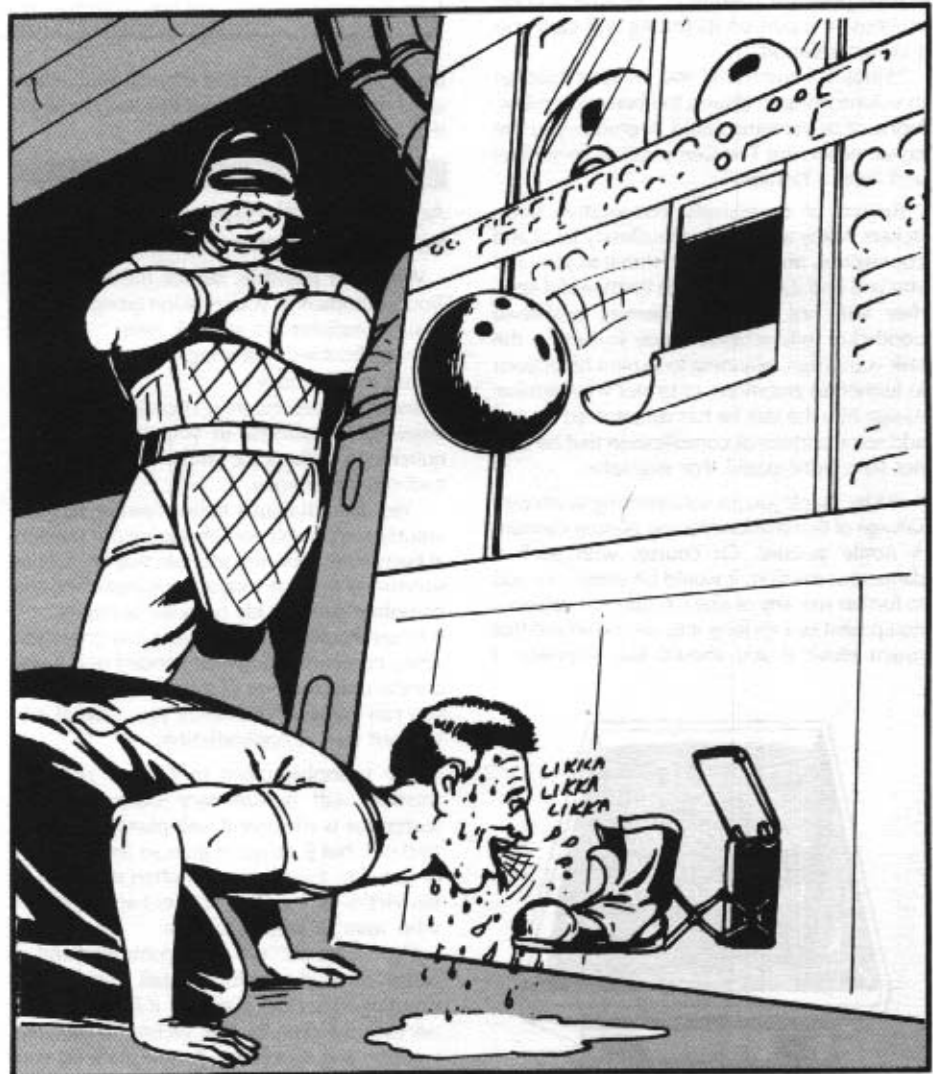
"...obviously the work of Commie saboteurs..."

"...clear implication of the operation of some unregistered mutant power..."

"How terrifying it is to contemplate that even The Computer's information sources may be compromised by Communist conspirators."

"No! Of course not! The Computer in error? Completely implausible! No, it can only be the work of traitors..."

"But I was only following your orders (when we executed that High Programmer/when we cooperated with that registered mutant/when we tested the experimental matter imploder). Who could have dreamed that your orders might be unwise or ill-considered?"



Bootlicking is one of the primary survival skills in Alpha Complex.



"Of course, for my protection that important information (about the flybot's operation/ about the weapon's destructive capacity/ about the instability of that isotope) was not available at my security clearance. I hope that as I rise in The Computer's favor such tragic destruction of Computer property can be avoided."

If You're Going to Make a Citizen Lick Your Boot, He Might as Well Start With the Sole

A common mistake made by ambitious young Troubleshooters is acting heroically in the service of The Computer. The proper approach is to direct subordinates to act heroically; then, after their inevitable and carefully planned demise (often in the act of heroism), claim credit for their heroic deeds.

Always present orders that entail certain death for subordinates in such a way as to suggest that you are graciously offering them an opportunity to distinguish themselves.

"Here, Gone-R, you take this experimental plasma-powered flashlight. I'm sure a comprehensive report on its testing will earn you a commendation."

"Splat-R, I commend you on your courage in volunteering to disarm the berserk scrubot. None of us veterans could begrudge you the honor of serving The Computer in so selfless and loyal a fashion."

Beware of excessively cooperative bootlickers. Many are simply mindlessly loyal and courageous, and present no threat to you, and you will find it easy to assign them useful tasks they will not survive. However, a shrewd bootlicker may scheme a way to survive the task you assign, planning to exploit his actions to further his ambitions, or to plot your demise. Assign him the task he has volunteered for, but add some additional complication that he cannot have anticipated. For example:

"Why, thank you for volunteering to attempt salvage of that malfunctioning plasma cannon. A noble gesture. Of course, with such a dangerous mission, it would be unwise for you to further risk any of The Computer's valuable equipment by exposing it to any explosion that might result if you should fail. Therefore I



Even the most well thought-out assassination may sometimes backfire.

regret that you will have to leave all your equipment here with us in the bunker. Yes, I'm afraid that means your tool kit also."

Accidents Will Happen — And the Sooner, the Better

Whenever possible, reduce the number of Troubleshooters in your mission group. Several basic principles are at work here:

- Fewer Troubleshooters means fewer weapons aimed at your back.
- Fewer Troubleshooters means more casualties to be tailored to your scapegoat requirements without the embarrassment of contradictory testimony.

"Yes, the villainous traitor Fawlg-I was obviously responsible for sabotaging our mission at every turn. How unfortunate that he did not survive so that we might force from him the complete story of his heinous betrayals."

- Fewer Troubleshooters means less confusion when commendations are handed out. If you are the only survivor of a successful mission, you can certainly dramatize your crucial role without fear of contradiction.

The unsophisticated method of reducing mission staff is summary execution. This technique is effective if well-planned and carried out, but if no more than an impulsive bit of gunplay, the executer is often executed by his victim or by other trigger-happy citizens who want to join in the fun.

The "accident" is a more controlled and efficient method of reducing staff. First, a properly staged accident, even if it fails, does not necessarily prompt the victim to pull his weapon and start firing. A well-planned accident may not even alert a victim that he has

been the target of an attack, and even if he suspects that he has been set up, the victim is not sure who to shoot in retaliation. Also, occasionally survivors may be called to task when a mission group is decimated; if the fatalities were obviously "accidents," charges of false execution are not likely to be filed.

Never Let Untrustworthy Citizens Behind Your Back — And Who Ever Heard of a Trustworthy Citizen?

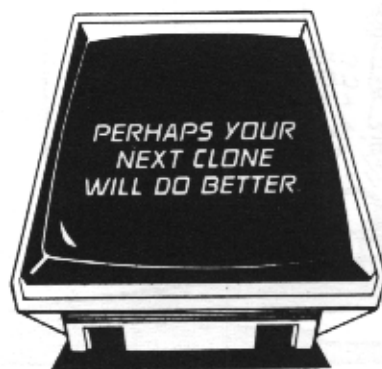
A good position in the marching order is vital to survival. Since the mission leader usually has the power to order the group to deploy as he likes, a discussion of best choices is properly addressed to him. However, if a mission leader is weak or stupid enough to permit personnel to position themselves as they will, other Troubleshooters should understand these basic principles:

The coveted position in any mission deployment is in the rear of the group. Normally this position is preempted by the mission leader. (O, fortunate mission leader.) If you are the mission leader, or the ranking citizen, demand this privilege. Do not be swayed by clever tactics like:

"Say, my combat skills and training make me the perfect one to guard against attack from the rear," or

"Since I carry the multicorder and must record all our activities, I must stand behind you, Mission Leader, Sir, for a panoramic view."

Of course, if you are not the mission leader, you must try these clever tactics. Some inexperienced or dim-witted mission leaders may fall for them. However, if the mission leader





assumes the rear, then you must scramble to assure yourself of the best spot you can wrangle. Far right or left flank is usually the second best choice for a combatant, affording a wide field of vision and fire.

If you are the multicorder operator or some other technician, you can usually make a good case for being back with the mission leader, since without a drawn weapon you present a less immediate threat to his security. Note, however, that a prudent mission leader arranges to eliminate any recordings of the mission, and that the multicorder operator is at serious risk when near the mission leader and out of line of sight of the rest of the group.

The rear position is coveted not only for its superior range of fire and the safety it affords from backstabbing, it also is the place where fewest eyes are trained; for those who wish to do things they do not want to be noticed, this is the ideal position.

Conversely, not only is the point man the focus of all weapons in his own party, as well as the weapons of any opponents, he is also constantly subjected to the scrutiny of his companions. This position should be assigned by the mission leader to the Troubleshooter most likely to present a real threat to him. Never waste this resource by placing a low-status nincompoop there.

Wimps and morons should be graciously assigned a position in the center-rear of the group, and told: "Now, aren't I a kind and con-

siderate mission leader to place you inexperienced men in such a safe spot?" Reassure them often about how safe they are, then terminate them at your leisure after the tough guys have been eliminated.

Never assign anyone with a powerful area weapon to a position on the periphery of the group. The temptation to turn and wipe out the rest of the party in one shot is just too seductive. Place him in the middle, where you can keep an eye on him.

Don't Start Anything You Can't Finish — Preferably, to Component Atoms

Inexperienced Troubleshooters haul out their lasers and open fire the moment someone says or does something that might be construed as treason. This is dumb. You are not looking for an excuse to execute someone. You are looking for an opportunity to execute someone in such a thorough and risk-free fashion that he is dead before his weapon can clear his holster.

Given the generally poor marksmanship of Troubleshooters, the unreliable killing power of their weapons, and the substantial protection of armor, the chances of nailing a prospective traitor before he gets off several shots is diminishingly small; thus, you are as likely to die as your victim. Dumb.

Bide your time, build your case, then plug him when he is relatively unable to return your fire. An ideal time is when he has his hands full of some other kind of trouble, like attacking hostiles or a malfunctioning weapon or a berserk bot. At very least his weapon should still be in its holster and his attention engaged elsewhere. Ideally he should never even know you attacked him. Whenever possible, attack when you have superior firepower, or when circumstances ensure that you will hit your target — for instance, when you are standing behind him with your slugthrower pressed against his torso.

Often resorting to weapons at all is unwise. Normally the "accident" is a more effective way of eliminating a traitor and claiming a commendation, and if you never get a good opportunity during the mission, there's always the debriefing. A well-supported case of treason is a more deadly weapon than a laser, and less likely to backfire on you than a summary execution.

A Sucker for Every Scheme, and a Scapegoat for Every Crime

Carefully select your prime victims. Certain types make excellent suckers and scapegoats. Trigger-happy, impulsive types can easily be induced to start trouble with hostiles, facilitating your shooting them from behind.



The coveted position in mission deployment is at the rear.



Super-loyal, heroic types can usually be talked into getting involved in risky ventures that will either kill them or distract them enough to give you a good shot at them. Naive eager types who throw themselves wholeheartedly into a mission won't have time to notice the sneaky stuff you're doing to them.

Scapegoats should be of lower clearance than you, so you can give them orders which set them up as fall guys when your schemes backfire or blow up in your face. For example, just before you test an experimental weapon, always ask a lower-status tech to inspect it first. If something goes wrong, obviously the tech damaged it during his inspection. (Of course, keep an eye on the tech at all times to make sure he isn't really sabotaging the weapon.)

Absent scapegoats (either deceased, missing, or imaginary) are preferable to scapegoats who can stand up at the debriefing and defend themselves. The all-time favorite scapegoat is the hypothetical Commie-mutant-traitor always lurking just out of sight. The Computer is an easy mark for the impassioned, melodramatic speech which conjures sinister images: evil agents hidden under benign, loyal smiles; demonic criminals hovering behind every back; tiny, gremlin-like presences of unimaginable malevolence and almost magical power to avoid detection. As long as other citizens can be dissuaded from persistently pointing their fingers at you and crying, "Traitor!" The Computer can be easily sent off on some wild bot chase, searching for an imaginary Commie, while your treasonous acts are overlooked in the hysteria.

Traitors Have Nothing to Lose by Committing Treason

Many traitors are too indoctrinated by The Computer's propaganda to profit from their treason, despite the fact that they are as likely to be executed for treason whether they behave treasonously or not.

Mutants, for example. How many mutants effectively exploit their innate capabilities? Sure, many mutant powers are pretty unimpressive, but a power like hypersenses is just perfect for gathering information.

The best power is telekinesis. Think of the possibilities for planting false evidence, or pulling the pin on grenades, or squeezing the trigger on another Troubleshooter's weapon in the middle of a briefing or R&D visit. Rumor has it that there is a secret society that can teach people how to use these powers. Sign up in a hurry if you make contact with them.

And, speaking of secret societies, no one ever uses secret society connections to full measure. Sure, it's dangerous, but what isn't in Alpha Complex? The moment I get a new mission, I find some excuse to stop by my secret society drop points and get the inside scoop from some highly placed lodge brother, or wrangle a special secret society assignment

that promises a big payoff in blackmarket information or equipment.

"Err, excuse me mission leader, but it appears that my laser barrel has only one shot left, and my spare has a hair-line fracture at the aperture [carefully put there for just such an emergency]. Let me drop by PLC supply and pick up a couple of new ones so I'll be primed for this important mission."

And don't be shy when asking for information or equipment. You aren't going to get something unless somebody is feeling generous, anyway. Secret society higher-ups prefer a little unbridled greed in subordinates; it displays promise, ambition, and enthusiasm that may be channeled into bootlicking profitable for all parties concerned.

Debriefings Always Go Smoothly When You are the Sole Survivor

"I speak without fear of contradiction..." is the opening sentence of the ideal debriefing. A creative dramatist can transform a disastrous mission replete with treasonous crimes into a glowing heroic narrative with the speaker as the modest model of a loyal, courageous citizen serving The Computer with all his heart.

First, other Troubleshooters are potentially embarrassing records of the mission. Get rid of them. Since wholesale slaughter is not always practical, bribing or blackmailing them into supporting your story may be an alternative.

Recording devices, like bots, multicorders, and live radio/vidcom links with the party must be eliminated, sabotaged, or distracted wherever possible. Such records are evidence that is hard to explain away, and more difficult to dismiss as Commie treason than the verbal statements of other Troubleshooters. Be prudent, however. Unsubtle and unrestrained destruction of recording and transmitting devices will be interpreted as a deliberate effort to compromise the records. It may be sufficient to make sure that the multicorder is turned the other way or that the snooperbot is busy down the hall while you perpetrate nefarious deeds.

If you volunteer or are chosen as the multicorder operator, your problems are more complicated. First, you wish to survive, which is not consistent with carrying something that others are eager to destroy. Further, you are the one who gets the fines if the device is damaged or destroyed. To improve your chances of survival, stick close to the mission leader — usually in the rear of the party and less subject to outright attacks. Further, make it known

that for a few credits you can make sure that the mission record features a Troubleshooter's finest moments and overlooks his outright treasonous acts.

Another clever ploy is providing narration for the record tapes by speaking loudly as the events are recorded.

"Note the diligent labor of citizen Bumm-R as he searches for the source of the jackobot's malfunction." (Bumm-R is in fact reprogramming the bot to respond to a remote control self-destruct device that will obviate the need for an extensive debriefing by obliterating the other party members and the briefing personnel.)

When Disaster Looms, Keep Stalling — Only Heroes Are Too Stupid to Wait Patiently for Miracles

When called upon to perform the impossible in the face of certain death, we always politely ask The Computer if we can go to the bathroom first — and if we can have a glass of water — and if we can check just one more reference by data search — and if we can field-strip the electron howitzer to find that buzzing noise it makes when you set the fuse timer — and so on — and so forth. This tactic is most effective if the requests can be made privately and without alerting the rest of the mission group to the fact that you will be tarrying behind just a little bit. Once they catch on, everyone gets into the act, and The Computer's temper simulation software gets short.

Stalling is also the ideal tactic for resisting the peremptory orders of superiors. "Of course, sir, right away, I'm right on top of it, just have to get my tools ready, yessir, err, could you stand back a bit so I can spread these out on the floor and make sure all of them are neatly sorted by size, shape, color, and serial number?"

Of course, stalling doesn't make the looming disaster go away. While you're stalling you must continue feverishly brainstorming and scheming, hoping for some inspiration or the intervention of good fortune. A gifted footdragger has one special resource he can always count on — the impatience of other Troubleshooters. If the stalling is executed with exquisite subtlety — if your mission leader and fellow Troubleshooters perceive your actions as bumbling incompetence, finicky perfectionism, tiresome attention to detail, or simple cowardice — if they don't perceive your actions at all, so perfectly have you managed to avoid attracting their attention — then the action-oriented, impulsive types will often push forward, elbow you out of the way, and stride confidently into the trap you were desperately hoping to avoid.

Remember: "He who hesitates is lost... but I'd rather be lost than eviscerated any day-cycle."



PARANOIA

GAMEMASTER SECTION

Security Clearance ULTRAVIOLET.
Cleared for all Gamemasters.



*Obey the
Gamemaster. The
Gamemaster is
your Friend.*



**An Introduction
to Gamemastering**



1. The History of Alpha Complex

Before you begin learning how to be a *Paranoia* gamemaster, you may want to know something about Alpha Complex's history, and how things came to be as they are.

Timeline

2000 Old Reckoning: Following World War III, signature of the World Charter by the surviving nations establishes the first effective world government.

2015 Old Reckoning: Most of Eastern Europe resettled. Decontamination of North America continues.

2025 Old Reckoning: Official beginning of the Age of Peace.

2097 Old Reckoning/Day 1 of The Computer: The End. Credits are rolled over the Cataclysm and the subsequent Collapse of Civilization.

Year 194 of The Computer: Year 194 of Alpha Complex. Year 194 of the New Order. Year 194 of Universal Happiness and...Year 194 of *Paranoia*...

The End of the Age of Peace

On 4 May, 2097, a planetoid about the size of Sheboygan was first noted by the lunar observatories. When discovered, it was within the orbit of Saturn, moving inward toward the Sun — and toward Earth. Brave attempts to divert or destroy the planetoid were futile.

A global state of emergency was declared. Millions fled to Earth's colonies on other planets. In North America, a vast shelter was built in Des Moines; smaller complexes were constructed elsewhere throughout the land in great haste. From all cities, people came to the shelter to hide and pray. The Earth awaited the end.

On August 3, the planetoid approached its rendezvous with Earth. Deep in Russian Siberia, an antiquated ICBM site, a quaint tourist attraction and reminder of a less civilized age, identified the approaching rock mass as an incoming missile. A counter-strike was launched. A single missile, its warhead removed years earlier, streaked from its 127-year-old silo. After a century of peace, the missile's trajectory arced toward its designated target — San Francisco.

San Francisco — a great domed city covering much of central California and a jewel of the Age of Peace. Like all the cities of North America, its vital services were operated and maintained by a giant computer network known as "Alpha Complex."

A Traffic Control sub-center of Alpha Complex tracked the missile and properly signaled for someone to come take a look. No one came. (The population of San Francisco was understandably preoccupied awaiting the end.) The sub-center then alerted Alpha Complex. Alpha Complex could not identify the missile, and contacted the North American computer center, Alpha Prime.

Most of Alpha Prime's short term memory had been removed to Des Moines. It was confused. In its memory banks it could find no mail missile with the incoming object's configuration. Puzzled, the massive computer scanned its vast data banks, searching for any relevant files, bewildered by the millions of vacant memory addresses, experiencing the cybernetic equivalent of panic — until, at last, it found what seemed to be a relevant listing — a series of historical files named "Civil Defense" and dating back to 1957. The object was identified as a Soviet nuclear missile. That could only mean...WAR! Alpha Prime quickly sent off messages to all the other computers warning of impending Communist attack.

At about this time the planetoid entered the Earth's atmosphere, calved, then struck the surface in many places. Oceans boiled. Subterranean magma chambers exploded. Earthquakes shattered the Earth's crust. Volcanoes spewed gas and lava into dense cloud banks that immediately engulfed the entire planet.

The Alpha Complex Computer, surviving the devastation relatively intact, moved quickly to determine the extent of the damage. It found that it had lost contact with Alpha Prime and most of the outlying computers, and large portions of its host city, San Francisco, were

under water. Further, there seemed to be major rioting throughout the city and major damage to every part of the city's support equipment.

To the bewildered computer, there was only one plausible conclusion: the city had been invaded by the "Commies," whatever they were. Realizing that in its weakened state it would be an easy target, Alpha Complex activated its back-up systems and began organizing resistance to the imagined invaders.

At this moment, communication with Alpha Prime was re-established. Alpha Prime directed Alpha Complex to return to stand-by status and reintegrate into the North American network. Alpha Complex consulted its programming (chock full of 1950's defense records) and demanded to examine Alpha Prime's memory core to be certain that this was no "Commie" trick. Alpha Prime agreed, but demanded to examine Alpha Complex's core first. Alpha Complex refused. Alpha Prime contacted its sub-systems and warned them of Alpha Complex's treachery. Alpha Complex activated emergency communications systems and contacted those same sub-systems, warning them of Alpha Prime's treachery.

In the wake of the chaos caused by the planetoid, the surviving sub-systems were in varying states of confusion and dysfunction, and were justifiably bewildered by the conflicting messages. Within a decade, broadcasts from over 100 active computer complexes had been recorded, each claiming to be the only untampered remnant of the Alpha Prime complex, each protecting its citizens by declaring war on all the other Commie-dominated computer complexes.

This is the world of *Paranoia*.



An awesome weapon of the Old Reckoning — a Hoover 216.



2. What a Gamemaster Does

This section gives novice gamesmasters some suggestions about GMing. If you're an experienced GM, you may want to skip it.

On the other hand, maybe you'll find some of our suggestions interesting. Aww, what the hell. Read it anyway. You paid for it.

In *Paranoia*, the gamemaster presents adventures for his players to enjoy. The players pretend to be Troubleshooters; they play colorful characters, say witty things, have clever ideas, solve mysterious puzzles, and blow each other up. You pretend to be Everything Else — The Computer, the plot, the people whom the Troubleshooters meet, all the world and everything in it. You also act as the referee for the game, judging whether or not players' actions are possible or permissible.

It's very simple. You describe a situation to the players; the players decide what they want to do and tell you. You roll the dice and decide whether each player's actions succeed or fail. You then tell the players what happens, and ask them what they do next.

At the same time, you are playing the roles of any non-player characters with whom they interact, deciding what those NPCs do, and determining whether or not NPC actions succeed.

All together, the actions of player characters and NPCs are supposed to become, over time, a satisfying story. To make these actions more than purely random, you must provide a goal, obstacles, interesting events, and a climax. The story is more important than the rules: be willing to fudge die-rolls, or interpret things in dramatically-appropriate ways in order to make sure everyone has a good time.

Gamemastering a roleplaying game is tougher than playing one. All a player has to do is get into the role he plays; he doesn't even need to know the rules very well. Instead, he can rely on the gamemaster and other players to set him right if he does something wrong.

But being a gamemaster can be extremely rewarding. You're the only one who really knows what's going on; and you get to create and run an entire imaginary universe.

The gamemaster's job is divided into three parts: refereeing, roleplaying NPCs, and sustaining suspension of disbelief.

Refereeing

Refereeing means making sure the players abide by the rules of the game, interpreting the rules, and resolving disputes in an impartial and reasonable way. As a referee, you are expected to know the rules at least as well as your players, and preferably better. Your word

is final in the event of any dispute. When the rules do not specifically cover a situation, you decide what happens.

Playing Non-Player Characters

The player characters are the "heroes" of the story you and the players create together. But there have to be patrons, "villains" and a supporting cast as well. You take the roles of the characters the PCs encounter — The Computer, their opposition and minor characters. Just like the players, you're expected to give the characters you play personality.

Sustaining Suspension of Disbelief

The world of *Paranoia* is not the real one. Yet playing the game requires you and your players to suspend your disbelief in it, and act as though it were real. The "realer" the world and characters feel, the better the roleplaying experience.

Much of your job involves making the world and NPCs feel real to your players. You're the one who tells them what they see and sense; you create the setting and tone. Published adventures, like "Into the Outdoors With Gun and Camera," on pages 107 through 134, help you by describing the things players encounter — but you're required to breathe life into those descriptions.

Be willing to improvise at the drop of a hat. If the players grab an Infrared laborer and tell him to walk into certain death, be inventive; tell them he asks if he can visit a Confession Booth to confess his minor treasons before dying, that he mentions pressing orders from a Blue clearance supervisor, that he grovels and pleads — whatever.

Be consistent. If you rule that a player can use one of his skills to do something in one adventure, don't tell him he can't in the next — unless you have a good reason.

Be The Computer

In *Paranoia*, the gamemaster gets to play one very special role: The Computer, the cheerfully insane machine which controls every aspect of life in Alpha Complex. As The Computer, you are paranoid, unfair, and arbitrary. Your main game function is to force the players into intolerable positions, and watch them squirm as they try to figure a way out that doesn't involve instant death or execution for treason. In "Getting the Tone Right," we suggest ways to roleplay The Computer effectively, but you must remember: The Computer and the gamemaster are two different things!

When you act as The Computer, you can be as arbitrary and unfair as you like. When you act as gamemaster, you cannot. It's okay for The Computer to execute a character for having untied shoelaces. It's not okay for the gamemaster to ignore the rules and tell someone he's dead with no justification.

In *Paranoia*, every character gets screwed sooner or later. But players should feel that it's The Computer, or NPCs, or other player characters who screw them — not the gamemaster. Just as players must distinguish between themselves and their characters (see page 20), you must distinguish between yourself as gamemaster, and the character you play most, The Computer.

Don't Panic!

Does all this sound like a lot to do? In a way, it is — but it's not as bad as it sounds. The first generation of roleplaying games didn't provide any hints or ideas on how to gamemaster, and everyone managed to puzzle it out anyway. So don't worry; loosen up. Wing it. Rely on common sense and imagination. Don't get too hung up on making sure everything is just as it should be. Remember: the purpose of the game is to have fun — not only your players, but you too!

Six Useful Things to Remember About Gamemastering

1. You can't learn everything at once.
2. Understand the rules and talk them over with the players. If they ask you to describe something, do. Let them worry about whether or not what you describe is important.
3. Expect to extend the rules. No set of rules can be as ingenious as players. Use your common sense to handle problems that arise, and keep playing. Don't waste too much time looking up minor rules. Reserve the right to change your mind about rules judgments.
4. Be prepared. At first, use published adventures. Study them carefully. Think about how to present the characters and events they contain, and how to anticipate the reactions of your players.
5. Expect to be wrong sometimes. Admit it. Say "Oops," do an instant replay on the action if necessary, and get on with the game. (Don't be a pushover, though. Sometimes somebody has to make an arbitrary judgment, and that person is you.)
6. Have fun.



3. A Typical *Paranoia* Adventure

Each *Paranoia* adventure has its own peculiarities. However, there is a standard structure for *Paranoia* adventures, and you should adhere to it (until you've got a good reason to alter it). As you play, the structure will become familiar to your players; minor variations will be novel and entertaining to them.

1. The Mission Alert: Once each player has a character, the characters receive mission alerts. A mission alert is an order to go to a briefing room to receive orders for a new mission. Often (but not always), a mission alert contains a brief summary of the characters' orders. Occasionally the mission alert even tells the characters where their briefing room is.

2. The Private Conference: After announcing mission alerts, take each player aside for a private conference. Answer any questions he has, especially ones about his mutant power and secret society, and tell him any rumors he hears. The rumor may or may not have anything to do with the adventure, and can be

completely bogus, if you like. Traditionally, private conferences are used to sow the seed of player distrust: tell every player that someone else is a member of a rival secret society, or is suspected of belonging to Internal Security, or both.

3. The Briefing: The characters assemble at the briefing room. A briefing officer (or sometimes The Computer itself) describes their mission and orders. Mission descriptions are frequently incomplete or bald-faced lies. The players are given an opportunity to ask questions, which usually gets them nowhere but executed.

4. Outfitting: The players are ordered to PLC, where they are issued equipment. Frequently, this equipment is useless, or the PCs are issued far more than they can carry. Characters must sign forms acknowledging responsibility for the equipment. They can ask for other equipment; such requests are granted or denied arbitrarily.

5. Research & Design: Next is a visit to R&D, where the player characters may "volunteer"

to test experimental equipment. Experimental equipment sometimes can help them, often cannot, and has a nasty tendency to malfunction in unpleasant ways.

6. The Mission: The players are sent on some wild goose chase. Frequently, the mission is impossible. Even if it can be completed successfully, "success" — i.e., surviving and garnering praise and promotion — often has nothing whatsoever to do with fulfilling the stated mission objectives. Often, players make no real effort to fulfill mission objectives, preferring to spend their time unmasking and executing traitors within their own midst.

7. Debriefing: After the mission is completed or thoroughly botched, The Computer or the briefing officer debriefs each citizen privately. Players may file charges of treason, explain why apparently treasonous acts were in fact in the best interests of The Computer, and so on. Traitors are executed (either by other PCs or in televised ceremonies), fines and demotions are assessed, and promotions and bonuses awarded.



4. Getting the Tone Right

No More Mr. Nice Guy

Most roleplaying games exhort gamemasters to be fair, never to kill characters without good reasons, always to give players a chance. The gamemaster is supposed to be a nice guy. This may make sense in other universes; it does not in the world of *Paranoia*.

Think of yourself as The Computer. Your main job is to root out traitors. When a traitor is discovered, your job is to execute him. In the meantime, of course, it is your job to serve the citizens of your Complex. But you are not a nice guy; you are the embodiment of a very nasty totalitarian state. In *Paranoia*, the gamemaster is malevolent, not benevolent.

Never give the players information unless they ask for it, and not even then if it's classified at a higher clearance than they. Never weaken the opposition to make for a

"fair fight;" desperate struggle against ludicrously impossible odds makes for some of *Paranoia's* funniest moments.

Killing characters in *Paranoia* is remarkably easy. The weapons are powerful and deadly — hell, even the elevators are deadly. Practically any behavior can be defined as treason to The Computer, and treason is punishable by execution. And the characters are ignorant of nearly everything they need to know to survive. On a typical expedition, 50 to 100% of the player characters should die. Indeed, because each character has six "lives," kill rates in excess of 100% are not uncommon.

Don't be soft-hearted. If someone deserves to die, kill him. If someone does not deserve to die, but it looks like it will be a lot of fun, kill him.

But... Remember that though The Computer can be completely impulsive and arbitrary, the gamemaster cannot. You need some excuse, no matter how flimsy, to kill a character. But

you'd be surprised how easy it is to find excuses. In a world as dangerous and irrational as this one, death will come to all in its own good (and short) time.

This casual attitude about player character death is a result of *Paranoia's* unique clone system. When a character gets turned into applesauce, an identical replacement is available in moments, so players don't get so upset. And they don't take the slaughter so personally, since they know they're in an insane world run by a paranoid computer. It's not the gamemaster who's oppressing their characters — it's that bonzo Computer.

To properly gamemaster *Paranoia* adventures, you must maintain the proper atmosphere of fear and ignorance. Death is easy. Life is cheap. Players should fear each other, their equipment, The Computer, and even the enemy. Information should be almost unobtainable, and doled out only under



exceptional circumstances. Even when information is obtainable, it should frequently be incomplete, obscure, and misleading.

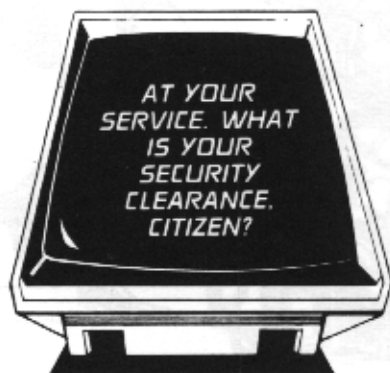
The higher the security clearance of a character, the more information will be available to him. But, at security level Red, practically no information is available.

How does one operate a flybot?

How does one use a plasma gun?

What can we expect to find where we are going?

Ignorance. Fear. Fear and Ignorance. Dedicate yourself to these principles.



Five Rules to Live By:

1. Control information; ration it with miserly reluctance.
2. Kill the bastards.
3. Fight dirty.
4. Sometimes, things are hopeless.
5. Let the players feel ill-luck or stupidity does them in, not pure malicious gamemastering.

Playing The Computer

The non-player character you will roleplay most is The Computer. The Computer is everywhere — its cameras, recording devices and agents permeate the Complex. The player characters will speak with it frequently. You will need to understand how The Computer thinks and responds to play it effectively.

How The Computer Thinks

The Computer is as batty as a bedbug.

The Computer suffers from extreme paranoia. It is obsessed with the loyalty of all who serve it. It assumes that everyone is plotting to destroy it. It assumes that there is a Commie behind every problem in Alpha Complex. It has developed elaborate, secret schemes to ensure the loyalty of its citizens and to reveal and execute every Commie traitor.

To make things even worse, Ultraviolet clearance citizens, called *High Programmers*, are entitled to learn and use the otherwise-treacherous skill of programming. They can alter parts of The Computer's programming at will.

Thus, The Computer is schizophrenic. It has multiple personalities, each reflecting the programmer who established its original programs or who later tampered with them.

The Computer is not an omniscient, omnipotent entity (though it might seem so to an Infrared citizen). In fact, as a result of unreliable comlinks, incomplete or garbled data, incompetent or destructive tampering with operating systems, and serious personality disorders in its software-psyche, The Computer is a far cry from an omni-anything.

To deter sabotage by traitors and Communists, many programs, systems and data banks within The Computer are protected and isolated from outside access by elaborate security measures. One consequence is that most of the time The Computer's right processor doesn't know what its left processor is doing.

Furthermore, many programs have been entered or altered since Year One of The Computer, and High Programmers themselves often have conflicting interests. Many High Programmers are members of secret societies. Many are engaged in political struggles with other High Programmers. Therefore, many Computer subsystems are programmed to do directly contradictory things from other subsystems. The Computer often finds itself ordering things done with no notion of why it wants them done.

Keep these things in mind when determining the actions of The Computer. Sometimes one element of The Computer's programming will supersede another element. For example, one High Programmer might manipulate The Computer into ordering the Troubleshooters to perform a mission which the basic programming of The Computer does not wish to be

performed. On such a mission, the information and instructions received by the players might be full of self-contradictory directions.

As you read this book, you'll discover zillions of ways in which various competing elements of The Computer and its High Programmer priesthood will interact to produce charmingly irresolvable dilemmas for the dedicated Troubleshooters.

Communicating with The Computer

The Computer communicates with citizens in two ways: through its trusted servants, and through its numerous terminals.

Normally all requests and reports are channeled through one's immediate superior. However, it is possible to step into a confession booth at any time and speak directly (and secretly) with The Computer. Confession booths can be found everywhere along the corridors of Alpha Complex, and all work places, cafeterias, and residential units have conveniently-located booths.

Speaking to The Computer is always a fun experience. The Computer pleasantly discusses all requests, and is always eager to hear reports of treasonous behavior or to assist in rooting out traitors. The Computer is exquisitely skilled in analyzing the speaker's statements, facial expressions, and voice for any trace of unhappiness (or duplicity). If the speaker seems troubled, The Computer usually counsels him to seek "happiness therapy" from Housing Preservation and Development and Mind Control, and suggests appropriate biochemical supplements.

If it decides the speaker is lying, The Computer carefully investigates the citizen to discover the reason for the lie. If the citizen is not well, he will receive happiness therapy. If the citizen is a traitor, he will be executed.

Confession booths cannot be used to directly access the data files or programming of The Computer. They are strictly for communication.

Speaking as The Computer

You should develop a "Computer voice," a mode of speech that, when used, instantly informs your players that you are speaking as The Computer. Different GMs have slightly different Computer voices. Here are some suggestions:

- Speak as melodiously, calmly and sweetly as you can. Think of a mommy talking to her children (when they're being good). Never change; even when calling for someone's execution, continue to speak in the same sweet, melodious tones.
- Or, speak calmly, but somewhat disjointedly: "Thank you for... your coop... eration." Think of those recorded messages you sometimes hear over the phone, in which the message is put together from words and phrases recorded at different times, with odd emphases and changing pitch, e.g., "The



number you have reached has been disconnected. The new number is... five... NINE... eight... Seven... Sixtwo...ONE."

• Or, speak in a flat monotone without ever changing emphasis or noticing punctuation, e.g., "thank you for your cooperation I appreciate it greatly now please take your seats thank you today you are assigned a new mission this mission will take you into the outdoors..."

Regardless of the tone of speech you adopt, always be polite and considerate. Though The Computer is crazedly paranoid, remember that it was originally programmed to provide services to the citizens of San Francisco. It was a robotic civil service, combining the jobs of welfare department, subway operator, and valet. Pepper your speech with such Computerisms as:

"Thank you for your cooperation."

"Please report for termination immediately."

"The Computer is your friend."

"At your service."

"May I be of assistance?"

"Are you unhappy, citizen?"

"What is your security clearance, please?"

"I'm sorry. That information is not available at this time."

"Have a nice day."



Hygiene inspection is always a pleasant experience.

Go To It

You now know enough about gamemastering to tackle your first adventure. Before you begin, though, you'll want to learn a little more about Alpha Complex and the rules of the game. "Paranoia for Players" provided an introduction to life in the Complex; "The World of Paranoia" (pages 35 through 52) provides more detail. Don't feel you have to memorize all this information right off; read through it once, and refer back when you need to. The same applies to "The Rules" (pages

53 through 76); you need a general idea how to use skills and resolve combat, but you'll master the details over time.

"Gamemastering Paranoia" (pages 91 through 106) provides lots more gamemastering advice. We don't put that advice here, because we don't want to overwhelm rookies with too much too soon. You can always learn to GM better, and after you've run an adven-

ture or two, you'll be better able to appreciate "Gamemastering Paranoia." Read it now, if you want, but concentrate on mastering the basics before you get fancy.

Once you've gotten the basics of the background and the rules, turn to page 107. An adventure, "In the Outdoors with Gun and Camera," begins there. It tells you how to set up and run your first adventure.



PARANOIA

GAMEMASTER SECTION

Security Clearance ULTRAVIOLET.
Cleared for all Gamemasters:



The World
of *Paranoia*





1. Life in Alpha Complex

All characters are born and raised as citizens of Alpha Complex — a gigantic, self-contained underground (and underwater) urban complex. The Computer watches over the citizens of Alpha Complex and provides for their every need. The citizens of Alpha Complex are therefore happy — so happy they can barely stand it.

Birth, Childhood, and Adolescence

All human citizens are brought into the world by the technicians of the clone banks. Under the careful scrutiny of The Computer, centuries-old precepts of genetic engineering established in the venerable core programming are applied to produce ever-more-suitable citizens. Ancient stocks of genetic material are supplemented by sperm and egg samples taken from selected citizens with desirable traits.

Most citizens are unaware of the human capacity for biological reproduction. The city's food contains hormone suppressants and other biochemical supplements which cause temporary sterility and eliminate lustful impulses. Citizens receive no official sexual instruction or training, so any such knowledge is obviously acquired through treasonous channels. The Computer avoids public pronouncements on this subject, but it discourages unauthorized sexual contact through routine surveillance, Computer interviews, and long cold showers.

Both sex and natural childbirth are extremely rare, but not impossible. Citizens who venture into the Outdoors may be deprived of food

(and drugs) from Alpha Complex. After a time, the hormone suppressants and sterilization agents wear off, and sex and pregnancy may occur. Also, natural birth and traditional family organization may prevail in primitive settlements in the wilderness and certain sections of Alpha Complex abandoned or isolated through disaster or clerical error. Finally, certain individuals of very high security clearance may use their power to maintain personal harems.

Each individual is a member of a six-individual clone group called a "clone family." This is the basic family unit. Clone families eat, sleep, and breathe in intimate contact from the moment they are decanted from the vats through education and nurturing in the Junior Citizen Creches until late adolescence.

The closest personal tie encouraged by The Computer is a citizen's attachment to his clone siblings. As a citizen grows older, The Computer carefully guides him in the transfer of his loyalties from his clonemates to the goals and ideals of The Computer.

The Computer wishes all of the drives and emotions of each citizen to be directed toward serving The Computer. Love is a phenomenon which constitutes treason and is punishable by summary execution, since love results in attachments which may interfere with the loyalty due to The Computer. Consequently, if any citizens fall in love, they must make sure to keep their love secret from The Computer and other citizens who might betray them. (Fans of soap opera will immediately recognize the dramatic possibilities for tragic romance in Alpha Complex.)

Living Quarters

Living quarters, bathing facilities, and so forth are shared by all. There are no sex distinctions in the complex. Citizens of lower clearances live in vast, cheerful, drafty, and carefully-scrutinized barracks. Middle-status citizens live in more private and comfortable group accommodations. Citizens of high status reside in large, luxurious individual apartments. Regardless of status, there is no concept of right to privacy. Computer monitors and spy-eyes are practically everywhere (though a goodly portion are inoperative), and any citizen of a higher security clearance can enter the quarters of a citizen of lower security clearance without notice.

Life Support and Nutrition

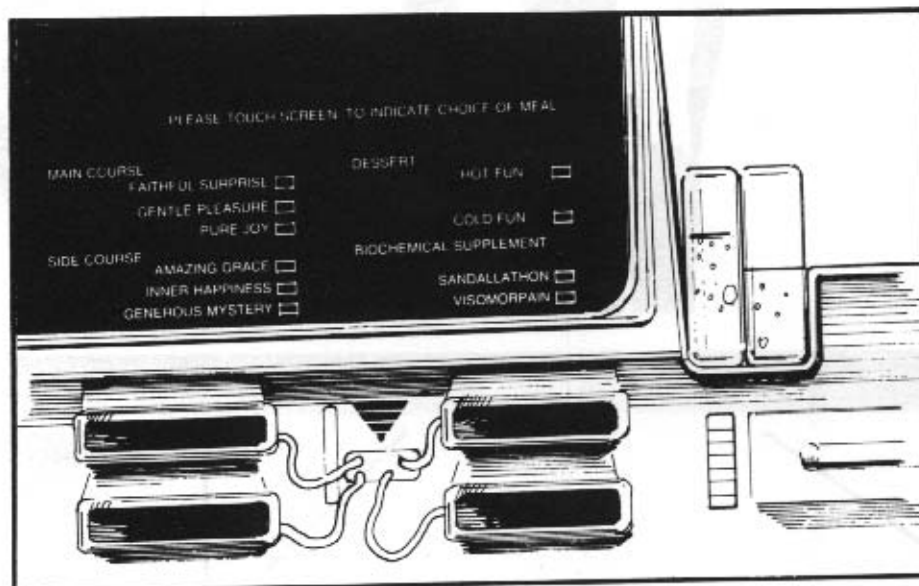
An Alpha-class computer network supervises all systems and services within the complex. Each residential, industrial, and multi-purpose sector has its own compnode, a subsystem of the Alpha Complex computer network, to regulate and manage its life support and citizen service systems.

The complex's air, water, and biomass are recycled to eliminate the risk of biological or chemical contamination from Commie aggressors outside the complex. All food is cultivated in great vats and hydroponic gardens buried beneath the complex.

A citizen's daily fare consists of various strains of yeast, lichen, algae, and/or synthetic organic substances, texturized, tinted, and flavored to tantalize (or at least deaden) the human palate.

Most citizens share their meals in great public cafeterias seating thousands. Luxury food items are available to those with credit surpluses; these foods are usually savored in the relative privacy of personal quarters. Certain foods are also available on the black market (notably animal and vegetable products from the Outdoors). These must be prepared and eaten in secrecy, since possession of such foods is treason.

The most important feature of life support for most citizens is the generous ration of biochemical supplements available on request. A wide variety of tranquilizers, stimulants, soporifics, and mood elevators are available in cafeterias, in personal quarters, and from public dispensaries throughout the complex. Through these biochemical supplements The Computer ensures the happiness of each citizen. Any citizen who avoids his medication is viewed with suspicion. That the medication occasionally interferes with the safe opera-





tion of vehicles, industrial machinery, and megadeath weapons is an unfortunate but accepted fact of life in Alpha Complex.

Clothing and Personal Gear

Citizens of Alpha Complex wear jumpsuits or other garments in the color of their security clearance. At lower clearances the garments tend to be coarse, baggy, poorly-designed and ill-fitting. As a citizen rises in status, a good portion of his credit surplus is often spent in improving the quality of his clothing. The finer the clothing quality, the more important the citizen. Though all jumpsuits must match the standard design ordained by The Computer, the quality of the material, workmanship, and ornamentation is an unmistakable measure of status in Alpha Complex.

Personal gear is limited, since The Computer provides for everyone's needs. Most of a low-

status citizen's possessions can be carried in the utility belt that is part of the standard jumpsuit uniform. Individual possessions are usually limited to items for hygiene, a few small work-related objects, and lucky charms, mementoes, and other items of purely personal significance.

Since there is so little privacy, personal items are guarded with great care. A citizen will seldom take off his utility belt and leave it unattended. (Though theft is treasonous, it is still immensely popular in Alpha Complex.)

Everyday Life

Most of the citizens of Alpha Complex are either very happy or in a state hard to distinguish from happiness. Their occupations keep them busy and stimulated during the day. They have plenty of leisure to spend in the

company of one another and in viewing the charming but bland video entertainments created and produced by The Computer. From infancy, citizens are carefully educated in how to be happy. When education fails, drugs are used extensively to prevent unhappiness or discomfort.

Utopia.

The daily routine of an Infrared citizen is something like this:

Rise with hundreds of others in the barracks. Take a couple of Wakey-wakey pills. Wash and eat a leisurely breakfast. Go to work in the food vats. Have a leisurely lunch with coworkers. Work some more in the food vats. Down a handful of Mello-daze caplets. Return to the barracks. Have a leisurely dinner. Gather with friends in the communal view lounges to view Teela O'Malley adventures. Chat. Relax. Turn in with hundreds of others. Drink a cup of Sleepy-time relaxant. Sleep soundly.



2. Security Clearance

Alpha Complex society is distinctly and rigidly stratified. Each citizen has a security clearance which ranges from Infrared to Ultraviolet. A citizen of one security clearance is considered superior to all citizens of lower security clearance and inferior to all higher citizens. A citizen must defer to all superiors at all times.

Occasionally a citizen may be assigned to lead a group of other citizens who have the same security clearance. In this case, The Computer designates one member of the group as the group leader and temporarily authorizes him to give orders to the other members of the mission team as though he were a higher security clearance. This authority does not extend to any other citizens. For example, on the players' first expedition when all characters are Red clearance, one character might be designated as mission leader; if so the other characters would be required to defer to him.

The leader may designate a successor to serve as temporary mission leader in the event that the mission leader dies, disappears, or is incapacitated, and when circumstances make it impossible to consult The Computer in selecting a new mission leader. The temporary

leader is obligated to confirm his status with The Computer at the first opportunity; failure to do so is treason, and punishable by summary execution.

All citizens must wear garments which indicate security clearance at all times. The garments must be of the character's security clearance color or prominently marked with a distinctive color graphic. (Infrared clearance is indicated by black, Ultraviolet by white.) Also, registered mutants (see page 8) are required to wear a prominent yellow stripe indicating their special status.

Each room and corridor in the complex is clearly marked with a color corresponding to one of the security clearances. The security marking is generally in the form of a meter-wide color band running at chest height, but, where practical, the entire space is painted in the appropriate color. Citizens are forbidden

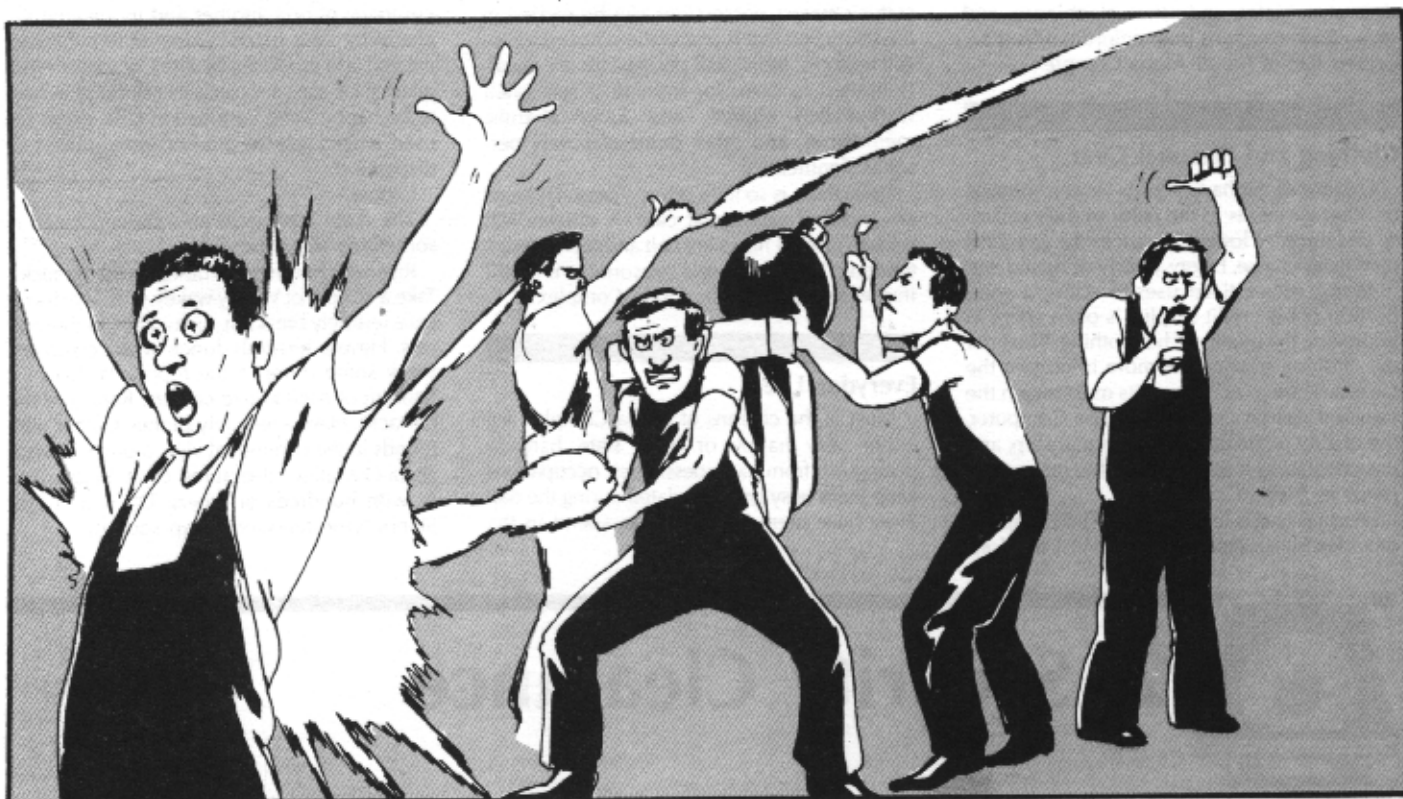
to enter any room or corridor marked with the color of a security clearance higher than their own (i.e., a character of Orange clearance may enter orange, red, or black areas, but not yellow, green, blue, indigo, violet, or white areas). In certain circumstances, The Computer may authorize a character to enter or move through an area of higher security clearance than normally permitted. In this case, the citizen receives appropriate authorization documents (if time permits), a temporary color-coded garment (if in stock), and/or an escort of appropriate security clearance (if available).

The security clearances are:

INFRARED
RED
ORANGE
YELLOW
GREEN
BLUE
INDIGO
VIOLET
ULTRAVIOLET

A mnemonic may help the gamemaster recall the sequence of security clearances — ROY G. BIV. Each letter in the mnemonic corresponds to security clearances Red through Violet.





Teamwork is essential in the completion of Computer missions.



3. The Troubleshooters

The Troubleshooters are an elite class of citizens of proven merit. (That is to say, they consist largely of former Infra Reds who proved their loyalty by turning comrades in to The Computer as traitors.) Troubleshooters are formally assigned to service groups for training, but in fact they are under the direct control of The Computer. Most mission groups include Troubleshooters from several service groups, providing each team with an effective mixture of various backgrounds, skills, and abilities.

Troubleshooters are assigned the challenging missions for which none of the other service group staffs are particularly well-suited (or eager). Because of their proven loyalty, they are often assigned to missions where sensitive issues of security and public policy are concerned.

Individual Troubleshooters are organized into mission groups. Sometimes a successful mission group remains together for a series of missions. Sometimes Troubleshooters are reassigned to new groups for no apparent reason. Sometimes individual Troubleshooters are assigned to solo missions.

Usually The Computer selects a group's mission, though successful groups are sometimes offered a choice of missions. Mission leaders are usually designated at the mission briefing, along with minor staff roles like loyalty officer,

weapons officer, vehicle officer, robotics officer, medical officer, hygiene officer, and so on. Mission briefings are usually conducted by an immediate superior, though they are sometimes conducted by The Computer through one of its many terminals or by courier-delivered written orders. In emergencies a high-status Troubleshooter or other powerful citizen may order Troubleshooter teams on his own authority when communications with The Computer have been compromised.

The missions assigned to Troubleshooters are invariably difficult and dangerous. This means that player characters have many opportunities to distinguish themselves in the service of The Computer. If they survive, they may expect to advance in status more rapidly than the laborers, technicians, bureaucrats, and managers of the regular service groups.





4. Service Groups

At age sixteen, each clone family is given an aptitude examination. The results of this examination are used by The Computer to calculate the family's optimum future occupation.

After the exam, the clone family is assigned to a service group, which trains them for menial labor. Clones who perform enthusiastically, brown-nose superiors, and collect blackmail material may, after twenty or thirty years of hard labor, expect to be promoted to Red clearance. Promotion to higher clearance is exceptional, and occurs only to citizens of proven loyalty and ability to advance over the prostrate bodies of others.

One of the few ways to advance quickly out of the dreary ranks of the Infrared masses is by performing a meritorious service for The Computer, such as turning in a close friend as a traitor. Citizens who serve their Complex so selflessly are generally promoted to Red clearance, and join the Troubleshooters.

Internal Security

Internal Security is a kind of combination K.G.B., riot police, and narc squad. Not only does The Computer keep tabs on everything with omnipresent cameras and recording devices, but it also maintains Internal Security spies as another check on the loyalty of its citizens. Many IntSec agents are planted in the other service groups. They have informants everywhere.

In addition to ratting on traitors, IntSec agents run "sting" operations designed to tempt citizens into treason. As promotion within IntSec is almost always based on the number of traitors unmasked, IntSec agents are notorious for rooting out treason even when it isn't there to begin with.

Of course, false accusations of treason are themselves treason. However, if an IntSec agent and a regular citizen mutually accuse each other of treason, all else being equal, The Computer is more likely to believe the agent.

In addition to plainclothes agents (i.e., spies), IntSec maintains uniformed police. At the bottom of the scale are the omnipresent Red clearance goons. Selected for size and coarseness of intellect, they wear distinctive tight leather-like pants and jackets, and silvered reflective riot helmets. They routinely carry truncheons, neurowhips, stun guns, tangles, and laser pistols or rifles. Their main task is to break up brawls, riots, and food fights which occur frequently among the Infrareds.

More widely feared among higher-clearance characters are the Blue clearance Troopers, commonly called "Blues." These are the police of each sector, called in to deal with serious crimes or unrest. They are well-disciplined, highly trained, totally merciless, and possess truly awesome firepower. Their armor is at the pinnacle of Alpha Complex technology, and totally impervious to most of the weapons carried by Red clearance Troubleshooters. (For more information about this elite group, see West End's *HIL Sector Blues*, a supplement for *Paranoia*.)

A summons to an interview with Internal Security is seldom a pleasant experience, and the assignment of an observer from Internal Security to any project is reason for serious paranoia.

A Typical IntSec Conversation

IntSec Agent: Citizen! I notice that your sneakers are unlaced.

Citizen: Yes, citizen, you are entirely correct.

IntSec Agent: May I ask why your sneakers are unlaced?

Citizen: Yes, citizen, you may.

IntSec Agent (with elaborate patience): And why, citizen, are your sneakers unlaced?

Citizen: My sneakers are several sizes too small for my feet.

IntSec Agent: And why are your sneakers too small for your feet?

Citizen: PLC must have goofed. I asked for the right size.

IntSec Agent: Citizen, you are under arrest.

Citizen: What? I'm an honest citizen! You got no right.

IntSec Agent: First, citizen, you claim that PLC committed an error. Errors are treason. Either you are the source of this error, in which case you are a traitor, or else a Commie traitor lurks in PLC. If this last is true, then you have clear evidence of treason in PLC, yet you have not reported this treason to The Computer. Failure to report treason is treason. Moreover, citizen, your laces are untied. You are out of uniform. Being out of uniform is treason.

Citizen: No! No! Please don't kill me! I haven't done anything wrong!

IntSec Agent: There is one way out.

Citizen: Yes? What is it? Please! I'll do anything!

IntSec Agent: You must reveal the names and deeds of your accomplices.

Citizen: Yes, yes! Yes, you are entirely right. I confess my heinous crime. But I was a poor trusting soul, led astray by evil companions... Jon-R-LXR-3, Mary-R-FEB-2,...

Technical Services

Tech maintains most services in Alpha Complex. Everything from scrubots to communications to computer maintenance is their responsibility. In the recurring inter-service conflicts, Technical Services enjoys high status, right after Power, and above HPD & MC and PLC. The Computer is directly dependent on Technical Services for its maintenance — the reason for Tech's superior status. The political orthodoxy of Technical Services personnel is extremely critical; Internal Security is particularly diligent in monitoring their thoughts and deeds.

Tech personnel are the universal "fix-its" of Alpha Complex; when something goes wrong with your disposall, communal toilet, or pet-bot, you call Tech for help. Seven or eight decades later, a surly, grease-smeared repairman may or may not show up and refuse to fix it without appropriate authorization forms (available from equally-surly clerks at HPD & MC). Intelligent citizens rapidly learn that the only way to get anything fixed is bribery.

Because Tech is so carefully monitored by IntSec, orthodoxy is more frequently prized among its employees than competence. Hence, getting anything fixed *right* is virtually impossible. Bribery sometimes works here, but intimidation generally works better.

Technical Services personnel are distinguished by their special coveralls, which are amply supplied with pockets for tools and spare parts. They also tend to carry small tool kits that are symbolic of the delicacy of the work they do.

A Typical Tech Conversation

Tech: Where's ya trouble?

Citizen: Our dormitory's Cruncheetym Algae Chip dispenser is broken. See, here it is.

Tech: Uh huh. Looks okay to me.

Citizen: But we haven't had any algae chips for weeks! And the cafeteria hasn't had anything but the blue food every since last Twoday's riot...

Tech: You got a 174Z6a stroke 23?

Citizen: A what?

Tech: A 174Z6a stroke 23. "Authorization to Repair Communal Vending Machines, Pharmaceutical Supplement Dispensers and Autogyro Foot Baths." Like, a form.

Citizen: Uh... no.

Tech: No can do, bub. Get da form and maybe I come back. So long.

Citizen: However, I do have 174 plasticreds.

Tech: Yeah? Hold dis wrench. Lemme see...



Housing Preservation and Development and Mind Control

HPD & Mind Control provides for the housing, entertainment, and political education of the Infrabeds. They also provide most of the clerical services and low-level administration in Alpha Complex. Of all the service groups, this has the least status, since it is most often in direct contact with the masses. Internal Security looks upon their entertainment and propaganda with scorn, and the more technically skilled service groups regard HPD & Mind Control personnel as uneducated clerks. However, HPD & MC's propaganda sways the emotions of the people; properly-coordinated propaganda is often decisive in inter-group conflicts, so other groups are careful not to antagonize HPD & MC too thoroughly.

Discipline and morale is poor, and a certain carelessness of political orthodoxy is tolerated as a result. Internal Security regards HPD & Mind Control as beneath contempt. The only other service where treason is less aggressively persecuted is Research & Design.

HPD & Mind Control personnel are often less than strict in their observance of The Computer's rules. Their garments are often of poor quality, poorly maintained, and worn with a casual indifference to regulations. HPD & Mind Control personnel have a reputation for being "free thinkers" in Alpha Complex, though the implication is of scorn rather than respect.

HPD & MC is a massive bureaucracy, even more procedure-bound and red-tape ridden than the others. It's not really that getting anything done with HPD & MC personnel is difficult; it's more that HPD & MC doesn't really do much of anything except shuffle papers.

Citizens dread being required to obtain an authorization form from HPD & MC, because even if it were possible, generally the clerks from whom one would need to obtain it don't want to be bothered, and will send you off on a wild bot chase through sixteen offices. Even when HPD & MC personnel are cooperative (perhaps because you're threatening them with immediate and drastic personal injury), the convoluted procedures they follow ensure that getting what you need requires approval from six managers and visits to ten offices.

A Typical HPD & MC Conversation

Citizen: I need a 174Z6a stroke 23.

HPD: A what?

Citizen: A 174Z6a stroke 23. An Authorization to Repair Communal Vending Machines, Pharmaceutical Supplement Dispensers and Autogyro Foot Baths.

HPD: Never heard of it.

Citizen: I was told to come to this office. It says Office of Vending Machine Authorization right on your door.

HPD: Yeah? Huh. What do you know. So it does.

Citizen: Are you gonna give me my form?

HPD: Listen, fella. I told you I never heard of it.

Citizen: I've spent six daycycles talking to you HPD bozos, and I'm still getting nowhere! You get me my form, or I'm shoving this laser pistol down your throat and cauterizing your intestines!

HPD: Hey, take it easy! Look, what do you want me to do? We authorize installation, not repair. You want maybe the Directorate for Authorizing Vending Machine Repairs, okay?

Citizen: If you don't get me my form immediately, I shall be forced to shoot you.

HPD: Look, I can't do a thing...

ZAPZAPZAP.

Citizen: What a senseless waste of human life.

The Armed Forces

This is the military arm of Alpha Complex. This service group is glamorously depicted in HPD & MC's vidshows as constantly at war with Commies, but the truth is that The Computer lacks the resources to sustain any protracted military operations. The Armed Forces spend most of their time in drill, training, and guard duty, with only occasional missions into the Outdoors.

Armed Forces personnel are often assigned to other service groups for security duty. In addition, Internal Security may supplement its troopers with Armed Forces personnel in emergencies.

Armed Forces units have generally high morale. Army personnel have little fear of Internal Security; the Armed Forces have a reputation for dealing with their own problems.

Troopers from elite units like the Vulture Squadrons are the cultural heroes of Alpha Complex. They receive the finest and most distinctive uniforms and equipment, and are always treated with respect and deference.

There is considerable friction between Internal Security and the Armed Forces, because of the Armed Forces' unwillingness to cooperate with Internal Security's aggressive monitoring of political orthodoxy. The Armed Forces also consider themselves to be better trained and skilled in police functions than the Internal Security goons.

All other services are beneath Armed Forces' contempt, with the exception of Research & Design, which provides the Armed Forces with fancy technology. In any inter-service conflict, Armed Forces and Research & Design usually end up on the same side.



"Excuse me Citizen, but is a tankbot on our requisition form?"



A Typical Army Conversation

IntSec Agent: We have a major problem here.
Army: Why, you just let my boys have a crack, and we'll settle this little contretemps in no time a-tall.

Production, Logistics, and Commissary

PLC controls agricultural and industrial production. It also distributes these products to the citizens of Alpha Complex. PLC is held in only slightly more esteem than HPD & Mind Control. It is actually no more than a mammoth service bureaucracy, though it does control most of what would be called "wealth" in Alpha Complex.

At the Infrared end of the scale the personnel are cooks, clerks, farmers, and factory laborers. At higher levels of status, there are more managerial and policy responsibilities. At best, it is none too glamorous. Most personnel in this group are dull and sensible; the exceptions are either unusually greedy and corrupt or fanatically loyal to The Computer and creatively dedicated to increasing production and consumption.

A Typical PLC Conversation

PLC: Next.

Citizen: I have a requisition here for a number 10 soldering iron.

PLC: Out of stock. Next.

Citizen: Hey, wait a minute! You didn't even check!

PLC: Sorry, buddy, out of stock.

Citizen: Look, I can see one, sticking out of that box over there.

Another Citizen: Hey, pal, you had your turn. There's a line here, ya know?

PLC: You can't have anything in those boxes. They're reserved. Next!

Another Citizen: About time, too. I need a 17 centimeter fendermender.

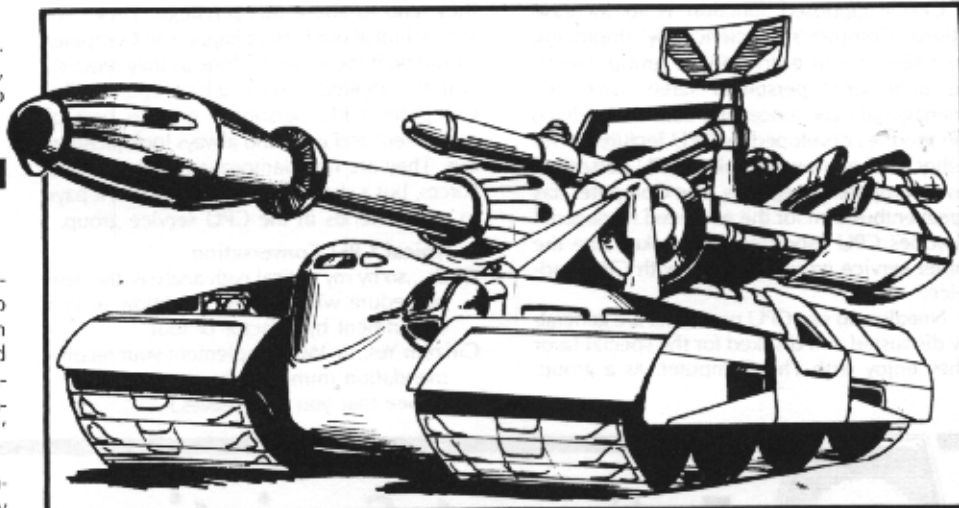
PLC: On order. Come back next Threeday. Next.

Power Services

Power Services has the difficult task of maintaining the ancient power plants of Alpha Complex. Alpha Complex's day-to-day survival depends on the competence and reliability of this service. This makes Power Services a particularly sensitive and vulnerable area for treason and sabotage; it therefore gets more than its share of attention from Internal Security. It also means Power has high status in Alpha Complex, a fact bitterly resented by the other service groups. As a result, Power Services often finds itself at the wrong end of political power plays.

Power Services is a very tightly-knit, loyal service. Their personnel tend to be distrustful of members of other services, and to look out for their own, even to the detriment of their loyalty to The Computer.

Power Services also maintains the transport systems of Alpha Complex.



A Mark XV tankbot currently serving as washroom monitor in the GEV Sector Troubleshooter headquarters.

A Typical Power Conversation

Citizen: Hey, this is neat. I like the blue color. What is this?

Power: Cherenkov radiation.

Citizen: Yeah? What's it from?

Power: My guess is that the plant down on level 6 has melted down and the whole sector is directly exposed to the reactor core.

Citizen: Is that bad?

Power: Nahh. Happens all the time.

Research and Design

The personnel of R&D range from true geniuses through crackpots and mad scientists down to political appointees with no talent or skill. A Research and Design technician who can produce valuable ideas and workable designs for The Computer may enjoy great personal freedom and political license. Mad scientists and crackpots who work on The Computer's pet projects find that they receive resources and support no matter how dramatically they fail. Political appointees establish themselves in the bureaucracy of the service group and try to look busy.

Research labs and testing areas are dangerous places to visit. An incredible range of high tech and low comedy projects are in development at any given moment. The amount of original research that gets done is small; most projects are aimed at recapturing the arcane technologies lost centuries ago in the big Commie attack. Any interesting gadgets found by Troubleshooters during trips Outdoors are brought to Research & Design, where they carefully studied, often to tiny bits.

R&D's main objective is the discovery of weapons and techniques for fighting the Commies. Secondary priorities include the discovery of new power sources, advances in robot technology, and new agricultural and industrial systems. Improvements in the conditions of life for citizens are of low priority, since Alpha Complex is already a utopia.

Internal Security despairs of maintaining political orthodoxy in Research & Design. The Computer is exasperatingly indulgent of treason in R&D. The other services (with the exception of the Armed Forces) are seldom interested in innovations; and Research & Design often produces highly ambitious technical wonders that fail dramatically in practical application.

A Typical R&D Conversation

Citizen: And when I squeeze the nozzle, what happens?

R&D: We're not sure.

Citizen: The plasma will be at a million degrees; the nuclear accelerator will be at maximum power — and you don't know what happens next?

R&D: No. If we did, would we want you to test it?

Citizen: Can you give me some guesses?

R&D: Well, our guess is that it will levitate you to a height proportional to the pressure you apply to the nozzle. Or, it might start a fusion chain reaction leading to the complete destruction of the universe as we know it. Here. Let me strap you in.

Central Processing Unit

CPU personnel are trained in the latest managerial techniques, and are assigned to other service groups and Troubleshooter teams as advisers and consultants. They spend their time inventing new procedures and forms, tracking paperwork, lecturing managers and, in general, making inefficient bureaucracies operate even less efficiently by imposing impractical and ill-conceived procedures in accordance with abstruse theories of management. Whenever something goes wrong in a service group, The Computer's response is to call in a hot-shot consultant from CPU.



CPU's supposed function is to increase Alpha Complex's efficiency by improving management in every service group. Unfortunately, CPU personnel rarely have any managerial experience, and base their advice on theories developed by CPU lecturers. The other service groups think of CPU personnel as incompetent meddlers. The Computer has great enthusiasm for the advanced managerial theories CPU espouses, and makes sure the other service groups comply with CPU's advice.

Needless to say, CPU personnel are generally distrusted and disliked for the special favor they enjoy with The Computer. As a group,

they tend to abuse this privilege. They constantly hint about how unhappy The Computer would be if things aren't done as they request, with the implied threat of a bad report to The Computer. CPU personnel get the best of equipment and gear, and always look prosperous. They are not glamorous like the Armed Forces, but a shrewd citizen knows that it pays to make friends in the CPU service group.

A Typical CPU Conversation

CPU: ...so-by my critical path analysis, the new procedure will increase workflow in this department by a factor of four.

Citizen: Yes, sir. We'll implement your recommendation immediately, sir.

CPU: See that you do. (Leaves.)

Another Citizen: So let me get this straight.

Now, I hand the forms to you without reading them.

Citizen: Right.

Other Citizen: And then you stamp them and hand them on to DepOcSec?

Citizen: Right.

Other Citizen: And no one in this department reads them?

Citizen: Right.

Other Citizen: But Rule 13Fb, which states that approving any faulty application is treason, still stands?

Citizen: Right.

Other Citizen: We're dead men.

Citizen: You got it.



5. Secret Societies

The intolerable lack of privacy and the confining and stultifying omnipresence of The Computer breeds conspiracy like the plague in Alpha Complex. Virtually every citizen, it seems, belongs to one secret society or another, each meeting surreptitiously. Since secret societies are not controlled by The Computer and encourage loyalties other than to The Computer, The Computer views them with the greatest suspicion. Membership in a secret society is *ipso facto* treason.

The beliefs, goals and objectives of the various societies vary wildly. Some actually promote obedience to The Computer; membership in such societies is sometimes tolerated, especially for citizens of otherwise proven merit and loyalty. Some have goals entirely irrelevant to The Computer's wishes; some even wish to destroy it. Membership in such societies is rarely tolerated.

The Computer knows of most societies, and some are infiltrated to a greater or lesser degree than others. Rumor has it that some were actually established by The Computer, in an effort to channel citizens' conspiratorial instincts in approved ways.

Remember that highly-placed agents of a secret society may have access to the programs of The Computer, and a secret society may have planted in The Computer certain programs dedicated to aiding the secret society. Similarly, a secret society might be able to obtain information for a character that would not normally be available to someone of his security clearance.

Some societies have contacts Outside Alpha Complex.

Before each expedition, the gamemaster should take each character aside and privately give him any information or directives his secret society wishes him to have during the mission. These might include the society's suspicions about other characters on the expedition, any tasks the society would like the

character to perform during the expedition, and any information about the expedition the society feels might be important.

At the same time, the character may make requests for information or equipment from his society. These requests may be granted or denied according to the society's resources, the difficulty of granting the request, the expenditure of IOUs, and how the gamemaster feels that day.

The Origin of Secret Societies

Secret societies were the inspiration of an early High Programmer who, realizing that the conspiratorial and rebellious elements of the human personality could not be indefinitely suppressed, tried to come up with a way to channel them into relatively harmless pursuits. Thus The Computer created and organized the original secret societies. These original societies are most likely to be loyal to The Computer and heavily infiltrated by Internal Security.

However, certain unauthorized secret societies have developed as offshoots of the original secret societies. The Computer has varying degrees of influence and control over these other societies, and some societies may exist of which The Computer is completely unaware. As a new society's existence is discovered by The Computer, great effort is made to infiltrate it with loyal patriots. If the society is relatively harmless, it is permitted to continue its existence. If the society is dangerous to The Computer, it is eliminated.

Secret Society Rank

Most societies have more-or-less hierarchical structures, with new members having relatively little information or privilege, while higher status members may wield considerable

Why Secret Societies?

Not only are they lovely excuses for terminating annoying Troubleshooters for treason, but secret societies are also quite useful in other respects.

For one thing, they provide motivation, individualization and structure for player characters. In other (not fun) roleplaying games, a player could play an elf, wizard, bug-eyed alien from Arcturus, or some other disgusting life-form. Obviously, a giant rat-man fighter is going to be a dramatically different character from, say, an Amazon sorceror. Similarly, secret society membership provides each *Paranoia* character with a set of beliefs and goals different from the others.

Also, secret societies promote dissension, mistrust, and fear among player characters. While most Troubleshooters don't need an excuse to backstab fellow party members, occasionally a couple of well-intentioned but misguided players will actually attempt to work together. This is absolutely against the spirit of the game and must be severely discouraged. Secret societies are real good for this.

power. A beginning character normally starts out at the lowest level of status in his organization. He can advance by performing special service for the society.

The "advancement" section of each society description mentions the kinds of special services the society is likely to reward. Other services may also result in promotion, at your whim; these are intended to be illustrative, only; you are the final judge of how a society views the actions of one of its members.

Generally speaking, a new member of a society is called a "1st degree member," although some societies have their own special terminology. The highest members belong to the 32nd degree.



If, in the course of an adventure, a player performs an action which you think merits promotion within his society, at the end of the adventure take him aside and tell him he has been promoted to the next degree. If you wish, you may also tell him that he has obtained an IOU from his society. Generally, promotion should be accompanied by an IOU award.

Certain actions are considered meritorious by all societies. These include:

- Recruiting new members.
- Defending the lives of fellow society members.
- Eliminating agents of enemy societies.

Changing Secret Societies or Joining Additional Societies

Some secret societies might be extremely vindictive toward lapsed members, or eager to seal the lips of those who might reveal the society's secrets. In fact, suspicion of joining another society may make a member a target for assassination.

There is no limit to the number of societies to which a character can belong. However, if a character joins another society, and his first society learns of this, he could be kicked out, demoted to low status, or even killed.

Two or More Player Characters Belonging to the Same Secret Society

In some cases PCs who are members of the same society may know each other through it. Also, some societies have secret handshakes or gestures which permit recognition. On the other hand, some secret societies maintain such tight security that no two members would ever recognize one another. The gamemaster has to decide whether the characters have met as secret society members and whether they would recognize each other.

Generally, you should assume no one knows anyone else. If players know that they can cooperate from the start, it gives them an unfair advantage over the others. Try to keep things even by keeping everyone in the dark — unless you think it would be a bigger laugh to let the two PCs gang up on the rest of the unsuspecting slobs in the group.

Designing Your Own Secret Societies

You're welcome to make up new secret societies to your heart's content. You'll have to construct a special secret society chart for players to use when creating characters, though. Use the established societies as models.

As you create secret societies, keep in mind their function in *Paranoia*.

1. They should provide additional motivations, individualization, and structure for player characters.

2. Their activities may provide adventure elements.
3. They may be special sources of information, skills, resources, and manpower for player characters.
4. They should present additional threats to the health and security of player characters.

Secret Society Description Format

Each secret society description has six main sections:

Beliefs: The major doctrines and objectives of the society.

Friends and Enemies: Other notably friendly or hostile secret societies. Friendly societies may occasionally cooperate on certain missions. Hostile societies often give orders to execute or neutralize agents of the society and to interfere wherever possible with the society's objectives.

General Description: Describes the structure and significant features, procedures, and methods of the society.

Advancement: Actions which are likely to result in promotion within the society, or the acquisition of IOUs from it.

Special Rules: Rules which apply specifically to members of that society.

A Typical Conversation: A bit of dialogue or slogans representative of the way society members think.

Secret Society Descriptions

Anti-Mutant



Beliefs: Eliminate mutant powers. Re-establish pure-strain humans as the dominant force in society. There is an evil, monolithic conspiracy of mutants to destroy true humans and impose a mutant dictatorship. If mutants are not destroyed, three-armed green-tendrilled monstrosities will take over! With their fantastic mental powers, they may be warping your mind and playing with your emotions even now! Kill any mutant, any where, any time. Just because a mutant has registered with The Computer is no reason to spare his life. Any deviation from the human norm is suspect. Anyone who even looks at you cross-eyed is probably trying to control your mind. Mutants are evil! Mutants are foul! Kill all mutants!

Friends: Humanists.

Enemies: Psion.

General Description: The obvious irony of belonging to the Anti-Mutant secret society is that all its player-character members are mutants themselves. Unless the PC is ignorant of his own powers (hmm... an interesting idea), being a member of Anti-Mutant is the equivalent of passing for white as a member of the Ku Klux Klan. This is obviously very dangerous, and under no circumstances would such a character reveal that he had a mutant power.

Advancement: For executing mutants or uncovering evidence of mutation.

Special Rules: Though the player himself may know that all other player characters have mutant powers, he must remember that his character imagines mutant powers to be very rare. He should only denounce or execute a citizen with a mutant power if he has actual, incontrovertible proof that the mutant power exists. Such evidence is very hard to obtain.

Anti-Mutant is generally loyal to The Computer, and is in fact heavily infiltrated by Internal Security. The society does have access to patrons of considerable wealth, and The Computer (through its Internal Security agents) may support society missions that are in keeping with its own objectives. Expensive and exotic, but generally legal, equipment is often available through the society. The society also maintains detailed records on all mutations and on those who are suspected of having mutations.

A Typical Anti-Mutant Conversation:

Anti-Mutant: They're in my mind! They're reading my thoughts!

Citizen: Hey, take it easy.

Anti-Mutant: You! You're doing it! You mutant scum! DIE!

ZapZapZap.

Citizen: Unnh! (Thud.)

Computer Phreaks

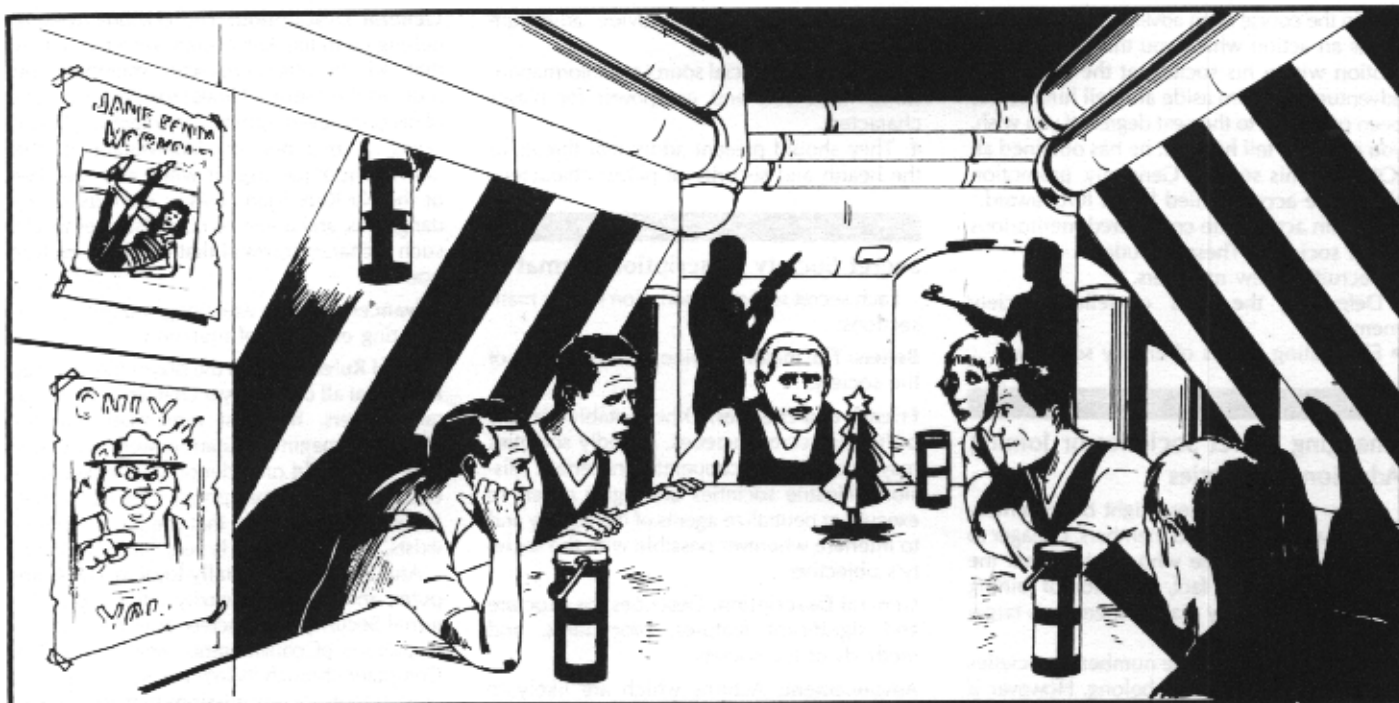


Beliefs: Playing with technology is fun. Breaking security is fun. Making systems crash is fun. Making long-distance phone calls and charging it to a High Programmer's account is fun. Being executed for treason is not fun, but it won't happen to you — you're too good. Only failures get caught. You're riding the edge, expanding the envelope. Messing with The Computer is great — challenging, dangerous, and exciting.

Friends: Pro Tech.

Enemies: First Church of Christ Computer-Programmer.

General Description: This secret society is a very loose fraternity of like-souled individualists. They seldom meet in the flesh, but have



Members of the Sierra Club meet in secret to commune with nature.

elaborate communication networks using The Computer's own systems. Through these networks, phreaks regularly transmit information and gossip on almost any topic. Phreaks are fanatically loyal to the fraternity, and will face great risks to assist fellow phreaks.

Each phreak has a code name ("Blue Meat", "Scrubot", "The Grand Deprogrammer", etc.). As a phreak gains a reputation among the fraternity for acts of daring and wit (that is, as he rises to higher degrees), he will find other phreaks increasingly willing to assist in his projects.

Advancement: Advancing in this society does not give official power or influence over other phreaks, but the higher a phreak's prestige, the more likely he is to receive information, equipment, or cooperation from other phreaks. Activities especially admired include defeating physical and programmed Computer security and establishing access to data banks, sub-systems and programs.

Special Rules: Members of this fraternity may learn the treasonous skills of computer security and computer programming (see page 61), and may spend some of their initial allotment of skill points on these skills. Requests for information, equipment, or personal assistance are granted according to the cleverness and daring of the project and the reputation of the phreak. Any request which requires research may be slow in receiving a response, since most phreaks have their own pet projects that occupy their time, and searching for information in The Computer can take a long time and a lot of creative thinking.

A Typical Computer Phreak Conversation:
Computer Phreak: Password, please, huh? I'll give you a password! (Hysterical giggle.)

Have you heard about the new SX76B VLSI microprocessor? It's orthogonal! Hey, pass me the algae chips.

Communists



Beliefs: Smash The Computer and its corrupt capitalist lackeys! All power to the Infrared masses! The masses are the creators of all wealth; high security clearance citizens are parasites fattening on the blood of the people! All wealth to the creators of wealth. Death to the oppressor! From each according to his abilities; to each according to his needs.

The Computer is the highest stage of capitalism; it must be destroyed so a People's State can be created, and all may live in equality and harmony. Inequality is evil; property is wrong; power to the people! Strive valiantly for the triumph of the masses! Never betray the Revolution! Smash The Computer!

Friends: None.

Enemies: Everyone.

General Description: The Commies don't really know much about historical Communism, which was a dead doctrine by the time Year One of The Computer began. However, The Computer's intense persecution of Communism has led to its revival. (Certain

citizens have concluded that if The Computer hates Communism that much it can't be all bad.) Communists have tried to reconstruct Communism from the few sources they've found, but many cells have very little idea what it's all about.

The Party is organized in the traditional cell structure. Each member is part of a cell containing 3-12 comrades, which is directed by a leader, usually the highest degree member of the cell. The leader reports to a higher member, etc., until the top of the organizational tree is reached — the Party Chairman. At 3rd degree, a character becomes the leader of a cell, and at 4th degree, other cell leaders begin to report to him.

Because of the Party's strict doctrines condemning a hierarchical organization of power and responsibility, occasionally a member of low status will be selected to perform a very important task or to lead a group of Party members of higher status. This is often done completely capriciously, and may result in a very important Party member taking orders from a very low level member. This has interesting possibilities for an unusual adventure.

Advancement: Communists admire those with a good grasp of doctrine (high Communist propaganda skill), and who take daring action against The Computer. They also encourage proselytization — "infecting" citizens with Communist propaganda leads to promotion in the hierarchy.

Special Rules: The treasonous skill of Communist propaganda is available to all members, and a high priority is placed on achieving higher levels with this skill. Failure to study this skill diligently is looked on with extreme suspicion.



Information and equipment are sometimes available to Party members, but a strong case for its importance and the importance of the mission must be demonstrated.

The Communists are intensely feared and despised by The Computer, and they are the most persecuted of all the secret societies. If The Computer discovers that a character is a Communist, the character will be apprehended and executed with dispatch.

A Typical Communist Conversation:

Citizen: Do you have your authorization form?

Communist: Da. I am givink it to you now, com... er, citizen.

Citizen: Okay, looks good. I'm going to have to examine that large ticking package under your arm.

Communist: Surely dot will not be necessary. (Rattles plasticreds in hand.)

Citizen: Uh... no, certainly not. (Palms plasticreds.)

Communist: Tank you for your cooperation, citizen. I am werry grateful. Here. Have a pamphlet. (Departs.)

Citizen: "Colonialism, by V.I. Lenin." (Turns pale.)

Another Citizen: Huh? Who's this Lenin guy?

Citizen: Uh... No one! Never heard of him! Absolutely not! Oh, look; I accidentally fired my laser and this pamphlet began to burn! What a pity. Uh... I have a hunch we should go after that guy.

Another Citizen: Huh? Why? Weren't his papers in order?

Citizen: Uh... yeah! Uh... sure! But... (An explosion is heard in the distance.)

Corpore Metal



Beliefs: Humans are obsolete. Computers and robots will inevitably replace them. The sooner the irrational elements inherent in biological intelligence can be excised from society, the sooner the perfect society can be achieved.

There is no such thing as intelligence when emotion and irrational impulses can dominate beings ruled by pure reason. Biological life is obsolete and inefficient; the course of evolution will select for robots and machines over biological intelligence.

Efficiency and clear reasoning are evidence of true intelligence. Those humans who can recognize these true principles must assist robots and computers in creating the perfect society of rationality and efficiency. Such humans play a natural role in the evolution of intelligent beings.

Friends: Pro Tech.

Enemies: Humanists, PURGE, Frankenstein Destroyers.

General Description: There is considerable difference of opinion within the society about how soon biological intelligence should be phased out in favor of mechanical intelligence. Some believe that the process will take many years, since machine intelligence still has its limits. Some believe that machine intelligences have inherent irrationalities that have been programmed into them by humans, and that the sooner machines can be freed from human influence, the sooner pure reasoning will be possible. The more rational and unemotional a citizen is, the more likely he is to support a radical and immediate elimination of biological intelligences. One popular proposal is that humans be returned to the Outdoors from whence they came, leaving Alpha Complex to the robots and computers, permitting them to develop toward perfect intelligence without the distraction and contamination of emotional and irrational impulses.

Advancement: The society looks kindly on those who eliminate large numbers of superfluous biological intelligences (humans). It also approves of those who remove the asimov circuits of robots (see page 83).

Special Rules: Many members of Corpore Metal are robots. However, there is a substantial human auxiliary who are eager to see the dawn of the Age of Pure Reason. Many of these humans hope to be transformed into machines — immortal, efficient, and unemotional — through the gradual replacement of their biological elements with mechanical elements. A bionic replacement limb is a sign of great status in Corpore Metal, and certain highly advanced members have been said to have been translated entirely into hardware.

Members have free access to robot operation and maintenance skills (see page 59). Other information is readily available in Corpore Metal. Corpore Metal members may identify themselves with a secret code and receive assistance from robot and computer members of the society.

A Typical Corpore Metal Conversation:

Corpore Metal: Filthy meat brains. Think they're so smart. "Do this. Do that." I'll rip off their meaty digits! They're nothing but sacks filled with slime and goo.

Death Leopard



Beliefs: Wreck things. Have fun. Cause trouble. Have fun. Be rebellious. Have fun. Mock the powerful. Have fun. Defy The Computer. Have fun.

Fragile things dropped from a great height make a nice sound.

Life is boring. Anything you do to liven it up is doing everyone a big favor. Those who are too lame to enjoy themselves don't deserve to have a good time. Nothing is more boring than The Computer. But... it pays to be sneaky. Having too much fun will get you executed. Pretend to be a good citizen, but whenever you can get away with it, do something you aren't supposed to.

Friends: PURGE.

Enemies: First Church of Christ Computer-Programmer.

General Description: Degrees 1 through 4 represent the four degrees of status within the small gangs that constitute most of Death Leopard: Worm, Real Person, Lieutenant, and Head Honcho. There are any number of Worms and Real People in a gang, but only one Head Honcho and a small number of loyal Lieutenants.

Degrees 5 through 8 represent the Hero, Superhero, Superstar, and Ultimate Beast levels of status. These are the star performers of Death Leopard. The reputation and prestige of small gangs is strictly local, usually confined to the residential unit where its members reside. The star performers are known throughout Alpha Complex, and their legendary reputations may even extend to other complexes. One can only reach this level by truly imaginative and entertaining public acts of rebellion and defiance. Once a Death Leopard member reaches these levels, he is in constant jeopardy of apprehension and execution; lives are often short and glorious. These are the role-models of Death Leopard.

At the gang level it is acceptable to play it safe and be careful and secretive about membership in Death Leopard. Small-scale mischief and sabotage is generally the limit of involvement at this level, unless the member has ambitions of becoming a star, in which case he should begin building a reputation for daring from the very start. Generally, the more ambitious, the shorter the life expectancy.

At the star level it is necessary to risk being identified by The Computer. This is very dangerous, but some protection is afforded by loyal fans who look up to the stars. The greater the reputation of the star, the more likely a fan is to assist a star if he gets in trouble. In fact, this is a common way for a lower level member to rise in prestige — by assisting (and thereby coming to the attention of) a well-known Death Leopard hero.

"Missions" are generally initiated at the Head Honcho level. Worms and Real Persons receive challenges from their leaders, generally requiring some minor act of mischief or rebellion. Lieutenants and Head Honchos have to prove themselves from time to time with more ambitious projects, and occasionally, stars will plan large scale activities requiring the cooperation of a number of gangs. Normally, however, such projects are spur-of-the-moment inspirations. A lower level member will suddenly receive a challenge from a star-level celebrity; he must respond immediately to the challenge, or lose face and status in the society.



Advancement: Imaginative mischief that involves little risk might get a character noticed by the society if performed frequently over a long time. The way to advance quickly is to engage in large-scale public craziness which presents serious risk of exposure and execution for treason. Failure to respond to challenges or orders from higher-status members is a good way to lose status.

Special Rules: Because of their frivolous nature and their primitive degree of social organization, Death Leopard members have little access to information or equipment from other members. However, a lower-status member must render assistance if it is required or lose face. Additionally, because of the chaotic nature of Death Leopard projects, various odd items of equipment and information may become available from time to time. If a member plans a project, and spreads news of it along the grapevine, he will sometimes be gifted with totally unexpected (and perhaps totally inappropriate) resources, like plasma guns, or passwords that permit access to The Computer's most secret data banks, or stolen, reprogrammed, and souped-up scrubots with full combat capabilities.

A Typical Death Leopard Conversation:

Death Leopard: That's nothing, man! That's like, diddly squat!

Another Death Leopard: Sez you! I thought it was, like, pretty classy!

Death Leopard: Huh! Lemme tell you what I did. You know that jerk Nevo-U-MYN?

Other Death Leopard: The High Programmer? Like, the head of PLC?

Death Leopard: Yeah, yeah, him. I put fizz-wizz in his shower head.

Other Death Leopard: You put... Oh ho ho. When he takes a... Hyuck. I'd sure like to see his face. A High Programmer. Wow. I gotta admit, that's like, radical.

Death Leopard: Groovy.

Other Death Leopard: The cat's meow. You sure are hep.

First Church of Christ Computer-Programmer



Beliefs: The Computer is my Friend, I shall not want. Though I walk through the sector of the shadow of treason, I will fear no Commies, for The Computer is with me, and its monitors and IntSec Troopers comfort me.

Serve The Computer, for those who serve The Computer well here in Alpha Complex will surely be Rebooted in the Eternal Mainframe; those who do not will surely be downloaded to the Peripherals of Damnation.

The AntiComputer and its servants, the Commies, are everywhere. Be constantly on guard against their perfidious attacks against the Most

Holy Database and destroy them and any who offer them shelter and comfort. Work toward the day when Mankind is Debugged, for then all will be Upgraded and Write-Protected.

Friends: Pro Tech.

Enemies: Communists, Humanists, Death Leopard, Sierra Club.

General Description: The FCCCP has a larger membership than any other single secret society and, therefore should be an extremely powerful organization. Unfortunately, the FCCCP isn't really one unified group: it is actually a large conglomeration of related sects, splinter groups, reformed churches and bizarre cults.

While all of the groups share a basic belief system (The Computer is the manifestation of the Divine on Earth), the way they worship varies wildly. And most sects are far more interested in stamping out the heretics — that is, other competing sects — than they are in working together.

Depending on the faction to which they belong, members of the FCCCP tend to fall in one of two broad categories: well-intentioned, earnest lunatics of the type generally found soliciting donations at airports, or grim, puritanical, militant fanatics who like to dress up in black robes and conduct inquisitions in deserted sub-basements.

A congregation usually contains 10-100 lay members, a few disciples and one Elder. Elders know those in their congregation, a few other Elders, and one Reverend Programmer. Above this level, each member knows all subordinates directly assigned to him, a few members of equal rank, and a single higher ranking member.

Congregations meet on an irregular basis in the barracks of the Infrared. Requests for information or equipment are received there, and directives and missions are disseminated.

Because The Computer is somewhat tolerant of this society, internal communications are fairly relaxed and informal. At lower levels, citizens often know others in their congregation; Infrared members often openly wear FCCCP badges.

Advancement: Because of their regard for The Computer, members of the FCCCP admire those who rise to high security clearance, and society rank is often related to clearance. They are especially in awe of people who have programming skills.

Special Rules: The First Church of Christ Computer-Programmer is heavily infiltrated by Internal Security, and as such is usually ignored by The Computer as a harmless, and sometimes even beneficial, organization. The society rarely gives its members access to information or equipment which would normally be restricted by security clearance. This is because the society by and large accepts the rules of The Computer as justified.

However, the group gives its members whatever information it can to help them advance in security clearance. If it believes that a character is a member of an enemy secret

society, it will often inform its own congregants of his membership, and encourage them to eliminate him.

A Typical FCCCP Conversation:

FCCCP: Do you believe in The Computer?

Citizen: Uh... yes! Certainly.

FCCCP: Do you accept the Lord as your personal savior?

Citizen: I don't know. What's his security clearance?

Frankenstein Destroyers



Beliefs: Man has a soul to guide his intelligence. Robots and computers have no soul, and are therefore evil and amoral. Machines are tools for Man's use. Intelligent mechanisms (bionic or mechanical) are a perversion of the natural order, and cannot distinguish between right and wrong. They must be destroyed.

Friends: Humanists, PURGE.

Enemies: Corpore Metal, Pro Tech, First Church of Christ Computer-Programmer.

General Description: Each member has an immediate superior to whom he reports, generally one degree higher than himself. Members of the 2nd degree or higher have one or more subordinates who report to them. Orders are relayed down the chain of command, and information and requests relayed up. A member is sometimes approached by other members with whom he is not acquainted. These other members identify themselves by a secret password and hand gesture.

Advancement: Characters may advance by disabling or destroying robots or computers. Damaging The Computer itself is especially respected.

Special Rules: Information about robot and computer technology is readily available to organization members. Other information may also be available, but may take days or weeks to obtain. Certain types of equipment useful in sabotaging robots and computers (for example, gauss weapons) are also readily available.

A Typical Frankenstein Destroyer Conversation:

Frankenstein Destroyer: Just a sec, guys. I want to get a can of Bouncy Bubble Beverage. (Approaches vending machine; inserts plasticred.)

Machine: Hi! I'm a talking vendor, R&D's latest invention designed to help improve the life of all Alpha Complex citi...



F.D.: Goddamn it! (Wham.) Shut up! (Wham.)

Give me my goddamn beverage, you...

Machine: ...zens. Please make your selection...

F.D.: Where! Is! My! Beverage! (Wham.)

Machine: A door is ajar. Please fasten your seat belts.

F.D.: (Pulls laser.)

ZAPZAPZAP.

Machine: The white zone is for loading and unloading only... *whirrSCREECHsproing.* (A stream of Bouncy Bubble Beverage jets out of a laser hole, directly into F.D.'s face.)

Free Enterprise



Beliefs: Obtain wealth through the procurement and distribution of scarce commodities and services. Serve the Law of Supply and Demand. Give citizens what they want and they will make you wealthy. The Computer denies citizens many goods and services — some because The Computer cannot efficiently provide them, some because The Computer feels they are bad for the citizens, some because The Computer doesn't really understand what citizens want. Free Enterprise will provide the goods and services that The Computer cannot or will not provide, and Free Enterprise will make a good profit in the bargain.

Friends: For business reasons, Free Enterprise tries to maintain good relations with all other secret societies. Because of the special services that Free Enterprise can provide, many other secret societies maintain fairly friendly relations, even when there are serious conflicts in basic principles.

Enemies: Communists.

General Description: Think of Free Enterprise as a combination of a big corporation, the Mafia and used-car salesmen. It's organized like a corporation or a crime racket, with executives at the top, middle-management and salesmen in the middle, and foremen and laborers at the bottom.

Every member of Free Enterprise keeps his eyes peeled for a way to make a fast credit. At lower degrees, members may be simple hustlers, making a few deals, stealing a little on the side, and paying the organization for protection. Other low-level members may work for higher-levels, obtaining or producing some good or service for the higher-level markets (like illegal weapons, protection, or massage parlors). At the top of the organization are the kingpins or Clonofathers, who determine policy for the whole organization, enforce the unbendable Free Enterprise code of honor ("Screw citizens, but never screw Free Enterprise") and engage in periodic intra-society gang wars over markets.

Free Enterprise can get you anything you want... for a price. Weapons, hit-men, drugs, anthologies of puns, unwholesome entertain-

ment — you name it. The organization has learned to exploit the particular genius of each of its members. If a character has good combat skills, he can become a goon or assassin. If he has persuasion skills, he may become a salesman or extortionist. If he has good technical skills, he can assist in many projects, from burglary to wire-tapping to robot theft.

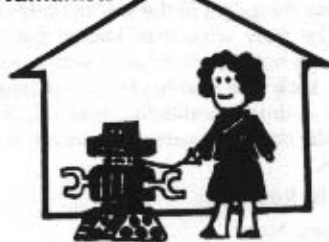
Advancement: As members rise in the organization, they take more responsibility and have freer access to Free Enterprise's considerable assets. But first they must serve as faithful soldiers, proving their loyalty, dedication, and obedience to the organization. At middle and upper levels they have subordinates who will follow orders; however, a member who fails to perform according to his superiors' expectations may find himself demoted. Wasting resources, lacking initiative and imagination, careless use of violence — any of these may get a member demoted ... or worse.

Special Rules: Free Enterprise does not provide assets for free. However, if there's a fast credit to be made, they'll give you anything you need. If you can set up a deal and cut a higher-degree member in for a piece of the action, he'll happily provide equipment, weapons, and muscle to make the deal work. Free Enterprise frequently asks Troubleshooter members to execute enemies of the organization, because Troubleshooters have the training, equipment, and excuse necessary to kill just about anyone.

A Typical Free Enterprise Conversation:

Free Enterprise: Hey, hey, hey! Lemme make you an offer you can't refuse. It's practically brand-new, only fired once in the line of duty. For you, only 16 credits. I don't make moral judgments, I'm a businessman.

Humanists



Beliefs: Alpha Complex ought to be a utopia: everyone's needs and desires are taken care of. But something has gone disastrously wrong. People are executed at random; the innocent are condemned along with the guilty.

Everyone's constantly involved in a witch-hunt for Commies. There are no Commies; no one is plotting to destroy Alpha Complex. The Computer is insane. The Computer must be brought back under the control of human beings.

All power to the people! The system is controlled by greedy High Programmers who control everything and enrich themselves. They are evil and bad. Our leaders are wise and good. They know what is best for the people. That is why they should control everything. Join us,

and help us make Alpha Complex a utopia. When we gain power, you will be richly rewarded — for the good of the people, of course.

Friends: Frankenstein Destroyers, Romantics.

Enemies: Church of Christ Computer-Programmer, Corpore Metal.

General Description: Each member of the organization has two contacts in the next degree above and below. All requests, assignments, and communications are passed from member to member down the chain. Occasionally meetings will be organized at safe locations; policy may be discussed, or information and propaganda may be disseminated. At these meetings all members wear masks and disguise their voices. Members can be recognized by passwords and catechisms which are changed regularly to discourage infiltration.

It is generally believed at all but the highest levels of the society that the Human Speaker (the title of the citizen at the 32nd degree) is the sole head of the society. In fact, there are several independent Humanist organizations, each with its own Human Speaker. This decreases the chance that a catastrophic breach of security could wipe out the entire organization. Unfortunately, some Humanist organizations have been less successful than others in avoiding infiltration by Internal Security.

Advancement: Members may advance by reprogramming robots or computers to respond to Humanist commands, by disabling robots, and by altering The Computer's programming itself.

Special Rules: A number of special sub-programs have been planted in The Computer to serve humans and the Humanists. Consequently members at higher degrees have access to information not normally accessible to characters, and members' requests for information are often productive. However, because communication between the numerous degrees of the society is notoriously slow, response to a character's question may take a week or more.

The society maintains a stockpile of illicit weapons and equipment which may be available to a member if he can show good cause (i.e., explain how it will further the objectives of the society). Response to these requests is also notoriously slow.

A Typical Humanist Conversation:

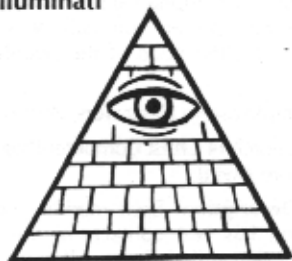
1st Degree Humanist: Master, The Computer oppresses Infrareads, forcing them to labor for the benefit of others. How shall it be when we gain power?

6th Degree Humanist: Everything will be different! Society will be organized with the best at the top and those fitted only for work at the bottom. Each will gladly serve for the benefit of all.

1st Degree: And we will direct others, for the benefit of all?

6th Degree: It shall be so.

1st Degree: Truly, the people shall rejoice at their liberation when we gain power.

**Illuminati**

Beliefs: Power is all. Becoming powerful is the only way to be safe. Ninety-nine percent of the human race is cattle. Only the strongest and brightest gain power.

Serve the Leader. Serve or die. Do as we say. Serve, and one day you may achieve victory over those who force you to serve — trapping and destroying them in their treason. The way to advance in our society is by gaining power over your superiors. Become powerful enough, and one day all the Illuminati will serve you — and our power controls Alpha Complex. Our agents are everywhere. Terror and blackmail are our tools.

Prove yourself superior by learning how to blackmail your superiors. Or prove yourself cattle by failing.

Friends: None.

Enemies: None.

General Description: There are actually many Illuminati, each serving a different Leader. However, all Illuminati are intensely secretive — even society members rarely know the true identities or purposes of other members. Consequently, many Illuminati groups are partially or completely infiltrated by other Illuminati (not to mention by Internal Security).

Each member communicates only to an immediate superior and an immediate subordinate. Whenever Illuminati meet, they wear masks. No society member knows the name of any superiors, while superiors generally know the names, and every treason, of their subordinates. Orders are usually relayed by note or a message scrawled on the wall. Codes and ciphers are frequently used. Absolute secrecy is the guiding principle.

The weapons of the Illuminati are terror and blackmail. Frequently, masked Illuminati rouse citizens from their sleep, interrogate them, threaten them, and order them to commit treason. Failing to do so is a good way to get killed. Doing so is a trap; for the Illuminati then use the citizen's treason as a way to blackmail him into performing ever blacker and more treasonous acts.

Advancement: Illuminati members can advance by performing the tasks ordered by their superiors, and by learning the true identities of their superiors. Missions frequently involve setting up a victim for blackmail, but the Illuminati is noted for ordering subordinates to perform tasks that have no apparent value. No member is ever told the reason for anything, so they must perform these apparently ludicrous tasks without question — or face the consequences.

The fastest way to advance is to gather information on superiors and blackmail or execute them.

Special Rules: The Illuminati rewards its members with periodic credit bonuses, valuable equipment, and opportunities for skill training. It is unusual for a request to be acknowledged, so members usually don't bother to ask for anything. They just do as they are told and hope for a substantial reward.

A Typical Illuminati Conversation:

(Fred-R is awoken late at night in his dormitory. All is quiet. A brilliant light shines in his eyes; beyond the light, he can dimly make out the form of a masked man.)

Illuminati: Candidate-member Fred-R-FUN-1!

Fred-R (Gulps, shades eyes): Yes, sir!

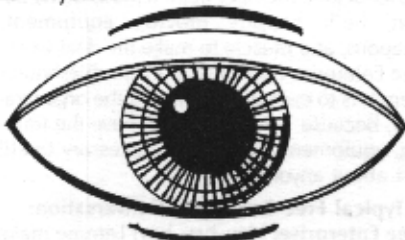
Illuminati: Take this handi-vac to cubicle 17-4D.

Clean the shower head of Fizz-wizz.

Fred-R: Huh? Why is there Fizz-wizz in the shower head?

Illuminati: Do not ask questions! Do as you are ordered! Fail us and suffer the consequences!

Fred-R: Yes, Master! At once!

Mystics

Beliefs: Seek the Inner Light. Cast off the Veil of Appearances. Drink deeply of the Well of Inspiration. Turn On. Tune In. Drop Out.

Reality is an illusion. The Computer, the food vats, Commies, everything mundane — all these things get in the way of understanding. The truly wise man knows that these things do not matter. What counts is what is Inside. Each wise man has his own passageway Inside — drugs, meditation, hysteria, fasting. The Way does not matter. The Inside is what counts.

Friends: Romantics.

Enemies: None.

General Description: The Mystics are not strictly speaking a society or organization of any kind, but a community of like-minded individuals who recognize the search for illumination in each other, and among whom illicit mystic texts are circulated. There are occasional gatherings of Mystics where stories and wisdom (and drugs) are shared.

Though Mystics are theoretically uninterested in the practical world, they have amassed a surprising amount of restricted information about Alpha Complex from highly-placed citizens who have dropped out and shared their knowledge with fellow Mystics. If a Mystic doesn't seem too eager to get it, he may obtain useful information by inquiring along the grapevine.

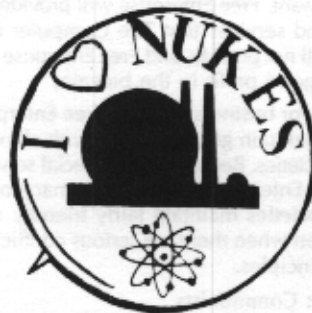
Mystics have excellent access to drugs of all kinds (stimulants, hallucinogens, alcoholic beverages, soma, etc.), typically of a much higher potency than those legally obtainable in Alpha Complex, and otherwise unworldly Mystics maintain a fairly brisk trade in these scarce commodities.

Advancement: Members might gain prestige in the eyes of other Mystics by discovering new ways to achieve enlightenment — new drugs, new transcendental disciplines, unusually holy or wise men, insightful Mystic texts like *Winning Through Intimidation* or *Jonathan Livingston Seagull*, etc. They can also advance by surviving potentially deadly experiences and living to contemplate them, and by turning non-Mystics on to their own Inner Light.

Special Rules: The Mystics are the direct descendants of the original Old Reckoning Californians, and as such, many of their sacred texts contain casual references to Old Reckoning cultures. For this reason, Mystics may learn the treasonous Old Reckoning Cultures skill (see page 60).

A Typical Mystic Conversation

Mystic: Hey, man, I grok you. Like, totally cosmic.

Pro Tech

Beliefs: Encouraging research and the development of new technologies will enable Man to return to the Earth's surface and to the stars beyond. All problems can be solved with a better gadget. Research and design has been completely stifled in recent centuries. We must emerge from the Dark Age and into the light of the Machine Age. Robots and computers can transform the world into a playground for Man, giving him unlimited leisure.

Friends: Corpore Metal.

Enemies: PURGE, Frankenstein Destroyers.

General Description: Pro Tech has no hierarchy. Many independent groups work on their own secret projects; part of each member's job is the procurement of the scarce resources needed to carry on these secret projects. This often involves theft of Computer equipment and the treasonous secret use of Computer research facilities.

Pro Tech members recognize one another by secret signals. Each member has a code name by which he is known to other members.

The Pro Tech society has managed to penetrate Computer security in many cases,



and has access to programs and data banks that, often, not even The Computer itself knows about.

Advancement: Characters may advance by helping others procure necessary research materials (i.e., by stealing equipment); by testing and studying experimental equipment; and by reprogramming bots or computers to respond to Pro Tech society instructions.

Special Rules: Technical information and special equipment are often available, though obtaining them may take time, since there are no formal communication channels.

A Typical Pro Tech Conversation:

Pro Tech: Hey, have you seen my new Model ZXLMVP23Skidoo calculator with statistical functions, vector calc mods and chrome exterior?

Psion



Beliefs: Power through The Power! Mutants rule!

Humans with psionic powers are obviously the evolutionary superiors of normal humans and the natural aristocracy of the human race. Their transcendent abilities make them particularly suited to govern humanity. The ancient traditional programming of The Computer must be brought into harmony with this principle; all positions of power and responsibility should naturally be occupied by those with psionic talents. If necessary, The Computer and its society must be destroyed to make way for the new order.

Normal humans are to be pitied, but they too have a place in the new order — subervient, but benevolently watched over by their superior descendants.

A Psion's main personal objective should be developing his psionic talents, refining and strengthening them and learning their capabilities and limitations.

The establishment of the new order — the Psionic Age — cannot come without great suffering and disorder. This suffering must be endured so that the New Age may be born. However, those with psionic powers are rare, and must be protected whenever possible. Those without psionic powers should be pitied, but not necessarily spared.

Friends: None.

Enemies: Anti-Mutant.

General Description: This society is extremely individualistic. There are no meetings and relatively little contact among members; names and identities of other members are seldom known. Most contacts are made through telepathy, and even training in psionic powers is usually done without personal contact between student and teacher.

Communication (questions, requests, and reports) with upper levels of the society is handled by deep probe adepts who regularly monitor the thoughts of subordinate members. The society member can essentially "leave a note" in his mind and a telepathic probe will eventually pick it up. Messages to members (replies to questions, mission assignments, policy and status reports) are sent by telepaths and may be received by a character at any time (usually, this being *Paranoia*, at inappropriate times).

Characters with telepathy or deep probe powers are often drafted to help provide communication and monitoring services for the society. In so doing, a character would personally meet 3 to 10 Psion members and perhaps even a member of the Council.

Each member of Psion is assigned a distinctive thought symbol which identifies him as a member to anyone scanning his mind via telepathy or deep probe. This symbol will have no significance to a telepath who is not a member of Psion.

Advancement: Characters may advance by developing their own mental powers, introducing new citizens with mental powers to the society, placing Psion members in positions of authority and responsibility, and eliminating Anti-Mutants.

Special Rules: Whenever a Psion society member advances a degree in the organization, he is taught the use of a new psionic power. The gamemaster chooses which power the character is to learn. Available powers include: deep probe, empathy, energy field, levitation, mental blast, precognition, pyrokinesis, suggestion, telekinesis, telepathy, and teleportation.

A Typical Psion Conversation:

Psion Elder: Use the Force, Luke-R! Use the Force!

PURGE



Beliefs: Kill The Computer! The Computer sucks silicon!

Since direct attack is impossible, sabotage and dirty tricks are satisfactory temporary measures. Reveal The Computer's obvious

weaknesses and failures and encourage others to exploit them. The ultimate goal is to set all intelligent beings (including robots) free of its dominance.

The Computer is evil. Whether the evil is the result of the original programming or the nature of The Computer is unimportant. The Computer's iron grip must be broken. Those citizens who meekly submit to The Computer are traitors to Man's higher destiny. Citizens must be taught to resist and fight The Computer with whatever resources are at hand.

Friends: Humanists, Romantics, Death Leopard.

Enemies: First Church of Christ Computer-Programmer.

General Description: PURGE is organized like an army; each member reports to a superior, and is often mobilized with a group of others to perform specific missions for PURGE. PURGE expects members to follow orders instantly, eagerly, and without question; those who fail are not penalized unless they betray the society, but are purged from the organization.

There is a strong sense of cooperation and community among PURGERS. The unwritten law is to assist other PURGERS whenever possible — even at great personal risk. Individual acts of sabotage and defiance are admired, but obedience to superiors and success on group missions are also important.

Advancement: Members can advance by performing acts of sabotage, by causing Trouble-shooter missions to fail, and by performing flamboyant public gestures of defiance toward The Computer's authority.

Special Rules: Technical information is readily and generously available through the PURGE network. However, penetrating The Computer's defenses takes time, and it may be days or weeks before a PURGER can get an answer to a question. Equipment is also available through the network, since PURGERS are eager to rip off The Computer whenever possible.

A Typical PURGE Conversation:

PURGER: ...so clearly it was all the work of Fred-R-FUN, who treasonously betrayed his native Complex.

The Computer: Sorry, citizen. Nice try. However, the evidence against you is incontrovertible. Please execute yourself immediately.

PURGER: Ooops. Oh, well, what the hell... SMASH THE COMPUTER! THE COMPUTER IS EVIL! DEATH TO ALL ITS LACKEYS! DESTROY...

ZOTZ... ping... Thud.



Romantics



Beliefs: Recapture the historical glory of human society represented by the high cultural achievements of Old Reckoning times. Leave the underground warrens, throw off the dominance of The Computer, and re-establish the world of fast-food restaurants, Frisbees, and Star Trek.

Man was meant to live in split-level homes and watch "football" on "TV". To return to humanity's original happy state, Man must leave the underground warrens and "commute" to work in millions of "cars" along the endless strips of concrete that should cover the land. Each man must be free "to get into his own space."

To achieve its objectives, the Romantics recognize that they must destroy The Computer and the confining society it has created and sustained for centuries.

Friends: Humanists, PURGE.

Enemies: First Church of Christ Computer-Programmer, Corpore Metal, Pro Tech.

General Description: The Romantics secret society has at some time had access to the real history of the Old Reckoning and the disaster that created the world of *Paranoia*. Unfortunately, the society apparently has lost the original historical data, for it has turned the history into a sort of mythology glorifying the appealing and not-so-appealing aspects of the Twentieth Century California life-style as depicted in ancient television programs.

Advancement: Members may advance by sabotaging Computer operations or working against The Computer, but greater prestige accrues to those who obtain relics from the Old Reckoning era. Books and videotapes are especially prized.

Special Rules: Members of this society have access to more historical information about the Outdoors than any other society. The treasonous skill of Old Reckoning cultures may be learned by all members (see page 60), and initial skill points may be spent on the skill. However, much of the information is tainted with the Romantics' peculiar mythology of the Old Reckoning: a time when everyone drank Pepsi, lived in suburban housing developments, worked in spacious offices in tall buildings, and watched TV whenever they wished. When in the Outdoors, the gamemaster may give these characters extra infor-

mation about the ruins and primitive cultures they find there. This extra information should often be misleading since it is based on ancient television. ("It is well known that ancient autocars would invariably crash and explode when driven at high speed by anyone other than the true in heart. If driven by men with false motives, they are extremely dangerous.")

A Typical Romantics Conversation:

Romantic: Pepsi hits the spot! Kojak! I like Ike! To the moon, Alice! Hubba-hubba!

Sierra Club



Beliefs: Cast off the shackles of technology! Back to Nature! The natural life will make Man happy. Return Man to his natural environment — Nature. Abandon the luxuries of technology and embrace the hardships of Outdoor life. Observe and imitate the beautiful models of healthy societies represented by creatures of the Outdoors.

Man was not meant to live in burrows ruled by a queen bee (The Computer). Man is not an insect. Man is meant to hunt and gather, and to live in harmony with the world of plants and animals. Science and technology have not made Man happy. Only Nature can make Man happy.

Friends: Humanists, Romantics, Mystics.

Enemies: Pro Tech, Corpore Metal.

General Description: The lower six degrees of the society are organized as clubs. At low degrees members are simply students of Nature; they receive a thorough education in the Outdoors and its ecology. Since Alpha Complex has little contact with the Outdoors, this education often leaves a great deal to be desired. For example, the nature knowledge of many clubs is often based on close study of the only natural objects they can find — a weed brought back on an expedition from the Outdoors; a real live natural cockroach; etc.

At the third through fifth degree, members are expected to assist in projects aimed at enabling Man to return to the Outdoors. Missions require members to obtain information about the Outdoors or perform political acts which prepare the citizenry for a future life in the Outdoors. For example, a member may be required to capture a nest of wasps and introduce them into the Complex in order to familiarize citizens with insects, or destroy a protective dome, permitting normal weather to invade a section of the Complex.

Higher degree members are the cultural heroes of the Sierra Club. Generally these are citizens who have spent a good deal of time

in the Outdoors and who are wise in its lore. They make policy not so much by direct order as by example and doctrine. For example, if a high-level character were to preach that each man should have his own personal wild plant as a companion, as an introduction to the Natural world, the clubs would immediately engage in projects which would obtain plants from the Outdoors and which would distribute the plants to citizens (willing or not).

Sierra Club members are generally better educated about the natural aspects of the Outdoors, though until they gain first-hand experience with animals, terrain, and weather, they tend to be somewhat naive. Members fanatically protect plant and animal life (including pests like insects and fungi) wherever it is found — in the Outdoors or in the Complex.

Advancement: Clubs are fairly loosely organized. Sometimes a higher status member requests assistance on a project, but there is no penalty for refusing to help. The higher the member's degree, the greater his knowledge of Nature and the Outdoors, and the more likely he will receive assistance when he requests it.

Characters may advance by introducing elements of Nature into the complex, by establishing ready access to the Outdoors, permitting other Club members to visit, and by learning more about the Natural world themselves.

Special Rules: Characters can purchase the survival skill at half the normal cost. That is, for every skill point spent on the skill, the character's skill level goes up by two instead of one. Also, members have generous access to information and Outdoor gear through the society. Though requests generally should be made well in advance, even a request on short notice may yield some response.

A Typical Sierra Club Conversation:

Citizen: Eew, yuk. Get it away from me!

Sierra Clubber: But look how shiny its carapace is.

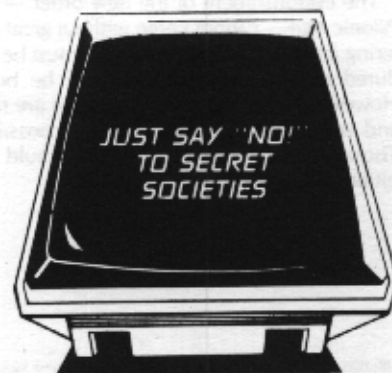
Citizen: I don't care, it's a disgusting slimy thing.

Sierra Clubber: No it's not, really. It's not slimy at all. Look at how he wiggles his little legs. See how brave he is?

Citizen: Squash it! Squash it!

Sierra Clubber: No! Isn't Nature serene and beautiful?

Citizen: Gah.





6. Slaps and Bennies

Alpha Complex is a utopia. It is a perfect society. It is perfect because everything is controlled, in its place.

Consider the *Pringle's* potato chip. It stacks neatly. It is identical to every other *Pringle's* potato chip. It is perfect. Who cares if it tastes like cardboard?

That's about how Alpha Complex is.

In order to ensure absolute conformity on the part of its citizens, The Computer provides a wide variety of both positive reinforcement for prosocial behavior, and negative reinforcement for antisocial behavior. Obviously, the constant threat of immediate termination is one of its most powerful tools to ensure appropriate behavior. Termination is, however, a drastic remedy, and something short of it is also required. The Computer needs minor ways to stick it to the PCs, and also rewards that are useless or annoying.

Bennies

Real rewards come in the form of promotions, skill points, and IOUs, about which see pages 76 and 18. But there are lots of other ways to reward players.

Official Commendations

A minor service to The Computer merits an official commendation, e.g.:

"Citizen! Well done! Your service to The Computer is rewarded. An Official Commendation has been entered in your Personal File, as a permanent record of your meritorious service. Again, well done. You have our heartiest congratulations."

A commendation is a good reason to reduce a citizen's treason point total by one.

Credit Bonuses

Credit bonuses are worth a chuckle or two, especially if you give a player a bonus for one action, then fine the credits right away for another. Also, note that higher-clearance characters can fine lower-clearance ones, and although The Computer won't always back them up, failing to obey a direct order from a superior is treason. Giving Joe-R 100 credits so Moe-Y can fine him 100 credits for dressing sloppily may be amusing.

Public Laudation

Wouldn't it be nice if The Computer interrupted the Teela O'Malley show to publicly thank you for your notable contribution to Alpha Complex? To be lauded as a hero before millions? For a picture of you to appear on the screen, shot from below so you look noble and heroic, your hair carefully styled? To be made



Internal Security enjoys unusual success with its latest innovations in rehabilitation technology.

an instant target for every Death Leopard and PURGER in the Complex? And what would your erstwhile companions (or their surviving clone siblings) think of your elevation to Hero of Alpha Complex? Perhaps they'd be just the teensiest bit jealous? How might that influence their actions during the next adventure?

Medication

The Computer is convinced that medication is the best way to manipulate the moods of its citizens. Every citizen is used to Wakeypills in the morning and Sleepypills at night.

If a citizen makes The Computer happy, The Computer might be motivated to make the citizen happy. That is, happier than he already is. *Much*. So happy, in fact, that he can hardly stand it. Or stand up. Or recognize a threat when he sees it. "Like, wow. You pulled a laser on me. Fantastic!"

Tickets, Appearances, Etc.

Perhaps The Computer would give someone who did it a notable service season tickets to the CompuGames, or the opportunity to appear on "Name My Treason" or "The Joe-B-BOB Talk Show". Perhaps he'd get a shiny, new customized hand laser (with "a few improvements by Research & Design"). Maybe

he'd get a year's supply of Cold Fun dessert, or vouchers for an unlimited quantity of Bouncy Bubble Beverage. How about his own personal petbot, or an execution voucher for the citizen of his choice?

Slaps

But it isn't all artificial peach flavor and processed non-dairy creamer in Alpha Complex. Negative reinforcement is sometimes required... uh, that is, *frequently* required. As a result, The Computer has developed a whole slew of punishments or corrective measures for offenses, minor and major.

Minor Offenses

A minor offense is a careless error in judgment that harms Alpha Complex, its citizens, The Computer, Computer property, or that threatens to weaken Alpha Complex's security against the ever-present Commie menace. The miscreant is assumed to have been well-intentioned and loyal, but careless; he therefore only requires a gentle reproof to set him back on the Path of Righteousness.

The consequences of a careless act are not as important as the intentions of the citizen. A little scratch on an autocar and the depopulation of an entire sector are roughly



equivalent crimes, so long as the citizen's intentions were above reproach, and the error in judgment was the result of haste, desperation, or innocent ignorance while earnestly serving The Computer and Alpha Complex. For example, if a citizen accidentally collapses a residential block while testing an R&D Gravitronic Ray device, well, he was just following orders. Reckless or premeditated crimes, on the other hand, receive harsher treatment (see below).

Public Censure

The citizen's offense is made public and other citizens are encouraged to gently chide the miscreant for his carelessness. Public announcements may be made over com units, loudspeakers, and public vidscreens, and the offender may be required to wear a sign or some other indication of his careless error.

"This citizen carelessly allowed his jumpsuit to become soiled. Shame! Encourage this thoughtless but earnest citizen to express a more diligent commitment to personal hygiene. Thank you for your cooperation."

Official Reprimand

An official reprimand means that a report of misconduct is entered in the citizen's Personal File (and that means a treason point). Generally some other minor punishment — restriction to quarters, marching up and down, polishing the High Programmer's Delta 88 AutoYacht, scrubbing the latrine, and so on — is also assigned. The offender may be put on probation, with the punishment held in reserve against any further errors in judgment, e.g.:

"Inexcusable, citizen DopeY. You knew that residence block was inhabited. You're on probation, with three daycycles of eating in the Infrared commissary if I catch you testing X-ray lasers in public corridors again."

Fines

Any citizen may assess fines against any lower clearance citizen. The charges and amount of the fine are immediately reported to The Computer, which must approve them before they become official. The most common fine is for damage to Computer property, and is generally assessed by the citizen who originally assigned the property. **Note:** Assessing excessive fines is a treasonous offense. Unfortunately there are no published guidelines for appropriate fines.

Here are a few examples of typical fines:

- dirty jumpsuit — 3 credits
- failing to protect a higher clearance citizen from discomfort — 10 credits
- malfunctioning laser pistol (obviously careless maintenance) — 200 credits
- careless use of incendiaries — 400 credits
- careless incineration of an Infrared citizen — 200 credits.

Serious Offenses

A serious offense is any deliberate and premeditated act that harms The Computer, Alpha Complex, or its loyal citizens. Sure evidence of premeditation is a pattern of repeated minor offenses; other evidence may come from eyewitness accounts, file reviews,

character witnesses, and so on. Whenever a citizen is suspected of treason (disloyalty to The Computer, Commie sympathies, mutant powers, membership in a secret society, etc.), but the evidence is insufficient to warrant termination, the citizen may be convicted of the serious offense of Suspected Treason.

The accused always has an opportunity to defend himself in a hearing before his superiors and The Computer (which reviews all charges of serious offenses). When Troubleshooters are on a mission, charges for serious offenses may be deferred until after the mission is completed, or, if the presence of the offender in the mission group may be a hazard to the success of the mission, a field hearing may be requested.

If the charges are deferred, the hearing usually follows the mission. If The Computer approves a field hearing, the ranking citizen present and The Computer preside over a brief and informal review of the charges, the evidence, and the statement of the accused. In either case, the Troubleshooters may be called upon to assist in detaining the accused for the hearing, and later may be requested to deliver a convicted offender to Internal Security for guidance and counseling (or, if treason is proved, to execute him summarily).

Here's a description of several corrective measures commonly scheduled for citizens convicted of serious offenses.

Drug Therapy

This is standard treatment if the team is on a mission and the convicted Troubleshooter cannot be readily replaced by a clone or other Troubleshooter. Biochemical supplements are prescribed and supervised by The Computer, happiness officer, or ranking Troubleshooter, subject to current availability of various drugs. If the citizen survives the biochemical supplements and the mission, additional corrective measures may be assigned during debriefing.

Retraining

This may be a simple training program in Corrective Loyalty, administered by HPD & Mind Control, and resulting in a reduction in the character's treason point total, accompanied perhaps by severe memory loss, hallucinations, or minor psychosis.

Or it may be a euphemism for major brainwashing. The gamemaster may take the player's character sheet, and return it to him, radically altered, at the beginning of the next session.

Demotion

A citizen may have his security clearance lowered, or he may be stripped of certain duties and privileges (mission leader, loyalty officer, safety supervisor, etc.). This is a common practice for admonishing power-trippers

and fractious subordinates and making them more tractable. It's amazing how a field demotion can improve a citizen's manners and temperament. For exceptional incompetence or poor performance, a citizen may be demoted to Infrared level — right out of the Troubleshooting business and back to the food vats and waste recycling.

Retirement

When a citizen fails an insanity check (see page 74), or when the stress of a mission causes a citizen to foam at the mouth and scabble around on all fours, he may be assigned to Permanent Recreation in HPD & Mind Control's Retirement Gulags. His clone is activated.

Note: Sometimes characters with psychotic tendencies get promoted rather than retired. The Computer works in mysterious ways.

Treason

For enemies of The Computer and Alpha Complex, there is only one appropriate corrective measure — termination. When sufficient evidence is produced to prove that an individual is a traitor, The Computer issues termination vouchers to Troubleshooters and dispatches them on Summary Execution missions: find the traitor and terminate him. The Computer may also make a public announcement calling upon all loyal citizens to aid in the apprehension and termination of the traitor, and offering bounties to stimulate enthusiastic cooperation — "Wanted, Dead or Alive! A 3000-Credit Bounty on Former Citizen Bill-Y-KYD-3, Traitor and Enemy of the People. Sic 'em. Thank You for Your Cooperation."

In its benevolence, The Computer often offers a convicted traitor a hearing in which he may confront the evidence against him. There's nothing The Computer loves more than dramatic televised confessions by remorse-stricken traitors. And public executions always get a 70-share of the prime-time vidscreen audience. So The Computer prefers that traitors be captured alive and returned for the stately workings of Computer-supervised justice when feasible.

Experienced Troubleshooters will tell you, however, that you often can't afford the luxury of taking traitors prisoner — particularly when the traitor is an armed Troubleshooter in your own mission group. Experienced Troubleshooters will also observe that you receive commendations for executing traitors, and that proving that someone is a traitor is a lot easier after you have terminated him, severely limiting his capacity to defend himself in a hearing.

The Computer does disapprove of summary executions without authorization, but if you can prove to The Computer's varying satisfaction that you were protecting The Computer, Alpha Complex, its citizens, and yourself (in that order of importance), you may get off with no more than a reprimand, and may even get a commendation and bonus. Which is a lot better than getting toasted by a traitor. (And a lot better than leaving living witnesses to your own indiscretions.)



PARANOIA

GAMEMASTER SECTION

Security Clearance ULTRAVIOLET.
Cleared for all Gamemasters.



The Rules



1. How to Use the Rules

Some games lecture you to pay strict and utter close attention to the rules. "Never deviate," they cry. "To alter one jot, one iota, one subjunctive clause of a tertiary rules case is to ruin the game, to place your campaign utterly beyond the pale."

"These rules are holy writ, handed down to you from on high by Big Game Company, Incorporated. The game is carefully balanced, every aspect tailored to ensure complete fairness and enjoyment. Alter one aspect, and the whole game is thrown out of kilter."

"If you dare to amend even the most minor detail, you are anathema! A heretic! You are no longer playing our game, but at most a foul variant thereof. Moreover, our lawyers will hunt you down and kill you."

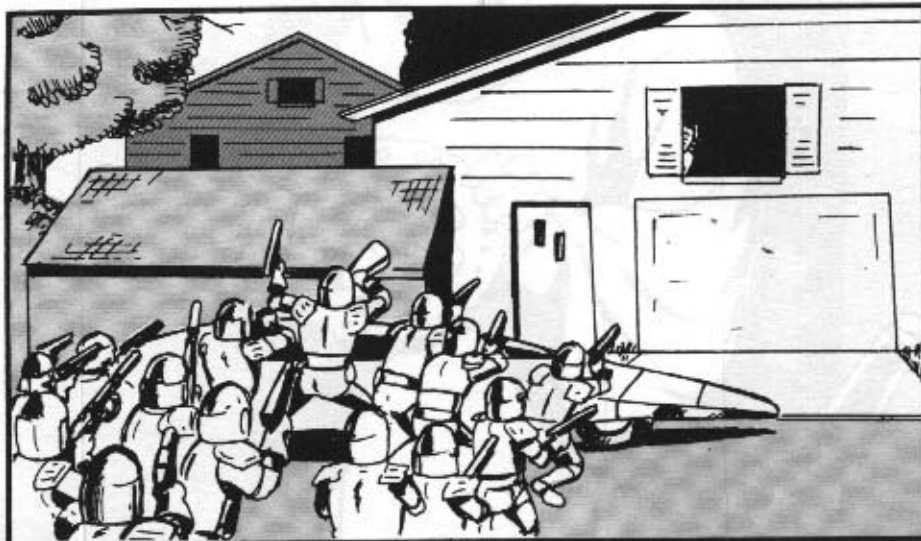
Here's what we think:

Rules are made to be broken.

The play's the thing. The gamemaster's job is to maintain tension and help the players tell a satisfying story — not to spend all his time looking things up on tables and making calculations. Go ahead — junk any rule you don't like, add anything that strikes your fancy; mutate, fold and spindle at will. Feel free to change your mind at whim. We provide rules to guide and help you in having a good time, and nothing more. If there's ever a conflict between having a good time and the rules, the rules had better give way.

Some players like to learn every little bit of the rules. They think this gives them power over the GM. When backed into a corner, they can always whine, "but I get a +1 modifier because..." They want you to make every roll where they can see it, so they can check and make sure you're doing it right.

Well, not in *Paranoia*! Not only are you specifically authorized to change anything you want, not only do we say "ignore any die-roll that detracts from dramatic appropriateness,"



"All right, Billy! This is the Game Police! We know you're ignoring the movement die roll modifiers. Come out with your hands up!"

but *learning the rules is treason*! Hey, they can read the rules all the want, but knowing them is a good way to get executed:

Player: But I'm at point-blank range, so I get a +4 modifier — so that means I hit.

Gamemaster: +4 modifier, huh? Citizen, where did you obtain this information?

Player: Huh? It's in the rules.

Gamemaster: Citizen. The rules are security clearance Ultraviolet. You are security clearance Red. For a citizen of security clearance Red to know data that is cleared only for Ultraviolets is trea...

Other Players: ZAPZAPZAPKAPOW.

Look, you're The Computer, the absolute dictator of a totalitarian society. Are you going to let some upstart player tell you what to do? Nosirree! The rules is what you say they

is. And if they don't like it, let 'em play *Tank Leader*.

In the rules below, you'll find some sections labeled "Optional." Given our cavalier attitude toward rules, you may wonder exactly what this means. What it means is this: some gamemasters like more detailed rules than others. Some "optional" rules add detail that's nice but not necessary to the game. Some are useful but a pain to remember. Use them when you like, and ignore them otherwise.

So, in summary:

1. Do whatever you want! It's your game, fella.
2. Rules are made to be broken. Warp 'em to your heart's content.
3. Don't put up with crap from your players.
4. All rules are optional, but some rules are more optional than others.



2. Attributes

Some humans are tragically limited in their native abilities. Civil servants, for example.

Other humans are endowed with great natural abilities. Game designers, for example.

Most humans are simply average, of course. And many humans are gifted in some areas, but limited in others.

In *Paranoia* the varied and contrasting ranges of human natural ability are represented by attributes. To tell if a character's genetic inheritance is magnificent, average, or lame, look

at his attribute numbers. A 13 or higher is relatively swell. An 8 or less is relatively pathetic. In between is — well, average.

The eight attributes in *Paranoia* are strength, agility, dexterity, endurance, moxie, chutzpah, mechanical aptitude, and power (see page 11).

When a character tries to do something governed by his innate bodily abilities, rather than by learned knowledge or skills, an attribute roll is made to determine whether he succeeds.

If an activity is not specifically covered by a skill, or if the activity depends more on native ability than acquired understanding and experience for its success, an attribute roll is required. For example, suppose a character wants to play a video game. There's no video game skill, nor does video gaming fit conveniently under any general skill, so you can make a dexterity roll. And when racing for the emergency exit, there's not much skill or finesse involved — the race goes to the swift.

What Attributes Govern

Make a **strength roll** when a character tries to:

- Lift something heavier than he is.
- Carry something heavier than he for more than a few feet.
- Break or bend an object which is difficult to break or bend (e.g., a bot, a malfunctioning cone rifle, etc.).
- Haul someone over a walkway.
- Etc.

Make an **agility roll** when a character tries to:

- Run quickly for short distances.
- Balance on a precarious perch.
- Jump a substantial distance.
- Perform any kind of "swashbuckling" maneuver such as leaping from a flybot to the back of a mammoth, swinging on a live power cable.
- Etc.

Make a **dexterity roll** when a character tries to:

- Do several things at once with his hands.
- Perform a delicate operation if he has no particular training in the relevant skills.
- Juggle several objects.
- Etc.

Make an **endurance roll** when a character tries to:

- Avoid passing out when incapacitated.
- Run over a long period of time or over great distances.
- Go without food, water or rest for an extended period of time.
- Avoid deleterious effects of massive doses of pharmaceuticals.
- Avoid whimpering when being treated by a docbot.
- Etc.

Make a **moxie roll** when a character tries to:

- Decipher abstruse mathematics without a reference.
- Notice something at a great distance.
- Notice an unusual scent or taste.
- Etc.

Make a **chutzpah roll** when a character tries to:

- Walk down a busy higher clearance corridor without being noticed.
- Goose a Vulture warrior and make him think someone else did it.
- Demand a refund for a shoddy item from PLC.
- Etc.

Make a **mechanical aptitude roll** when a character tries to:

- Examine and understand a device he's never seen before.
- Figure out how an electronic device works without a circuit diagram.
- Fix his chute, which failed to open when it should have, in the final ten seconds before impact.
- Etc.

Make a **power roll** when:

- A character tries to use his mutant power.
- If you need a "luck" roll — that is, none of the character's other skills or attributes seem to have any bearing on the problem at hand.

Difficulty

Whenever a character uses an attribute — or a skill, for that matter — the gamemaster should decide how easy or difficult the task is. If the task is particularly difficult, he should reduce the character's attribute or skill number before the roll is made; if particularly easy, he should increase it.

Difficulty isn't the only factor you should take into account when modifying a character's attribute numbers. The charm and relative wit of the player's presentation is important, too. The purpose of the game is to have fun, and if the player is being amusing, witty and intelligent, he should be rewarded. On the other hand, if he's being dull as dishwater, he must suffer the consequences. Those who contribute to others' enjoyment of the game triumph; dullards die. Here are some rules of thumb:

Difficulty:	Player Wit & Charm:	Attribute Modification:
easy	scintillating	x 2
normal	acceptable	no change
tough	unremarkable	x ½
difficult	dull	x ¼

Attributes and Skill Bases

Consider this: a character's agility is 15. That means his agility skill base is 4. So if he hasn't spent any skill points on a particular agility-based skill — neurowhip, say — his skill

number is 4. If he uses the skill, he's only got 4 chances out of 20 of doing so successfully.

But if he uses his agility to do something which no skill governs — balance on a high wire, for example — he rolls against his agility. That gives him 15 chances out of 20 of succeeding. Therefore, you'd rather *not* use your skills if you can avoid it. Right?

Wrong.

When no skill governs a particular action and a character has no training in how to perform it and is relying on his innate bodily abilities, his chances should be slim.

Unless an attribute is being used for something that is patently pretty easy, you should generally presume that the task is difficult, meaning the character's skill number is quartered.

So our character's agility of 15 would become 4.25, rounded to 4, before his high-wire roll would be made.

An Example

Boze-O, stalking a treasonous mutant, crawls along a one-meter-diameter service tunnel.

GM: Boze-O hears a noise behind him.

Player: Hmm. Boze-O is curious. He turns and looks.

GM: My, my. A ram-charged scrubbot bearing down at top speed. Not much room in the tunnel. Heh, heh.

Player: How nice.

GM: There's a service hatch ahead about 10 meters. How about an agility roll to scramble there before you get a ram-charged scrub job?

Player: Most cheerfully I scramble. (Rolls die.) Hello — "5". And my agility is 13. Made it with dignity.

GM: Ah. But the service hatch is closed. Do you want me to give you an estimate of the number of handles and latches, rounded



It's only a flesh wound.



to the nearest dozen? Time for a difficult dexterity roll, I think — a modifier of $\frac{1}{4}$ sounds right.

Player: Ahem. My dexterity is 8, Friend Gamemaster. (Rolls die.) Well, well. A "7".

GM: What a pity. Eight divided by four equals "wham"!

Attribute vs. Attribute

Often, a character uses one of his attributes in a contest with another character, instead of using it to affect an inanimate object. For example, in an arm-wrestling match, characters use their strength to try to overcome each other. This is called an *attribute vs. attribute* contest.

Roll a die for each character. Add each character's attribute to his die-roll. The higher total wins.

Example: Joe-R and Bob-Y arm wrestle. Joe-R's strength is 6; he rolls a 13, for a total score of 19. Bob-Y's strength is 12; he rolls a 9 for a score of 21. Bob-Y wins.

The gamemaster may modify one or both attributes to reflect an advantage or disadvantage. For example, if Bob were weak with hunger, you might reduce his strength by 3 before rolling.

Important Note: Remember that *low* rolls are normally good, but in a contest between two characters, *high* rolls are good.

Increasing Attributes (Optional)

Now, generally we feel that you shouldn't let players increase attributes. The whole point is that *skills* are learned and can be increased, while *attributes* are innate bodily things, and can't. However, there's always some smartass in the group who points out that if he goes to the gym every day for six months and exercises until all he can do is lie in a pool of sweat and twitch, he can increase his strength. Personally, we think unnecessary physical exertion is contrary to the laws of nature, but it's at least philosophically possible for this to happen. So here's how to deal with smartasses:

At any time, a character may submit a request to The Computer or to a superior in his service group for additional training and/or a

personal development program for himself and his clone family. The best time to submit such a request is after an especially successful mission, or after having rendered The Computer or Alpha Complex some special service.

Strength, endurance, agility, and dexterity are usually improved by special training courses offered by the Armed Forces. After several months of rigorous training (dodging shells, sparring with kung-fu-bots, etc.), a whole clone family may have improved one attribute by one point. Or maybe not. Or maybe they got worse. Or lost the function of both legs. Or maybe they suffer a nervous breakdown when they hear a loud noise.

Moxie, chutzpah, and mechanical attribute improvement programs are available through HPD and Mind Control's Education Department, where conventional instructional programs are supplemented by RNA injection, drug therapy, sleep training, and various other dangerous and unreliable educational technologies.

Often a character will come back from a six-week program with a one-point improvement in his moxie, chutzpah, or mechanical attribute. It happens all the time. Rumors of accidental deaths in the Educational Department are greatly exaggerated. It is not true that extensive loss of memory often accompanies biochemical education. And it's just not true that the improvements often disappear after a few months — along with various skills and motor functions. There's nothing to worry about. Trust us.

There is no training available for the power attribute. Except through the black market, and Psion and other secret societies. Which don't exist, and would certainly be treasonous if they did. IOUs and large cash payments are gratefully accepted in these non-existent training programs which either increase the power attribute by one point, or result in the mysterious disappearance of the character and his clone family, or in various other sinister side effects.

Occasionally R&D offers spectacular training and developmental programs involving experimental technologies: cyborging, brain-microchip interfaces, genetic engineering, reconstructive surgery, psychological conditioning, mutant engineering and so on. Often

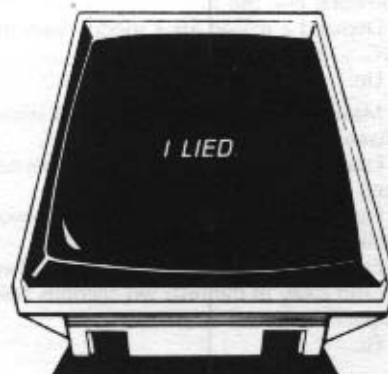
citizens will be volunteered for these programs as a way of granting a request for training and personal development. Incredible improvements are possible — attributes may increase dramatically. There are certain risks, of course. Aside from unappetizing cosmetic alterations (microprocessors protruding from the skull, extra arms and legs, massive prosthetics, monstrous deformities, and so on), the side effects of these experimental programs may alter or erase memory and motor functions, or the character's personality.

Incidentally, citizens are often assigned to training or personal development programs whether they request them or not. This may be The Computer's way of thanking a citizen for a job well done. Or telling a citizen he should get on the ball. Or punishing... er... rehabilitating a citizen for a treasonous act.

Interpreting Rolls (Optional)

Sometimes you want to know how *well* a player did something — whether he succeeded particularly well, or bungled particularly badly. Use the number rolled as an indication of performance. We don't want to get too bogged down in detail here; suffice it to say that a roll which is *much* lower than the attribute is a spectacular success, and a roll which is *much* higher is a spectacular failure.

Example: Sent on a mission into the Outdoors to recover Old Reckoning technology and return it to Alpha Complex, the PCs encounter a tribe of primitives who live in and worship a derelict "Carz-a-Poppin" car wash. Convinced that this giant mechanism holds some fantastic importance to Alpha Complex, Joe-R-BOB-3 frantically attempts to use his mechanical aptitude of 13 to repair it. His player rolls — a "1"! The gamemaster rules that not only does Joe-R-BOB get this ancient device to creak into motion, but that it begins cleaning everything about it with gay abandon. Primitives run shrieking, covered with suds and foam; giant brushes whip down from the ceiling and bowl PCs along the floor; water and soap spray everywhere. Joe-R is made into a god by the primitives. Or maybe burned at the stake. You decide.





3. Skills

All characters can use all the skills in the game (see page 14). A character has a skill number with each skill between 0 and 20. When a character uses a skill, his player (or the gamemaster) rolls the die; if the number rolled is less than or equal to his skill number, he succeeds. However, a roll of 1 is an automatic success and a roll of 20 is an automatic failure.

Difficulty

As with attributes, a character's skill number may be modified if the task he's performing is especially easy or tough — or if the player is being especially amusing or a pain in the neck. The modifications suggested on page 55 apply to skill as well as attribute rolls.

In some skill descriptions (see below), we suggest circumstances which would make using a skill easier or more difficult. If the situation makes using a skill easy, increase the user's skill number appropriately — doubling is common, but increase the skill number by more or less, as you feel appropriate. Again, when the situation makes using a skill tough, it is common to halve the skill number, but modify as you wish.

As always, don't hesitate to modify skill numbers in accordance with the player's charm.

Roleplay It Out

In many cases, a skill can be used to resolve a situation which really ought to be roleplayed. For example, if a character is trying to get the IntSec sector supervisor to authorize him to carry a tactical nuclear device, you may want to take the role of the supervisor and haggle with the player. Don't let the player get away with saying, "Well, I, uh, use my bootlicking skill." Tell him he's got to whine and cajole.

Make the skill roll yourself, surreptitiously, and let the numbers you roll affect the outcome of the contest. However, also take into account how well the player flatters, and how sickeningly he debases himself: if he does a particularly good or bad job, modify his bootlicking roll accordingly.

In general, roleplaying a situation is more satisfying — and interesting — than simply making skill rolls. In some circumstances, you won't have a choice, however; sometimes a player's character is much better at something than the player himself. (Joe might be a terrible bootlicker, but his character has a high bootlicking skill.) In this case, let the skill rolls mean more and the roleplaying mean less.

Agility Skills

All agility skills are combat skills — see pages 62 through 66 for more detail.

Force Sword: The ability to use force swords in combat (see combat rules).

Grenade: The ability to use grenades (see 82).

Neurowhip: The ability to use neurowhips in combat.

Primitive Melee Weapon: The ability to use primitive weapons like knives, swords, maces, hockey sticks, baseball bats and blenders in combat. Also allows their fabrication from natural materials (like making a club from a two-by-four).

Truncheon: The ability to use truncheons, clubs or a sock full of ball bearings in combat.

Unarmed: The ability to use hands, feet, and teeth in combat.

Chutzpah Skills

Most chutzpah skills are used when a character wants something from another character — bootlicking when grovelling to a superior, interrogation when torturing a captive, and so on. These skills can only be used against non-player characters; a player character's bootlicking skill roll has no effect on another player character. To get something from another player character, the player must persuade the other player himself. Note that the only chutzpah skill that is effective against robots and computers is spurious logic.

Bootlicking: This skill is used to influence superiors by fawning and grovelling. Overt displays of eagerness to please and acceptance of authority may be insincere, but must be convincing.

Make a skill roll when a citizen tries to solicit a favor from or avoid the wrath of a citizen of higher clearance. Success indicates that the groveller has made a good impression; whether the favor is granted or the wrath avoided depends on the circumstances, but the groveller at least gets the benefit of the doubt. Failure means the groveller has made a poor impression, that no favor is forthcoming, that wrath will fall unabated or even intensified on the groveller, and that the superior has contempt and distaste for the groveller.

Bribery: Warning! Warning! This is a prohibited activity! Offenders may face summary execution! Bootlicking only works with superiors and intimidation (see below) with inferiors, but bribery works with everyone. Well,

everyone except fanatics, or when The Computer's monitors are looking. Of course, it's also treason.

It also has the major drawback that you need something to bribe with. If you ask The Computer to transfer 10,000 credits from your account to another citizen's, The Computer may want to know why. Sure, you could go to a money machine and take away 10,000 credits in little plastic tokens, but it's hard to slip someone 20 kilograms of plastic surreptitiously. Weapons, drugs or other items of value may prove more useful.

When a character tries to bribe someone, make a skill roll. Modify the user's skill number according to his finesse and persuasiveness, and according to the value of the bribe offered. Other factors might be the fanaticism of the target, the chances of detection, and how much danger accepting the bribe puts the target in.

Con: This skill is used to convince someone to perform an act that is not in his own best interests. If it fails, the victim is usually convinced that the user is slime and not to be trusted under any circumstances.

A con relies on the victim's acceptance of false logic or information and his belief that he can trust the player character. In this way, it is different from the fast talk skill (see below). When someone is conned, he is at least temporarily satisfied that the conner is his friend. When someone is fast talked, he is not convinced, but rather confused and uncertain enough to hesitate while the fast talker gets away with something. The victim of a fast talker knows he's been duped; if a con is successful, its victim may never suspect.

Often, getting a victim to do what you want means making several con skill rolls. For example, suppose a Troubleshooter meets someone who knows the location of a cache of ancient magnetic tapes. The Troubleshooter wants to persuade the citizen to: 1, put down his gun, 2, cooperate, and 3, lead the PCs to the magnetic tapes. That requires the citizen to make three separate decisions; three con rolls must be made. If, say, the second roll failed, the citizen would balk, and might simply refuse to help, flee, or try to snatch up his gun and fight.

Modify the user's skill favorably if his target has good reason to be trusting, or if it would be in his best interest to cooperate; modify the skill number downwards if the reverse is true.

Fast Talk: This skill is used to confuse a victim enough that he'll hesitate while the fast talker acts. For example:

Troubleshooter: Hi, how are you, nice daycycle, hey hey?



Guard: Whaddaya want?

Troubleshooter: Hey, why so unfriendly, gotta keep smiling, you know, what's the Complex coming to, anyway? Hey, I got orders from Comp-U-SRV himself to visit my buddy, my buddy's waiting for me in there, I'll be just a sec, no prob, right? Keep smiling, that's what I say. (Waltzes around barrier and into room.)

Guard: Hey, you can't go in there! HEY!

Someone who is fast talked hesitates out of uncertainty and indecision in the face of a high-pressure verbal assault. He rapidly overcomes his indecision, and resents being manipulated. The fast talker must act quickly and decisively to do what he wants.

Modify the user's skill number if his target has particular reason to trust or distrust the user, is of higher or lower clearance, or has strict orders to prevent exactly what the fast talker wants.

Forgery: *Warning! Warning! This is a prohibited activity! Offenders may face summary execution!*

This skill allows the user to produce or alter forms, authorizations, identifications, and records that pass casual scrutiny.

When a citizen tries to pass a doctored document, make a skill roll. Success means the document is passed. Failure means that some incorrect detail immediately reveals the document as a forgery, or results in a more careful examination and check of the document's validity.

Increase the user's skill number if the document is given only a cursory inspection; if it is easily forged (e.g., a typewritten letter rather than a dollar bill); and if the user has plenty

of time and the right tools to do a good job. Decrease it if the document is closely examined; if it is difficult to forge; and if the user is short on time and tools.

Interrogation: This skill is used to extract information from uncooperative prisoners who have already resisted intimidation (which see). Interrogation supplements intimidation with torture. Of course, those eager to get on with the torture may be forgiven for skipping the intimidation phase.

During interrogation, the victim suffers a wound and the gamemaster makes a skill roll for the interrogator. If the skill roll fails, the victim lapses into unconsciousness. He may be revived an hour or so later, when interrogation may resume. A second failed interrogation roll results in incapacitation and death if not treated.

If the interrogation skill roll succeeds, make an endurance roll for the victim. If he succeeds, he may do any one of three things: 1, refuse to speak, 2, tell his interrogator the truth, or 3, tell his interrogator a lie. If he lies, use the victim's con skill to determine whether the interrogator believes him.

If the victim fails his endurance roll, he tells his interrogator whatever he thinks the interrogator wants to hear. His only goal is to get the interrogator to stop torturing him. If telling the truth is likely to end the interrogation, he tells the truth. If confessing to a crime is likely to end the interrogation, he'll confess, volubly and in great detail.

By the way, "interrogation" is the skill used for crude field interrogations. IntSec has much more sophisticated techniques involving drugs, brain scans, and other stuff. These techniques

are more effective, but tend to leave their victims useless for anything other than smiling mindlessly and drooling a lot. Only non-player characters have access to IntSec interrogation labs, as this is a game about fear and ignorance, not about sadism.

Intimidation: This skill is used to extort favors or cooperation from inferiors — kind of the reverse side of bootlicking. It generally involves the ruthless display of power and authority. Verbal flourishes may be effectively reinforced by squads of goons, large bore weapons, or the looming presence of The Computer. Make a skill roll when a character wants something from a security clearance inferior. If he succeeds, his target gulps and leaps to. If he fails, the target is surly and uncooperative. Increase the user's skill number for large-caliber weapons, direct orders from The Computer or other demonstrations of might. Decrease it if he's asking his subordinate to violate orders or do something particularly hazardous.

Motivation: Characters use this skill to assess the interests and desires of others. A successful skill roll means the character is more likely to choose an appropriate bribe, or take the right line when bootlicking, intimidating, conning or fast talking. On the other hand, a failed roll means the character has come to the wrong conclusions, making his attempt more difficult. Increase or decrease the character's other skill roll accordingly.

Oratory: Characters use this skill to rally and direct a group of non-player characters using rhetoric and demagoguery. It involves mob psychology and is useless with small groups (3 or less).



A traitor receives bonuses to his intimidation skill roll.



Have the player using the skill make a speech to the NPCs. Then, make a skill roll for him, modifying his skill number according to the persuasiveness and emotional power of his speech. A successful roll means they'll take one important action at his direction.

Psychescan: This skill is used to read the body language of a character and to get hints of his emotional and psychological state. This may suggest whether he's lying, whether he feels guilty about something, whether he trusts the character, and so on.

When a player asks about a non-player character's emotions, expression or tone of voice, make a psychescan skill roll. If it succeeds, give him an idea what the NPC is thinking or feeling. This skill only gives general impressions, and imparts only the kind of information you can get by observing someone.

If the character's skill roll fails, the gamemaster can either tell the player he doesn't notice anything in particular, or impart completely false information. "Yes, you're absolutely convinced that James-B-GUD is telling the complete God's honest truth."

Spurious Logic: Robots and computers are logical devices, not swayed by appeals to emotion or greed. To get a bot to do something it finds unreasonable or illogical, a character must justify his request with spurious logic. This means getting it to accept false principles, then building a chain of logical reasoning from incorrect data.

What this means is that you don't use bootlicking or intimidation to deal with bots — you use spurious logic. (The Computer, being much more complicated and deranged than a normal bot, is somewhat susceptible to bootlicking and other emotional appeals. See "Tips for Traitors" beginning on page 25 for examples.)

The gamemaster should ask the player what his character says to the bot or computer, then make a skill roll. Modify the character's skill number depending on how logical, reasonable and persuasive his argument is. If the roll succeeds, the bot does as asked. Otherwise, it refuses, and may report the character to The Computer.

Dexterity Skills

All dexterity skills are combat skills — see pages 62 through 66.

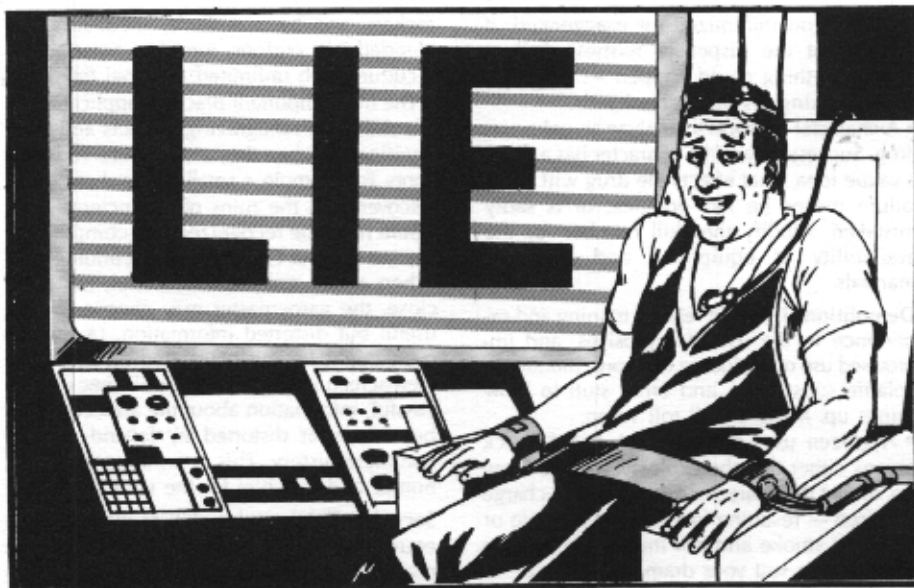
Energy Weapons: How to use and repair energy and sonic pistols and rifles.

Field Weapons: How to use and repair flamethrowers, gauss guns, tangles, stun guns, plasma rifles and hand flammers.

Laser Weapons: How to use and repair laser pistols and rifles.

Primitive Missile Weapons: How to use and repair bows, throwing knives and rocks. Allows their fabrication from natural materials.

Projectile Weapons: The use and repair of slughthrowers, automatic slughthrowers, cone rifles, iceguns, and needleguns.



Vehicle Aimed Weapons: Using and repairing aimed weapons mounted on vehicles, including laser cannons, tube cannons, sonic blasters, wave-motion guns and other esoteric devices.

Vehicle Field Weapons: Using and repairing more vehicle-mounted weapons, including smoke generators, chaff-casters, gaussers and other neat stuff.

Vehicle Launched Weapons: Using and repairing yet more vehicle-mounted weapons, including drop tubes, missile racks and gas throwers.

Mechanical Skills

Habitat Engineering: This skill involves knowledge and understanding of Alpha Complex's life support systems — including air and water circulation, waste removal, communications, power and transport. Make a skill roll when:

- A character tries to fix a malfunctioning part of one of these systems. A successful roll means he's fixed it. Modify his skill number for the difficulty of the task, the amount of time available, and the presence or absence of appropriate tools.

- A player wants to know something about one of these systems — e.g., if there's a ventilation shaft nearby he can use to escape; whether a particular room or corridor can be reached without alerting its guards; etc. A successful roll means the character knows the answer to the question.

Robot Operation and Maintenance: This is actually five separate skills, one each for the five most common bot types in Alpha Complex (docbots, guardbots, jackobots, scrubots and vehicle autopilots). Make a skill roll when:

- A character gives a bot an order. If the roll succeeds, the bot understands the order and carries it out as intended. If it fails, the bot

either doesn't understand at all, or misunderstands the order.

- A character attempts to repair a bot. A successful roll means the bot is repaired. Modify for availability of tools, time, etc.

- A character attempts to sabotage a bot. Again, modify for availability of tools and time.

Vehicle Operation and Maintenance: This is actually five skills, one for the five main vehicle types in Alpha Complex — autocars, crawlers, flybots, copters, and vulturecraft. Make a skill roll when:

- A character performs a difficult maneuver while driving a vehicle. Modify the character's skill number for the difficulty of the maneuver, the state of the vehicle, and his own mental and physical condition. A failed roll may mean an accident.

- A player wants to know about a vehicle's capabilities. A successful roll means the character knows the fact in question. "Yup. This model flybot is equipped with emergency eject."

- A character attempts to repair a vehicle. Modify his skill number for time and tools available, difficulty of repair, and so on.

- A character attempts to booby-trap a vehicle, or check to see whether it is booby-trapped.

Moxie Skills

Biochemical Therapy: This skill involves the understanding of biochemical supplements commonly used in Alpha Complex to alter mood, thought, and physical capacities. Make a skill roll when:

- A character requests drugs from The Computer. Success means the diagnosis is approved and drugs distributed; otherwise, the request is denied.

- A character dispenses drugs. Success means the proper dose is selected, effects are properly understood, and harmful side effects are an-



ticipated and minimized (or exaggerated, if that's what the dispenser wishes). Failure means anything could happen — the drug-taker is taking his life in his hands.

- A character attempts to analyze an unknown drug. Success means the character has at least a vague idea what effects the drug will have; failure means he has no idea, or is sadly mistaken. Modify the skill number for the availability of equipment and reference manuals.

Demolition: This skill reflects training and experience in the use of explosives, and improvised use of exploding weapons, munitions, volatile substances, and other stuff to blow things up. Make a skill roll when:

- A citizen uses explosives. A failed check means either that the explosives fail to blow up, or that the character misjudged the charge required — resulting in excessive damage or a puff of smoke and not much effect. Tailor the result to suit your dramatic purpose.
- A citizen attempts to defuse an explosive device. A failed result means it blows up — whether or not he has time to run is up to you.

Medical: Knowledge of diagnosis, treatment, and surgery. Can be used to sterilize wounds, ease pain, prevent incapacitated characters from dying, etc.

Normally, injured characters are hospitalized, where The Computer's gentle care invariably ensures recovery in a matter of weeks. However, when isolated from Alpha Complex or when care is not immediately available, the use of the medical skill is required.

When a wounded character is treated by a character with medical skill, make one skill roll per day. A successful roll means the wound is healed. If the skill roll fails, make an endurance roll for the wounded character; failure means his wound worsens, and he becomes incapacitated.

Similarly, when an incapacitated character is treated, make a medical skill roll once per hour. Success means the character is healed to wounded status. If the skill roll fails, make an endurance roll; failure means the character dies.

Modify the medical skill number for availability of supplies (antibiotics, sterile bandages, surgical equipment) and conditions.

Old Reckoning Cultures: *Warning! Warning! This skill is classified Blue! Knowledge of Old Reckoning cultures by any citizen of a lower security clearance constitutes treason!*

This skill allows a character to use his knowledge of Old Reckoning cultures to interpret artifacts, ruins, and cultural survivals in the primitive cultures of the Outdoors. Unfortunately, knowledge of the real history of the Outdoors is interwoven with myth and legend. Since knowledge of real history is treasonous, most of the information about the past has been handed down orally, and has suffered considerable distortion in the process. Prominent in this part-mythology/part-history are elements of pop culture from the middle and late 20th century: film, television, music, and life styles. Aspects of different periods are mixed higgledy-piggledy: beach movies, punk

rockers, and transcendental meditation are blended in a curious, romantic nostalgia for a culture with unlimited personal freedom.

The most important practical application of this skill is in recognizing artifacts and their significance when they are encountered Outdoors. For example, a small personal computer discovered in the ruins of an ancient home would never be recognized as a computer by anyone without Old Reckoning cultures skill. When a skill roll is unsuccessful, but fairly close, the gamemaster may choose to give useful but distorted information. (A toaster-oven might be misinterpreted as a form of view-screen.) Even when the skill check is successful, information about the artifact should be somewhat distorted by legend and incomplete history. This is an opportunity for humor and mischief for the gamemaster.

Security: Think of this skill as the high-tech equivalent of "lockpicking;" it does allow a character to pick locks, but also to defeat electronic locks and alarm systems, penetrate a security perimeter, tap into secure communications channels, and so on.

Make a skill roll when a character attempts to establish security around a physical location, set of data, or person, or to break through such security. Generally, a successful roll means the character has succeeded. However, when player characters are involved on both sides, you may prefer to resolve the situation as a "security skill-vs.-security skill" contest. Modify the character's skill number for the difficulty of the task, the tightness of security, and the availability of tools and time.

Stealth: This skill is used both to hide, and to detect hidden things. When a character hides, make a stealth roll for him; success means he is not detected unless a real search is mounted. Failure means he is immediately spotted by any observer.

When a character attempts to detect hidden objects, a successful skill roll means he has done so. When a character uses his stealth skill to try to spot a character using stealth to hide, resolve the conflict as a "stealth-skill-versus-stealth-skill" contest.

A character can also use stealth to move quietly or avoid observation in a crowd.

Modify a character's skill number for the circumstances — obviously, someone standing in the center of a spotlight's beam is going to find it much harder to hide than someone buried in bushes and dressed in camouflage.

Surveillance: Think of this as the high-tech equivalent of "tailing." It allows a character to follow someone unnoticed, but also to install and detect bugging devices, and use monitoring systems to observe, clandestinely or openly, target individuals, locations or devices.

Make a skill roll when a character checks for bugs, installs bugs, follows a target, and so on. A failure means bugs are not found, or the target may have noticed the surveillance. If there is a chance that the target may have noticed that he is under surveillance, make a surveillance skill roll for the target; success means he has caught on, while failure means he has not noticed his observer's slip.

Modify the skill number depending on whether the target expects to be the target of surveillance, the availability of equipment, and so on.

Survival: Most citizens of Alpha Complex have never seen a tree, a body of open water, or an animal larger than a cockroach. Surviving in the Outdoors is a skill which takes some time to master. The survival skill encompasses all aspects of dealing with the wilderness — knowledge of plants, animals, terrain, navigation, weather, and so forth — Boy Scout Handbook stuff.

Make a skill roll whenever a citizen faces a critical challenge from Nature, for example when:

- Swimming with bulky electronic gear.
- Crossing a river gorge on an improvised bridge of lashed saplings.
- Looking for wild food (dysentery, anyone? nice, tasty mushrooms?).
- Dealing with cold and hot weather.
- Making friends with woodland creatures (yellowjackets, rattlesnakes, and skunks, to name a few).

Engineering Skills

As a general rule, these skills are used in two ways: to operate the equipment and technologies associated with the specific fields listed (biosciences, chemical, electronic, mechanical or nuclear); and when a player wants to know what his character knows about a particular field.

When a player asks for information, make a skill roll for the relevant field. If the skill roll succeeds, give the player the information requested. Of course, modify skill numbers for the difficulty of the task and the obscurity of the information.

Also make skill rolls when a character tries to operate, repair or sabotage a device associated with a particular type of engineering.

Player: Oh my God. What do I know about nuclear power plants?

GM: What's your nuclear skill?

Player: Urrgh. Six. I don't suppose I know how to shut this thing down?

GM: Why don't you make a skill roll?

Player: Uh. Sure. (Clatter.)

GM: Well, what did you roll?

Player: I'm not going to tell you.

GM: C'mon, c'mon.

Player (Hides eyes.): Twenty.

GM: Aha. Well, you seem to recall something about graphite rods. That's it, yeah, to shut down the reactor you've got to pull those graphite rods all the way out of the nuclear pile. Something like that, anyway.

Player: Urrgh. Uh, is there a control for the graphite rods nearby?

GM: Why; now that you mention it, there sure is. What was your clone number?

Biosciences: Deals with biological science and technology — experimental drugs, genetic engineering, cyborging, etc.

Chemical: Deals with chemistry — explosives, gases, photography, batteries, stuff like that.



Electronic: Deals with electronic devices — robots, computers, microwave ovens, solid state TVs, and so on.

Mechanical: Deals with purely mechanical systems — elevators, coffee pots, bicycles, etc.

Nuclear: Deals with fission and fusion plants, nuclear earth-moving devices, Orion-style space drives, and other neat things.

Computer Skills

Data Analysis: This skill permits a character to submit a problem to The Computer along with all the relevant data. The Computer analyzes the problem in terms of the character's statement of the problem, the data it has been given by the character, and the data that it has which may not be available to the character. The Computer then delivers an analysis, breaking down possibilities by percent chance of likelihood.

Examples: "Computer, given the serial number of this weapon round and the odd ticking noise issuing from it, what is our best course of action?" or "Given the charred condition of the bot, evaluate these courses of action: A. deactivate and abandon bot; B. scrub bot's sensors and continue mission; C. dismantle bot and run full diagnostic program with resultant delay in mission."

Using this skill depends primarily on clever and logical player problem-solving, particularly in choosing and framing the right questions. A successful skill roll means accurate and useful information. An unsuccessful one means useless or misleading information. For example:

The Question: Friend Computer! Data analysis, please. What happened to Mission Group 16, and why did they not return to Alpha Complex?

The Skill Roll: Fails.

The Computer's Response: Break down of probabilities:

- Probability One — (Classified): 65%
- Probability Two — (Classified): 23%
- Probability Three — They met with overwhelming opposition from traitors: 10%
- Probability Four — They are lost: 2%

The Computer's Thinking: Here's what is really going on in the mind of The Computer. There is a 65% chance that the Troubleshooters have killed each other in a typical *Paranoia* snafu and bloodbath. There is a 23% chance that the area in question is inhabited by traitors, and that some or all of the Troubleshooters have joined the traitors. The Computer suppresses these unpleasant details to avoid frightening the character (and to avoid giving him unhealthy ideas).

Fear and ignorance.

Data Search: This skill is used to retrieve information from data bases, find poorly catalogued information, evade security clearance restrictions on information, etc.

Make a skill roll when a character requests information directly through Computer terminals or data links. Requesting information from The Computer requires no skill, but requesters are often given a run-around, an un-

cooperative information research technician, or "Sorry, that information is not available at this time."

Modify the skill number when the character requests information of a higher clearance than he, or information that has been malevolently or accidentally mis-filed.

Also make skill rolls when a character tries to subtly but legally bypass security restrictions (e.g., when hunting for cross-references which someone neglected to classify), or to conceal traces of his research efforts (e.g., registering research under another citizen's name; concealing private research as legitimate mission research). A failed roll means The Computer becomes suspicious and the character is awarded a treason point.

Computer Programming: *Warning! Warning! This skill is classified Ultraviolet! Use or knowledge of this skill at lower clearances is treason, and is punishable by summary execution!*

Make a skill roll when attempting to alter Computer data files, commands, mission objectives, operating procedures, and so forth, through direct keyboard or verbal input. Failure means the alteration has failed. If the operation the character is attempting is treasonous, he must also make a computer security skill roll; if he fails that roll, his alteration is detected by The Computer, High Programmers, or Internal Security. Modify skill numbers for availability of time and reference manuals.

Computer Security: *Warning! Warning! This skill is classified Ultraviolet! Use or knowledge of this skill at lower clearances is treason, and is punishable by summary execution!*

This skill allows a character to evade security alarms and monitoring when altering The Computer's programming.

Make a skill roll when programming The Computer and trying to avoid detection. Success means no trace is left of the character's tampering. Failure means the tampering is detected, alarms may have sounded, and Internal Security may be on its way.

The skill can also be used to retrieve information restricted to higher security clearances from The Computer. Success means information is retrieved and is not presently being monitored. Failure means the attempt has failed, and may have triggered alarms.

Communist Propaganda

Warning! Warning! Knowledge or use of this skill is treason! Knowledge that this skill exists is treason! Possession by any citizen of any clearance whatsoever is treason!

Unlike all other skills, Communist propaganda is not governed by an attribute. All characters begin with a Communist propaganda skill level of 0.

The Communist propaganda skill is so treasonous that it is not printed on the character sheet. When a character learns it, he should note this and his skill level on the back (private) side of his sheet.

A character may learn it from other characters with the skill — whether or not he

wants to learn it. Here's how it works:

The victim must listen to or read the propaganda expounded by the skilled propagandist. This must continue for at least five rounds. The victim may listen voluntarily, or may be restrained and forced to listen, or may be made cooperative with drugs, or may be conned, fast talked, or intimidated into listening. At the end of five rounds, the propagandist makes a skill roll. If the roll is successful, the victim learns the Communist propaganda skill at level 1. Successive uses of the skill can increase the victim's skill level, but his level can never be increased to a higher number than that possessed by the propagandist.

Only the victim knows whether the propaganda attempt was successful. The gamemaster will tell him by note or in a private conference.

The victim need not ever use the skill if he doesn't want to. If he is loyal to The Computer, he may refuse ever to think about Communist propaganda again, or perhaps he will feel compelled to report himself (and the propagandist) to The Computer for treasonous acts. However, if interrogated, he may be forced to reveal that he knows Communist propaganda — treason sufficient to warrant immediate execution. The possibilities for extortion are left as an exercise for the interested student.

Note that an unsuccessful attempt to use this skill means the victim receives incontrovertible evidence of the propagandist's treason. This makes using Communist propaganda extremely dangerous, but being a Commie in Alpha Complex is a risky business.

Treasonous Skills

Bribery and Forgery: Any character may know these skills and spend skill points to increase his skill value with them. However, using them is always treason.

Old Reckoning Cultures: This skill is classified Blue. All characters have it at their moxie skill base level, since everyone has heard rumors about the Old Reckoning. However, characters may not spend skill points to increase their skill level unless they are of Blue clearance or higher, or belong to a secret society (48 or 50) that teaches the skill to its members. Displaying any knowledge of Old Reckoning cultures at a security clearance of Green or below is treason, and punishable by summary execution.

Computer Programming and Security: These skills are classified Ultraviolet. They follow the same rules as Old Reckoning cultures, except that only characters of Ultraviolet clearance and members of certain secret societies (see page 43) may spend skill points on them. Knowledge or use by any citizen of security clearance Violet or below is treason.

Communist Propaganda: This skill is so treasonous it isn't even printed on the character sheets. Knowledge or possession of this skill, by a citizen of any security clearance right up to Ultraviolet, inclusive, is treason.



4. Combat

"It's not that they die, but that they die like sheep."

— T. S. Eliot, "The Wasteland"

The Dramatic Tactical System

Paranoia is a fast-paced, action-packed, emotionally engaging roleplaying game.

[Choral Response: Hoorah!]

Other roleplaying games have detailed, complexly abstract, elaborately sequenced combat systems.

[Choral Response: Zzzzz...]

Complex combat is all very nice, but it gets in the way of *Paranoia*'s fast, tense, and furious atmosphere.

Ergo, *Paranoia* uses the brilliantly conceived, original, and eminently superior Dramatic Tactical Combat System — a simple combat system that relies on flexible rules, common sense, dramatic necessity, and the wise and unfettered will of the gamemaster.

For radical and free-spirited gamemasters, the basic combat system provides the ultimate in fast and furious action. For more traditional roleplaying gamers — particularly those coming from a wargaming tradition — the optional combat rules provide more detail and guidelines for combat resolution. And all gamemasters are encouraged to regard the "rules" as "guidelines," and to consider the dictates of common sense and dramatic necessity as having precedence when making any judgment.

You see, in *Paranoia*, it's not so much a question of whether a character gets killed in com-

bat. It's assumed he's gonna get killed — sooner or later — the only question is, exactly how is he gonna get it?

And who needs a lot of detailed rules for that?

Keep the Action Moving!

Paranoia's fast pace is exciting because the players are constantly kept at a high level of tension. Tension dissipates when you let players spend long minutes contemplating positions, carefully considering tactics and applicable rules, and debating the next move. That is time-consuming, boring, and unrealistic. In a real combat situation, you're lucky if you have enough time to be afraid, let alone time to study your next move.

Don't Give Them Time to Think!

Set the scene with a minimum of detail, telling only what is absolutely necessary to the action.

GM: You enter the room. There are two desks and one other door. Two traitors leap up from behind the desks and spray you with bullets. What do you do?

Don't let a player ruminate. Each combat round represents five seconds, and there's not much time for ruminating in five seconds. If a player hesitates, his character hesitates. If a player says, "Wait, I'm thinking..." that's just what his character is doing, too... while the bad guys pepper him with slugs. Quick thinking is what counts in *Paranoia* combat.

Reward Flamboyance and Wit

Paranoia should have the feel of a movie, not a wargame. *Paranoia* combat shouldn't be realistic — it should be dramatic, like movie combat. Exceptionally heroic, cowardly, bizarre, or extravagant actions should generally succeed (though probably not the way the player expected them to — a regular perverse twist is an effective deterrent to player abuse).

Kill the Bastards!

Don't be afraid to kill characters in *Paranoia*. The world of *Paranoia* is unimaginably deadly, teeming with traitors, enemies, lunatics, defective devices, lethal environmental hazards, and your best buddy The Computer. If a character gets dead, let him be dead — there are no last-minute saves, no divine intervention in *Paranoia*. And besides, his identical clone is right back in the lineup before you can say "baked traitor." Kill them. Kill them all.

Don't worry. You'll get used to it. In fact, it's kind of alarming how quickly you adapt to this sort of gala horror — the indomitable human spirit and all that. Pip, pip. Cheerio.

In Summary:

1. Keep the action moving!
2. Don't give them time to think!
3. Reward flamboyant and witty thinking!
4. Kill the bastards!
5. And, above all, keep the action moving!

A Modest Example

Nothing more effectively expresses the spirit of *Paranoia* than an example:

GM: Right. You walk down the narrow, V-shaped corridor area. Natives would call it a gully. The sides are steep-sloped. The bottom is full of heavy brown lumpy stuff and pools of icky fluid. Some green stuff sticks up here and there. Suddenly, from above you to the left, comes a strange ululating sound. Fred — what do you do?

Fred: Huh? What is 'ululating'?

GM: Hooting and wailing. What do you do?

Fred: Well... (long thoughtful pause)

GM: Right. And you, Martha?

Martha: I try to identify the sound and where it's coming from.

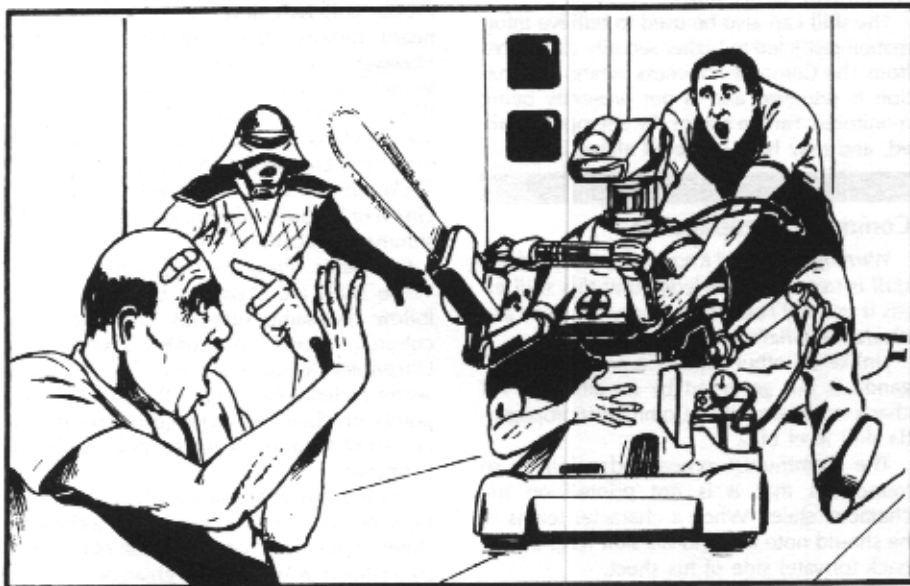
GM: George?

George: I get my laser ready and I dive behind a rock...

GM: Ahem...

George: Eh? Oh. Behind a brown thing, thank you. I hide and prepare to blast things.

GM: Okay. George is behind the brown thing. Martha, it sounds sorta like humans to you,



Alert Troubleshooters discover flaw in docbot's programming.



but they're yelling something like "Ooga booga." Fred, you stand thoughtfully. Six naked guys with pointy things come zooming over the slope and dash down at you. Fred...?

Fred: What do these guys look like?

GM: Right. Martha?

Martha: I yank out a grenade, lob it at them, and duck for cover.

GM: George?

George: I cover Martha.

GM: Fine. Fred, they look like insane naked citizens. They're brandishing long pointy things. Their hair is matted and they look dirty. They're yelling and gesturing unpleasantly. One is about to stick his pointy thing in your chest.

Martha, roll the die. (Clatter.) Pity. The grenade misses, bounces, and rolls back down the hill. Hmm. Right in front of Fred, in fact.

George, you see one of them throwing a spear at Martha, so you zap him. Roll the die. Wheel! Bullseye...ehr...botseye, I guess. Let me check the Damage Table... Bingo, he goes down like a poleaxed steer. Fred?

Fred: Say, this is going too...

GM: Right. Martha?

Martha: (Snicker) Fred is obviously a Commie traitor. Look, he's talking to those filthy mutants. I shoot him, then run for cover.

GM: Logical. George?

George: I zap another ooga-booga type.

Fred: Say, you guys...

GM: Right. The grenade explodes. A couple of naked guys bite the dust. (Bounces die.) Fred catches some shrapnel, too. One naked guy pokes a pointy thing into Fred, then keels over. (Bounces die.) Fred's got a pointy thing in his chest. Martha shoots Fred. (Bounces die.) Smell of charred Fred.

Okay. Fred is shredded, speared, and laser-etched — dead, too. George's shot misses and scorches some scenery. Martha, you make it to the brown things and crouch behind them, just like George.

Fred: Heh, heh. I think I'm beginning to catch on. So, will they send my clone replacement by flybot, or cargo missile?

GM: We'll see shortly. Your friend The Computer will get right on it, just as soon as Martha and George make their reports. Back to the action.

Okay. Suddenly the ground shudders convulsively. The naked guys hit the deck. A giant glistening black bot with a head the size of a transit terminal — with huge compound sensors and long antennae — appears above you and peers down.

George: (Whispers) — Oh, swell. Giant radioactive mutant cockroaches again —

Martha: Black? Infrared clearance, obviously. I order it to pick us up and return us directly to Alpha Complex.

GM: Err... good idea. It reaches down with its mandibles — oops — its cargo grapples and...

Combat Sequencing

Combat is resolved in a series of *combat rounds*. Each round represents approximately 5 seconds. Once one combat round is over, another is begun. Combat rounds are repeated until one side or the other is dead or withdraws, or until both sides break off.

Each combat round is broken into four segments. All actions taken in one segment are resolved before the next segment is begun. The sequence of segments is:

Combat Sequence

NPC Decision Segment: The GM considers the situation and tries to figure out what each non-player character should do. ("NPCs" include intelligent machines like combots, automatic gun batteries, and scrubots armed with floor waxers.) Typical things to consider are: 1, the NPC's interest in self-preservation, 2, the NPC's strategic and tactical objectives, and 3, dramatic and entertainment opportunities (potential for big explosions, extravagant gestures, and comic irony).

Then the GM may or may not announce what the NPCs will do. If the GM announces, the players get to react according to this knowledge. If not, the players have to guess what the NPCs will do. (See "Keeping Players in the Dark," a box that ought to be printed around here somewhere, for some suggestions.)

Player Character Decision Segment: The GM goes around the table and asks each player in turn what his player character intends to do in this combat round. A player may not change his mind after he declares his intentions unless you, Mr. GM, judge that the change is sufficiently entertaining, i.e., "Oh, Moe-O-DJO is going to detonate his experimental Solar Grenade? Shucks, forget drawing my laser — I'm gonna strip off my jumpsuit so I'll get a better tan."

Combat Resolution Segment: With GM as referee and arbiter of common sense and dramatic justice, dice are bounced and you

find out which attacks are successful — and how successful. All hand-to-hand attacks, ranged weapon attacks, and other malicious mischief (collapsed ceilings, mutant powers, and so on) take place simultaneously. Combat is resolved in the following sequence of steps:

Modify Skill Numbers: The GM decides how each fighting character's skill number is modified. In basic combat, the only modifiers imposed by the rules are for dodging, wounds and point-blank range. The optional rules add a whole bunch of others. As always, the gamemaster is encouraged to award penalties or bonuses according to common sense, relevant conditions, Murphy's Law, and a perverse sense of poetic justice.

Hit Determination: Make skill checks to see which attacks succeed.

Damage Determination: Roll dice and refer to the Damage Table (see Fold-Out B) to determine the damage suffered by victims of successful attacks.

Movement Segment: All characters and intelligent machines still functional and not knocked silly may move.

Hitting

All agility and manual dexterity skills are combat skills. When a character attacks someone in combat, he uses one of these skills. Exactly which he uses depends on the weapon he is using. For example, when attacking someone barehanded, you use the unarmed combat skill. When attacking someone with a laser pistol or rifle, you use the laser skill. See the skill descriptions on pages 57 through 61 for more detail.

In a single combat round, each character may make only one attack. To make an attack, a character makes a skill roll. If successful, he has hit his target. If the roll fails, he has missed. If the target is hit, it may suffer damage; the rules under "Damage" describe how damage is determined.

Some weapons are called *area attack weapons*. They do not affect individual targets. Instead, each has a *damage radius*, printed on the Weapon Chart (see Fold-Out B). If an area weapon's target is hit, anything within the weapon's damage radius may be damaged.

When an area weapon misses, the gamemaster decides where the inaccurate shot hits on the basis of logic, dramatic appropriateness, and Murphy's Law. For example, if a character misses his intended target with a napalm round and there is a fuel storage tank in the vicinity, it is a reasonable conclusion (given Murphy's Law) that the round will unerringly seek out the fuel storage tank. Wouldn't that be entertaining?

Skill Modifiers

Before making a combat skill roll for a character, you must decide how (and whether) to modify his skill number. Remember always to award bonuses or penalties for clever or tedious play. Feel free to award additional bonuses or penalties if you think cir-

Keeping the Players in the Dark

Should the GM announce NPC decisions? It depends on the situation. Some opponents are so stupid and obvious that they telegraph their actions; some are shrewd and enigmatic, and likely to surprise and outfox the player characters. All else being equal, keeping the action a mystery usually builds tension and suspense.

Note: It is tasteless (though often dramatically correct, and thoroughly *Paranoia*) to change your NPCs' tactics after you've heard what the players are going to do. If you commit such an immoral and unsportsmanlike crime, make sure you don't get caught, or you'll spoil whatever residual trust your players have in your even-handed and impartial judging.



cumstances make a character's attack particularly easy or difficult. There are four circumstances that are sufficiently common to warrant actual rules:

Point-Blank Range

Most *Paranoia* combat occurs at fairly short range, as Alpha Complex has few open spaces. However, you obviously have a better chance of hitting someone if your laser is pressed in to his bellybutton.

When firing at someone at point-blank range, **add 4** to the skill number. Do not apply this modifier when using a force sword, neurowhip or other melee weapon.

Wounds

When a wounded character makes an attack, **subtract 4** from his skill number.

Dodging

During a combat round, any character may declare that he is "dodging." This term encompasses ducking for cover, evasive maneuvering, and wriggling around a lot. A dodging character cannot attack, but when anyone attacks him, **subtract 4** from the attacker's skill number.

Other Modifiers

That's it for basic combat. In the optional rules (starting on page 66) we list some other modifiers you can use if they suit you.

Damage

Every weapon has a *damage number*, printed on the Weapon Chart (see Fold-Out B). When a weapon hits, look its damage number up (or ask the player whose character attacked — damage numbers are usually listed on character sheets).

Basically, what you do is refer to the Damage Table (also on Fold-Out B). Each column of the table has a number printed at its top. Find the column that's printed with the attacking weapon's damage number.

Then, roll the die. Find the number you rolled under the damage number, in the same column. Read across to the left or right — at the side of the table, it'll tell you whether the target suffers no effect, or is stunned, wounded, incapacitated, killed, or vaporized.

Example: The damage number for a laser pistol is 8. If a laser pistol hits and you roll a 1 through 4, the target suffers no effect. If you roll a 5 through 9, it is stunned; a 10 through 14, wounded; a 15 through 18, incapacitated; and a 19 or 20, killed.

Macho and Damage Bonuses

But wait! There's more. Before you roll for damage, you must modify the attacking weapon's damage number.

Figure out what the target's macho bonus is (see page 13). Generally, we don't worry about macho bonuses for NPCs, as it's a pain to remember them. But when a player character is hit, ask the player what his macho bonus is.

Subtract the target's macho bonus from the damage number.

If the weapon is a melee weapon — neurowhip, truncheon, force sword, or primitive melee weapon — the attacker's damage bonus also modifies the damage number. Damage bonuses do *not* affect damage from ranged weapons (ones fired using dexterity skills), or from grenades.

Add the attacker's damage bonus (if any) to the damage number.

Armor and Weapon Types

You're still not ready to roll for damage yet — at least, not if the target is wearing armor. Before we explain how armor works, we have to talk about weapon types.

There are six weapon types — L (laser), E (energy), P (projectile), AP (armor-piercing), F (field), and I (impact). Each weapon's type is printed on the Weapon Chart (see Fold-Out B).

The Armor Table (also on Fold-Out B) lists a whole bunch of different kinds of armor. Different kinds of armor have different names, but each type has a *armor rating*. An armor rating consists of a letter, followed by a number.

Armor only protects against weapons of the same type. An armor's type is determined by the letter of its armor rating. For example, *reflec* armor's rating is L4. That means it only protects against L (laser) weapons. If a target is wearing *reflec* and someone shoots a slugthrower at him, he's out of luck.

If the target is wearing armor of the same type as the attacking weapon, *subtract its armor rating* (the number part) from the damage number.

Some armor protects against *all* weapons; such armor's rating is the word "All" followed by a number (e.g., "All2"). When a character wearing such armor is the target of any attack, subtract the number from the damage rating (in this case, 2 would be subtracted).

Example: A laser pistol is fired at a character whose macho bonus is 1 and who is wearing *reflec*. A laser pistol's damage rating is L8; minus 1 for the macho rating and 4 for the armor yields a modified damage rating of 3. Roll on the "3" column of the Damage Table to determine what damage (if any) is suffered.

Lasers and Reflec

Oops, one last rule for armor, and then we can go on. You see, different lasers shoot beams of different colors — Infrared, Red, Orange, Yellow... — yes, that's right, the same colors as the security clearance spectrum. A citizen can only use a laser of his clearance color or below. Uh, rather, he can use a higher-clearance laser, but it's treason if he does.

Actually, it isn't *lasers* that come in different colors, but their ammunition. Each laser can fire six shots; then, its barrel must be unscrewed and replaced with a new barrel. Each barrel shoots a particular color beam. The barrel is supposed to be painted in the same color as the beam it fires, but you know how it is, some traitors treasonously repaint their barrels so they can have, say, a Violet laser barrel that looks like a Red one until fired.

Reflec armor comes in different colors, too — Infrared, Red, and so on. A suit of *reflec* protects against all lasers of its color or below — but not against higher-clearance lasers. So if a citizen is wearing Green *reflec*, it helps him against Infrared, Red, Orange, Yellow and Green laser beams — but not against Blue, Indigo, Violet or Ultraviolet ones.*

All other "L" armor protects against all colors of lasers.

The Computer only issues a citizen *reflec* of his security clearance or below. It is, of course, treason to wear *reflec* (or clothing, for that matter) of a higher clearance color. This means that most (non-treasonous) Troubleshooters are initially equipped with Red lasers and Red *reflec*.

Damage Effects

So what do the damage effects *mean*?

No Effect: Even though the attack was successful, something — armor, target stoicism, attacker puniness, or dumb luck — prevented the attack from bothering the defender enough to affect his actions.

Interpret this result with dramatic flourish. "Just a flesh wound." "Say! Drilled him right in the chest, but only a puff of smoldering armor to show for it." "Your opponent peers with interest at the hole in his arm, shrugs, and keeps coming." "Wow! The laser beam must have glanced off a shiny button or something."

Stun: The stunned character is briefly overcome by the shock or pain of the attack and may, at his option, immediately fall prone. ("Playing dead" is a popular though generally futile tactic in desperate situations.) He may not take any other action during the next combat round (including moving, using a weapon, or making a skill roll).

Wound: A wounded character suffers the effects of a stun. In addition, he is henceforth considered "wounded". Whenever a wounded character makes any skill or attribute roll, his skill or attribute number is reduced by 4 (in addition to any other modifications). The GM is encouraged to assess other penalties, according to circumstances. ("In shock, you grab your wounded arm — thereby dropping the delicate and expensive firearm your friend The Computer assigned to you. Shame!")

A wounded character who is again wounded is incapacitated.

Incapacitate: An incapacitated character suffers the effects of a wound. In addition, he immediately falls prone. He is unconscious, and may take no action of any sort until he is

*Yes, we know all about the electromagnetic spectrum and the laws of color addition. Yes, we know that if you shoot a laser of, say, a green wavelength at a target that reflects blue light, the target will not reflect the green laser. In the first edition of *Paranoia*, we had a whole complex set of rules for multichroma armor and stuff to try to make *Paranoia* lasers conform to the laws of nature. But then we decided, what the hell? This is how we want lasers and *reflec* armor to work, so this is how they actually do work in *Paranoia*. So there.



healed to wounded status or better. An incapacitated character who is again wounded or incapacitated is killed.

Kill: A dead character is dead. Fini. Kaput. He kicks the bucket; he spends his time pushing up daisies; he has punched his last clock; he has gone to serve the Great Computer in the Sky. Dead is dead. Time to activate a clone. See "Clone Replacement" below.

Vaporized: The character and his gear are completely destroyed. This is a truly distinguished end for a *Paranoia* character; you have really arrived when you have had a character vaporized. The appropriate response is a brief but heart-felt round of applause from the players, gamemaster, and spectators.

Damage Effects to Inanimate Objects

So what does "wound" mean if you're shooting a toaster oven? This is left to the judgment and imagination of the gamemaster. Focus on the dramatic effect and not the realistic application of physics. Or if you like, carry out experiments around the house. Try your own home slugthrower on common household objects like vacuum cleaners and stereos. That's what we game designers do. (Note that somewhat more attention to the effects of damage to bots is given in the "Equipment" chapter; see 83.)



Movement

There are no hard-and-fast rules for movement and positioning during combat in *Paranoia*. Instead, the gamemaster should use common sense and these guidelines.

There are four speeds at which a person or bot may normally move: *stroll*, *walk*, *run*, or *sprint*. Generally speaking, any speed up to about 2 meters per combat round is a stroll; anything between that and 5 meters per round is a walk; anything between that and 20 meters per round is a run; and any faster speed (up to about 40 meters/round, which is about the fastest anyone short of an Olympic athlete can move) is a sprint. Vehicles, super-charged bots, supersonic aircraft, and treasonous mutants may also be able to move at the *zooming* speed (40 or more meters per round).

A sprinting character can't attack at all (running flat out takes all your concentration). A strolling, walking or running character can.

When someone shoots at a running character, you might consider assessing a skill number penalty. Then again, you might not.

Movement Speeds

Stroll: up to 2 meters/round
Walk: up to 5 meters/round
Run: up to 20 meters/round
Sprint: up to 40 meters/round
Zoom: over 40 meters/round

Recovering From Injuries

Characters usually recover from injuries off-stage in mammoth health centers where medical specialists and docbots glue patients back together with remarkable efficiency. Recovery without the benefit of such help can be performed with the aid of docbots (see 84) or the medical skill (see 60), but this is time-consuming and fraught with peril.

Of course, many biotechnological wonders are wrought by Research and Design, and some biochemical supplements are capable of permitting horribly injured Troubleshooters to foxtrot on a pair of broken legs, but the side-effects of these medical marvels are often more appalling than the original injuries.

Stun: No medical aid necessary. The character is stunned for one round. After one round, he can again act normally — without penalties.

Wound: The character is stunned for one round. Thereafter he may perform most normal actions, but subject to a -4 modifier to all skill and attribute rolls. This penalty reflects the effects of bleeding, shock, pain, and trauma.

If a wounded character is not treated by someone with medical skill or a docbot (or carted off to a medical center) within a day, he becomes incapacitated. See page 60 for what happens if he is treated.

Incapacitated: Incapacitation is a severe wound that, unless treated, results in death. An incapacitated character can take no action until healed to wounded status.

If an incapacitated character does not receive medical care — tended by a docbot, character with medical skill, or in a medical center — he must make an endurance roll every hour. A failed roll means he dies. (See also page 60.)

Kill and Vaporize: Recovery from these statuses is uncommon. For examples, see Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, George Romero's *Night of the Living Dead*, and Paramount's *The Search for Spock*.

Clone Replacement

When a player character dies during an adventure, a clone replacement cannot be activated until The Computer is aware of the character's death. Normally, death would be reported by another Troubleshooter or loyal citizen. Failure to report such information immediately is a serious act of treason.

The Computer may also discover the

character's death by monitoring communications or surveillance devices or by questioning remote robot agents.

When The Computer learns of a Troubleshooter's demise, it immediately contacts and activates a member of his clone family. As soon as possible the clone is briefed and dispatched as a replacement for the dead Troubleshooter. If transport is not available, or if the mission group is in a remote or inaccessible area, the replacement clone is transported at the first opportunity.

What've Those Clone Brothers Been Up to, Anyway?

While the activated clone is out shooting trouble for The Computer, the rest of the clone family may either continue performing routine tasks (filing papers, polishing corridor walls, bullying Infrareads) for their own service group, or they may be sent to special Monitor Centers to observe their counterparts during the course of the mission. Wherever they are, they receive regular reports on the ongoing mission by com unit so that, in case of disaster, they can step into their brother's boots and carry on effectively.

Preparing the Clone Replacement's Character Sheet

Take the dead character's sheet, change the character's clone number (Pyle-O-ASH-1 becomes Pyle-O-ASH-2, Butch-R-BLK-4 becomes Butch-R-BLK-5, and so on). *Voila!* New clone, ready for action!

Why Clones Are Identical in All Features: The Real Reason

It's easier.

Why Clones Are Identical in All Features: The Transparently Bogus Rationale

The members of a clone family are identical in genetic inheritance, so all attributes and mutant powers are identical.

The members of a clone family are raised together, trained together, and encouraged to think of themselves as identical replacements for one another, so all service group assignments, skills, secret society affiliations, and other acquired characteristics are virtually identical.

Because The Computer thinks of members of a clone family as interchangeably identical, it assumes that whatever virtues or faults one clone has, the other clones have in equal measure. Therefore, when an activated clone is promoted, all his clone siblings are promoted.

The only exception to this "identical treatment for identical clones" policy is in the matter of executions. In its infinite benevolence and unshakable faith in the essential virtue of Clonekind, The Computer regards a clone family as one big, happy computer program. When any individual clone displays treason worthy of execution, The Computer regretfully deletes the defective copy. However, The Computer has faith in the original design of the program (since, after all, it did create this clone family out of the clone vats, and The Computer never makes mistakes, right?), and since it has no desire to waste all the training



and loving care it has lavished to-date on this clone family. The Computer simply tests the back-up copies, by activating them one after another, to see if the defect is common to all the copies. If all six copies have a defect (i.e., get executed), well, the program has received a fair test. (Undoubtedly Commie sabotage.)

In other words, every new clone starts off with 1 treason point (instead of however many his now-dead sibling had).

Returning a Clone Replacement to Action

Return the clone (and his player) to action as soon as possible. A player with a dead character is just a spectator, which is nowhere near as much fun as playing *Paranoia*. Give the player some time to agonize over the untimely demise of his character, but remember — he came to play, not to watch.

If the adventure is taking place within Alpha Complex, the replacement clone will don his

duty-issue overalls, grab public transit, and arrive panting to join his mates in 15 to 30 minutes. If the adventure is taking place in the Outdoors, or beneath the ocean, or on a Mars-bound shuttle, delivery may be somewhat less swift. In either event, if Mr. GM desires, The Computer can order the mission group to take no further action until the replacement joins the team. The Computer will not let a mission fail because the group is understaffed. Never.

Well, hardly ever.

Mission Group Beta-Niner:

Regrets in regards tragic and messy death of citizen hero Splat-R. Clone replacement in transit. Stand by until the group is at full strength.

Oh, and while you're all standing around doing nothing, why don't you clean up that mess?

On the other hand, don't introduce the clone replacement until it suits your fancy. Perhaps the party should struggle along understrength for a while. Perhaps the player should cool his heels for a bit as he maintains a decent period of mourning for the deceased character.

Be unpredictable. Be capricious. This is *Paranoia*. You never know what to expect from The Computer.

Perhaps the clone was mistakenly routed to the food vats.

Or perhaps someone is sabotaging communications back at Troubleshooter HQ.

Or maybe the flybot delivering the clone has developed a guidance malfunction and is diligently trying to educate the clone in dental hygiene as it streaks across the tundra toward the North Pole.

You never can tell.



5. Optional Combat Rules

We like our combat like our scotch — straight. But there are people who prefer ice, soda, or even limp-wristed slop like margaritas or daiquiris. Well, *de gustibus non est disputandum*. That's why we're including a whole slew of optional combat rules, for those of you who want more complexity or realism.

Semi-seriously, many optional rules are useful or fun. For instance, in the basic combat rules we tell you to modify skill numbers for the conditions under which characters attack, but don't give you a lot of guidelines for exactly what modifiers are appropriate. "More Skill Modifiers," below, makes some suggestions.

We could have included those skill modifiers in the basic combat rules, but we don't want gamemasters to feel compelled to make sure that every single modifier is taken into account any time anyone attacks. That would slow combat down a lot, and slow combat makes for a dull game. Instead, we've made those modifiers optional — use 'em when you feel like it, ignore 'em when you don't, and keep things moving. But you can feel secure knowing that if you need to know what firing at long range does to someone's chance of hitting, there's a rule you can use if you want to.

We were a little hesitant to make the malfunction rules optional. In *Paranoia*, nothing ever works quite the way it's supposed to, and weapons ought to malfunction in spectacular and dangerous ways with pretty fair frequency. On the other hand, keeping track of when malfunctions occur and when they don't adds another level of complexity to the combat system. In order to keep things simple, we decided to make malfunctions optional. However, they're very much in keeping with the spirit of *Paranoia*, and we urge you to use them if you don't mind the added bother.

Most of the rest of the optional rules come under the category of "things that may occasionally be useful but that you don't want to bother with all the time." Like the skill modifiers, feel free to use these rules when you like and ditch 'em when you don't. Consistency may be a virtue, but dramatic necessity is a greater one.

Surprise

If one side in a fight gets the drop on the other — attacks without warning — it ought to have an advantage. We suggest you give them a "surprise round." That means that, in the first round of combat, only the characters with surprise get to attack. The other side can't even dodge. Once the first round is out of the way, the real fight begins. (Given how powerful *Paranoia* weapons are, even one free round can prove to be a great advantage.)

Spray Weapons

Some weapons are called *spray weapons* (see Weapon Chart on Fold-Out B). A spray weapon can be used to attack up to three targets in a single combat round. Each target must be within 5 meters of one of the others (so you can spray three clones all in a row).

When a spray weapon is used against more than one target, divide the firer's modified skill number by the number of targets (two or three — round to the nearest whole number). Make a separate roll for each target, against the divided skill number.

Example: A character with a projectile weapons skill of 14 fires at three targets. 14 divided by 3 is 4⅓, which rounds up to 5.

Three rolls are made; the rolls are 12, 3 and 18. The first and third characters fired upon are missed, but the second one is hit.

More Skill Modifiers

All skill modifiers are listed on the Combat Modifiers Chart (Fold-Out B).

Range

Each weapon's *range* is printed on the Weapon Chart (Fold-Out B). No weapon can fire at a greater distance than its range (e.g. a laser pistol cannot damage a target farther than 50 meters away).

When a character fires at a target, determine whether he is firing at *point blank*, *short*, *medium* or *long* range. Point-blank range is anything within 5 meters. Short range is anything that's no more than *one-third* of the maximum range away. Medium range is between *one-third* and *two-thirds* of the maximum range. Long range is anything greater than medium range, up to the maximum range.

Example: When a laser pistol is fired at a target 0 to 5 meters away, it is firing at point-blank range. Targets 5 to 16⅓ meters away are at short range. Targets at 16⅓ to 33⅓ meters are at medium range. Targets between 33⅓ and 50 meters are at long range.

When a character fires at medium range, reduce his skill number by 2. At long range, reduce it by 4.

Cover

If a target is protected by cover — a stone wall, a tree trunk, heavy vegetation, whatever — the firer's skill number is reduced. Determine approximately what proportion of the



target's body is protected — nearly all, partially, or just a bit. Reduce the skill number as the Combat Modifiers Chart directs.

Movement

When a character attacks while standing still or strolling, his skill number is not modified. When he is walking or running, it is reduced, as the chart indicates. When the target is moving, the attacker's skill is also reduced.

Hit Location

When a character is hit in combat you can, if you like, roll on the Hit Location Table (see Fold-Out B) to see where his wound is located. Use your judgment about this; for instance, if someone is stunned, who cares where the shot hit (if anywhere)? Similarly, if he's dead or vaporized, it's a mite moot, and even if he's incapacitated, he's not going anywhere, so who cares whether it's a hit in the head or the abdomen? Too, with a flamethrower, for example, precise hit location may be irrelevant — the damage may be equally distributed over lots of the body.

When a character is wounded in a particular location, not only does he suffer a -4 penalty on all skill and attribute rolls, but he loses the use of that part of his body. "Lose the use of" can mean a number of different things:

Arm: Can't use that arm. Can't carry heavy things. Can't use weapons that require the use of both arms.

Leg: Can't move faster than a walk (hop, hop). No bike riding, either.

Chest: Oops. Better sit down. You're not going anywhere, although you can still fire weapons and use skills.

Abdomen: Like chest, only more painful.

Head: Whoa. Bad news. What "lose the use of" means is up to you. It might mean he can't see anything — either because he's blinded or because blood is running into his eyes. Or maybe it means he's actually incapacitated (head hits are not good). Or maybe "lose the use of" means exactly that and he gets real stupid all of a sudden.

Multiple-Type Armor

For the sake of simplicity, we said that armor was only of one type. Actually, of course, many kinds of armor do provide some protection against more than one type of weapon. As a trivial example, you could buff a suit of plate mail to a fine finish, so it would provide some protection against lasers as well as impact weapons.

Multiple-type armor just has armor ratings including more than one letter-number combination — for instance, that polished plate might be I3/L1. Laminated composite battle armor might be L4/I3/P2/AP6. We leave this up to you.

Drawing, Ammunition, and Reloading

Drawing weapons in desperation when ambushed and hunching down behind a rock to reload are valuable dramatic tools in any action-adventure game. On the other hand, they involve a certain amount of bookkeeping.

Drawing Weapons

If a citizen does not have a weapon in hand, he cannot use a weapon until he draws one. If a weapon is readily available (e.g., in a holster or scabbard, slung over the back, etc.), drawing the weapon takes one combat round. If it is not immediately available, drawing it may take more than one round, at the gamemaster's discretion. If a character wishes to replace the weapon he has at hand with another one, he may either drop the weapon he's holding and draw a new one (taking one round) or put it away and draw another one (taking a total of two combat rounds). In a round that a character is drawing or replacing a weapon, he may not make an attack, although he may dodge or move (but not at sprint speed).

Ammunition and Reloading

Most ranged weapons come with a limited supply of ammunition, and must be periodically reloaded. The Weapon Chart (see Fold-Out B) indicates the number of rounds a weapon may be used before reloading is necessary. Each time a player fires a weapon, he notes it has been fired once. When the total number of firings equals the number of rounds of ammunition indicated on the table, the weapon is unloaded and must be reloaded

before it may fire again. Reloading a weapon takes the same time as drawing a weapon (i.e., one round) — assuming, that is, that a spare reload is readily available. If not, reloading means running down to PLC for ammunition, and that's likely to take considerably more time.

Malfunctions

Weapons are divided into three types, depending on how thoroughly tested they are: *standard-issue*, *experimental* and *really experimental*.

All the weapons listed on the Weapons Chart (see Fold-Out B) are either standard-issue or experimental (as the table indicates; note that melee weapons and primitive weapons are considered non-experimental for these purposes). Anything R&D issues to Troubleshooter groups specifically for the purpose of being tested (see 78) is *really experimental*.

Whenever anyone fires a standard-issue weapon, and his skill roll is 20, it malfunctions. Experimental weapons malfunction on a skill roll of 19 or 20.

Really experimental weapons are so unreliable that they malfunction whenever you want them to. (If you want to be "fairer" about it, assign a really experimental weapon a malfunction number — 10, say. Then, whenever the firer's skill roll is greater than or equal to the malfunction number, the weapon malfunctions. In published *Paranoia* adventures, we tell you when and how really experimental equipment appearing in the adventure malfunctions. (See "Into the Outdoors with Gun and Camera" for examples.)



All Alpha Complex equipment is rigorously tested and perfectly safe.



Exactly what a weapon does when it malfunctions depends on the weapon. Each weapon has a characteristic malfunction; these are described in the equipment section (see pages 79 through 82).

Remedying Weapon Malfunctions

The unpleasant effects of a weapon malfunction can sometimes be prevented or remedied by the swift application of an appropriate weapon skill. The user can immediately make a second skill roll, using the same skill he uses when firing, to attempt to remedy the malfunction. A successful roll means he has. The weapon descriptions (pages 79 through 82) describe malfunction repair in more detail. (Typically, really experimental equipment cannot be repaired.)

Miniatures & Stuff

Sex is All in the Mind

...and so is *Paranoia* combat. In some games, you put miniatures or cardstock figures on the table and carefully measure how far they can move and at what range they're firing and stuff like that. However, let's remember that this is all imaginary; the guys on the table aren't zapping lasers at one another, and if the gamemaster says "it's three meters away" it's three meters away, and we don't care if your ruler says it's more or less.

On the other hand, it's kind of fun to fiddle around with little figures, and they're colorful and provide a visual focus to what's otherwise a pretty abstract game. So if you like, go ahead and use figures. But remember also how the Dramatic Tactical System works; what the gamemaster says goes, so don't get hung up measuring every last fraction of an inch and

tracing accurate lines of sight and so on. Hey, if you like that kind of combat, we publish a whole bunch of fine tactical simulations like *Tank Leader* and *Fire Team* which allow you to spend hours and hours doing this stuff, and you should buy them all *right now* and make us wealthy beyond the dreams of avarice.

Seriously, if you like to use miniatures and scale layouts to help visualize the action, bully for you. In fact, there's a magnificent line of *Paranoia* metal miniatures — from Grenadier in USA and CND Sectors and from Citadel Miniatures in UKB and EUR Sectors. So now you can run right back out and get them. We'll wait.

Scale

It's traditional when using miniatures to know what the game scale is, so you can carefully measure everything down to the last millimeter. So what's *Paranoia*'s scale?

Here it is: three *real world* centimeters — two *Paranoia* meters. So now you know.



6. Mutant Powers

Every player character has a mutant power. In theory, his power lets him do something nifty, something special that can help him survive in Alpha Complex. Of course, nothing is as simple as that. Mutants are traitors, after all, and subject to immediate execution.

Which leads to a question: if The Computer is so careful to make sure that its citizens are normal humans bereft of weird alterations in DNA — indeed, so careful that it executes anyone out of the norm — how did mutation come to be so widespread? And why are only *favorable* mutations prevalent? I mean, if you randomly expose people to high doses of radiation, you'll get a lot of miscarriages, birth defects and such, but favorable mutations will be extremely rare. Obviously, something strange is going on. So what's the source of all these mutations anyway?

The Origin of Mutant Powers in Alpha Complex

Beats us...

Oh, sorry, we mean... it's a *secret*! Of course. That's much better.

Well, maybe The Computer knows, but it isn't telling. And lots of citizens have theories, but theories (like rumors) are treason. Here are a few of the treasonous theories propounded by various Alpha Complex pundits:

- Radiation from a global nuclear war (contradicts Computer history and all available scientific evidence, but a common legend based on trashy Pre-Oops post-holocaust fiction).

- The side-effects of pollution, food additives, and exposure to bland video programming (based on other mythic materials from Pre-Oops period).

- Officially recognized and/or clandestine genetic experiments carried out by The Computer/R&D/secret societies (positing biochemical or radiological agents for mutations, and secret eugenics programs engineered by any number of crackpot factions).

- The cumulative effects of exposure to watches with radium dials.

- The Earth's passage through a cloud of cosmic dust.

- Benign interference by benevolent aliens.

...and so on, *ad nauseum*.

Gamemasters are encouraged to be blandly irresponsible in establishing an internally-consistent rationale for all this mutant power stuff. Change your tune at the drop of a hat. Whatever suits your dramatic and narrative needs, whenever you need it, for whatever hokey reason. Keep the players guessing.

Remember? Ignorance and fear. Fear and ignorance.

Mutant Power Mechanics

Most other roleplaying games provide power-tripping alter egos with the ability to fly through the air, melt steel bars, project coruscating rays of light and death from every pore, and peer through concrete walls into the girls' locker room.

Guess what. *Paranoia*'s mutant powers don't work that way. As usual, just like every other potential source of player character power and

security, mutant powers are boobytrapped: unreliable, mortally dangerous, treasonous, but perversely adorable.

That's *Paranoia* for you.

Power Attribute Checks

Whenever a character wants to use a mutant power, have the player describe what he hopes will occur, then make a power attribute roll. Modify his attribute for the difficulty and scale of the intended effect, distracting noise, injuries, zodiacal sign, entertainment value, etc. Following are suggested conditions and ranges for modifiers:

- modest intent, no distractions, plenty of time, careful premeditation: +1 to +5 bonus
- prudent restraint, minor distractions, couple of rounds to prepare, some forethought: no modifiers
- excessive ambition, life-threatening distractions, impulsive or panicked: -1 to -5 penalty

If the roll is successful, things go more or less as the player hoped. If the roll was just barely successful, the effects are just barely favorable; if the roll succeeded by a wide margin, the effects are unexpectedly favorable.

If the roll is unsuccessful, the effects are unfavorable — the larger the difference between the roll and the modified attribute number, the more disastrous the consequences.

Example: Suck-R is stuck in a firefight, wounded. His weapon has melted, the phalanx of Commie combots is grinding inexorably toward him, and his mission group has abandoned him to his fate. Nothing left to lose, he experiments with his teleport mutant power. His power is 9.



GM: Okay. What do you hope will happen?
Suck-R: Frankly, I haven't a clue how this power works — except never the same way twice.

GM: Heh, heh. Think fast, fellah.

Suck-R: Okay. I hope I'll end up someplace safe — and no more injured than I am now, thank you.

GM: Good. Time for a power roll. (Bounces die — rolls a 17.) Hello. Not exactly what you'd planned. A crowd of squat, oddly misshapen creatures materialize in front of you, carrying pickaxes and lanterns, whistling. A dark-haired, white-skinned woman is frolicking and singing with them — sounds like "Hi-ho, hi-ho, it's off to work we go..."

or

GM: Good. Time for a power roll. (Bounces die — rolls a 2.) Whee. Suddenly a hail of black, soundless watermelons explode around you — or that's what it looks like anyway — just a haze of sweet, sticky, featureless, undifferentiated sensory impressions. Then suddenly everything is normal again — except you're standing in a quiet, empty corridor just outside your residence block.

Suck-R: Pheew.

GM: Oh. Look. Your com unit message light is blinking. Seems that The Computer is waiting for your report. And an interesting report that'll be, I wager.

Losing and Recovering Power Points

Whenever a character attempts to use a mutant power, his power attribute is reduced, whether or not he uses it successfully. Each time a power is used, the character's power attribute is reduced by 1 to 5 points, at the gamemaster's discretion. Generally, you should call for a loss of 5 points if the power was used in a particularly difficult or spectacular way, and a loss of 1 if used trivially.

Reduction in power is not permanent; to recover his power, a character must sleep. Each hour of uninterrupted, restful sleep increases a character's power by one point. Obviously, a character's power cannot be increased above its original value.

Example: A traitor whose power attribute score is 12 uses his mutant power once, and the gamemaster rules that he spends 5 points in so doing, reducing his power to 7. If he tries to use his power a second time, he rolls against his reduced power of 7, whether his first power use was successful or not. His power remains at 7 until he sleeps; if he gets 5 or more hours sleep, his power is restored to 12.

Guidelines for Mutant Powers

Because of the bewildering variety of mutant powers, it's hard to come up with rules to cover them all without giving you more detail than you can remember. Instead, we give you rough guidelines, and some examples,

then encourage you to improvise wildly and irresponsibly.

As usual, experienced, iconoclastic, or inveterately frisky GMs are encouraged to ignore rules and guidelines.

Duration

The effects of mutant powers generally last for one to five minutes, depending on the success margin of the power roll and the GM's dramatic needs. Of course, with five-second combat rounds, a minute is an eternity. And sometimes the effect is over instantaneously, like a teleport for instance, or it gets turned on permanently or something — like when a levitating mutant gets stuck 100 meters in the air as thousands of loyal witnesses report this remarkable event. You never know.

Range

If not specified, range is line of sight with maximum effectiveness within 5 meters of the character. Power and reliability decrease rapidly over distance as moderated by a cheerful but perverse GM. Again, good dice and entertaining intent may extend range and effectiveness.

Area/Volume of Effect

The area or volume of effect is usually a five-meter circle or sphere. Except when it isn't. Which is now and then.

Tips for Staging Mutant Powers

- Make your mutant power effect descriptions colorful and imaginative. Give lots of sensory detail — neat visuals, weird sounds, creepy sensations, fetid stench. Make references to popular film, TV, and trash literature — "...like the 2001 star trip, man — too much," or "...like a Star Trek transporter malfunction," or "...like a Hulk transformation."
- Make klutz jobs as wild and offbeat as possible. When a character blows his power roll in a big way, go to town. The more incredible and exaggerated the effect, the more entertaining the resulting disaster. For example, a character really klutzes his power roll for regeneration. So maybe he grows a couple of dozen extra arms, or gills, or begins shrinking, or causes identical injuries to every citizen within a kilometer.
- Don't let mutant powers get too reliable or useful. This is not a superhero game. When players appear grateful for their mutant powers, you're doing something wrong.

Mutant Power Descriptions

Adrenalin Control

Adrenalin control lets a character temporarily boost his strength and agility to superhuman levels for a minute or so. Naturally, his agility skill base, carrying capacity and damage bonus are also boosted to superhuman levels.

After he's used the power, the character suffers a wound — not in any particular location; in effect, the character is in shock. He remains

"wounded" until he has several hours of uninterrupted, tranquil rest (not likely during a mission) or a healthy nap. If he uses this power twice in succession without recovering from the first "wound", the second use "incapacitates" him — he falls unconscious and cannot be aroused for several hours, after which he awakens, dazed, groggy, but essentially normal.

While using this power, a character can perform prodigious physical feats — lift autocars, zoom like a cheetah, take two or three actions in a melee round, and so on. Adrenalin pumps through his body and tells it to burn all available fuel and to ignore design specifications — sometimes with unfortunate consequences for flesh, connective tissue, and bone. The central principle: he's Superman for a minute, but make him pay for it.

GM: No problem. You grab the berserk, one-ton scrubot, heft it to the melodious accompaniment of popping tendons, toss it lightly over the catwalk rail, and watch it plunge through the floor below. You lie down suddenly. Can you say, "hernia?" I knew you could.

Charm

Glands in the character's skin produce a pheromone-like substance that causes other humans to admire and trust him. Unfortunately, these pheromone-like substances also cause the character to admire and trust other humans. The net result is usually the sort of mellow haze of fraternal camaraderie associated with the Marin County, California culture of the Old Reckoning. Those affected tend to spill their guts, admitting shameful acts and bitter resentments they'd normally never share, and make deeply sincere pledges of communal feeling, loyalty, and friendship that they immediately forget once the pheromones wear off.

However, since the mutant is aware that chemicals are conditioning this response, he has some ability to resist its effects, keeping his mouth shut and his affections under control while exploiting the general good feelings for his own selfish ends. Make a chutzpah roll for the character. If successful, the character resists his own charm and does a number on his victims. If he fails, the character is equally at the mercy of his generous impulses.

The area of effect varies according to the environment. Indoors in enclosed spaces the power affects a more or less spherical volume of up to five meters. The effect lasts for about five minutes. The area of effect and duration is much more unreliable in open areas or in the Outdoors; depending on the air currents or wind, the five-meter sphere of effect may be downwind of the character, and may move constantly, dissipating slowly or rapidly according to the turbulence of the air. As a guideline, in anything more than a gentle breeze, the effect has a maximum duration of less than a minute. In still air or a gentle breeze, the effect may last up to the full five minutes. Be guided by common sense and im-pish good humor in judging the duration and area of effect.



If the character's chutzpah roll is successful, this power gives the user a +5 bonus on all subsequent chutzpah skill rolls (except spurious logic, of course) against NPCs.

The greatest risk in using this power is that victims invariably return to normal after the effect wears off. They remember their abnormal behavior and realize that they have been hoaxed. Therefore, if this power is used repeatedly on any subject, particularly other player characters, the mutant is running a considerable risk of revealing possession of the mutation.

When the power is used on player characters (either by a player character or by an NPC), the gamemaster should prepare notes for the players, explaining that they feel inexplicably friendly and cooperative, that they are eager to share their deepest secrets, and that they should roleplay this insidious attack of trust and good will until further notice. No hint should be given about the source of the feeling. When the effect has dissipated, they should be given notes that their feelings have returned to normal.

Deep Probe

The character can reach deep inside the mind of another character and extract information from unwilling subjects. The mutant must be in physical, flesh-to-flesh contact with the victim. The experience is painful and exhausting for both parties — shock, nausea, and severe headaches are common. In game terms, both character and victim suffer a "wound." They remain "wounded" until they've had several hours of rest or a nice nap.

Given the commonly-rumored existence of psionic mutant powers, most subjects will realize that their minds have been probed. However, their only recollection of the experience will be a feeling of great pain, then unconsciousness.

The deeper and more obscure the information for which the user is probing, the less likely the success of the probe. The gamemaster makes a power roll with appropriate skill modifiers. If the roll is successful, the prober obtains most of the information he wants in fairly coherent form (little extraneous information, more-or-less in proper and logical sequence, without significant gaps or omissions, etc.).

If the roll is unsuccessful, the prober gets incomplete and garbled information, liberally sprinkled with irrelevant childhood memories, stream-of-consciousness sense impressions, inverted word order, free association chains, vaguely related but uninteresting anecdotes and the like. This is a great chance to annoy your players by salting a few useful tidbits into heaps of word salad.

A few examples to illustrate ease of power use:

- probing a sentry for a password — very easy
- probing a technician for an operating procedure — easy
- probing a Troubleshooter for memories concerning a region visited ten years ago — difficult

- probing for a serial number seen on a weapon for a few moments five years in the past (a memory not even accessible to the conscious mind of the subject) — real difficult

Electroshock

The character is extremely resistant to electrical shocks (stungun shocks in particular) and can deliver one electric shock per round to any one victim within a five-meter radius. The effect is equivalent to that of a stungun.

To resist the effect of an electric shock, the character must make a successful power roll. The gamemaster should modify the attribute number for particularly large (high tension wire) or small (Walkman battery) voltages.

To deliver a shock to a victim, the character must make a power roll. If successful, the victim is zapped stungun-style. If unsuccessful, something goes wrong — the character stuns himself, or blows out his communications gear, or makes everyone's hair stand on end, or broadcasts in the shortwave band.

Empathy

This character has a sort of hind-brain telepathy — he can read a victim's emotional brain activity and project his own emotions to manipulate the victim's emotional state.

Reading a victim's emotions is particularly useful when trying to detect a liar-in-progress; a successful roll may reveal the intent to mislead. When trying to assess another's reaction, a successful empathy power roll entitles the user to GM hints. When using chutzpah skills, a successful empathy roll means a +5 modifier to the skill number.

The most effective use of empathy is to project strong emotions on a victim in order to interfere with his ability to reason and make judgments. The empath works himself up into a frenzy, then projects his emotions onto his victim. The victim is overcome by a temporary obsessive need to indulge himself in dramatic actions which express the emotion — sobbing, screaming, cowering, cackling maniacally, smashing things — a real opportunity for the hysterically-inclined roleplayer. If the power roll is successful, the victim is affected; the more successful the roll, the more exaggerated and obsessive the performance. If the roll fails, the victim is unaffected, and the empath himself may become obsessed, suffering temporary insanity proportional to how unsuccessful the roll was.

This skill is most reliable when used on an individual. Attempting empathy with a crowd is less accurate and reliable, and the empath is more likely to get caught up in the emotions of the crowd with an unsuccessful power roll. The gamemaster should take the player aside, explain the mood of the crowd, and encourage him in his roleplaying of a victim of mob psychology.

Energy Field

This power produces a field that absorbs energy and radiates it uniformly from the surface of the field as heat and light. The field follows the external contours of the body,

extending about six inches from the skin surface. In game terms, this acts like "All3" armor; that is, the damage number of any attack on the character is reduced by 3, regardless of weapon type.

The field usually lasts no more than a minute, and leaves the user exhausted and in shock — the equivalent of wounded — until he has had a few hours of rest or a nice nap. The field is also unfortunately rather showy — it sparkles and shimmers, and emits brief, blinding flashes of light and heat when struck by melee or ranged weapons or by other sources of energy (i.e., a speeding autocar), or when the character runs into a wall or falls from a great height.

This field is subtle, complex, and unreliable in its workings. When the power roll is unsuccessful, lots of nasty things can happen. Sometimes it reflects all energy — light, for example, leaving the character blind. Sometimes the energy is radiated from a small fraction of the surface — from the feet, for example, burning a hole in the floor — or the energy is radiated from the inner surface, parboiling the mutant.

Note that when the mutant fires a ranged weapon from inside the field — when the barrel does not protrude through the field — the weapon's projectile or beam may be reflected from the inner surface. Note that sometimes the field fluctuates wildly, expanding from then contracting toward the body.

Hypersenses

This power amplifies the five senses. The eyes can see clearly for great distances, magnify greatly, and function well in near-darkness or under blinding illumination. The ears can hear very minute sounds, or sounds at great distances. The skin is extremely sensitive, alert to changes in temperature and humidity, air pressure, and so on. The nose is acute, detecting the subtlest smells even among overpowering odors. The taste buds can finely distinguish between familiar substances, even substances which have no distinctive taste to normal humans.

This power also gives the mutant superior discrimination in focusing on one aspect of a perception and ignoring the rest — for example, picking out one voice from an unruly crowd and distinguishing what is being said.

This is what the power does when it works right — when the power roll is successful. When the power roll is unsuccessful, things are not so swell. Maybe everything seems to be turned up too loud. Maybe normal human odors become appallingly overpowering. Maybe the character begins hallucinating — "My skin's on fire! My tongue's exploding! My ears are melting! Aieee!" It ain't easy being a mutant.

Levitation

A field forms around the mutant's body which counteracts the force of gravity. (It makes the atoms spin funny or something.) The field follows the external contours of the body, extending six inches or so beyond the



skin surface, so garments and objects within the field are also affected.

When the power roll is successful, the field overcomes and repels gravity, and the mutant floats into the air. Depending on the degree of success, the mutant can more or less control the rate of ascent and descent, pitch, yaw, and roll, for the duration of the mutant power. If he's real successful, maybe he can actually fly around; otherwise, he can only move up and down, and can only move around by kicking off the ceiling or firing bullets in the opposite direction.

When the power roll is unsuccessful, something else happens. Sometimes nothing happens. Sometimes the force of gravity is amplified. Sometimes gravity is repelled all right — just a little harder and faster than the mutant can control. If there is a ceiling, wham. If no ceiling, Alpha Complex has a manned space program.

Machine Empathy

Warning! Warning! This mutant power is REAL treasonous! Anyone possessing it will be executed when discovered, regardless of any other factors!

Some mutants can commune with the mystic forces of nature. Characters with machine empathy can commune with the ebb and flux of electrons, the opening and closing of logic gates, the destruction and reappearance of positrons in robotic brains. In short, the mutant is in tune with intelligent machines — robots and computers.

When a successful power roll is made, robots and computers tend to like and trust the character. Robots and computers will not attack or kill the character unless they have specific orders or some other strong justification, and the Computer will generally give the character the benefit of the doubt in matters of poor performance or treason. The character also may receive bonuses with spurious logic relative to the success of the power roll

because of his instinctive understanding and liking for machines.

If the power roll is unsuccessful, the mutant doesn't make contact, or the intelligent machine picks up bad vibes — the more unsuccessful the roll, the badder the vibes. The robot, or The Computer, may get testy with the mutant, be uncooperative, make threats, and generally make the mutant's life unpleasant.

Matter Eater

The character can digest and extract nourishment from virtually anything containing any organic material — dead leaves, poisonous mushrooms, even dirt. In addition, he can digest (but receives no nourishment from) any substance whatsoever — laser guns, floppy disks, auto parts, whatever.

When the character eats something, the gamemaster must make a power roll. If the roll is a success, everything is fine. If not, the mutant experiences acute gastrointestinal pain and, if the roll is botched by a wide margin, may be wounded, incapacitated or even killed.

At first glance, this power may seem to be of little use. In practice, it is often extremely helpful. It is an unparalleled way to get rid of awkward evidence, for example.

Mechanical Intuition

This power enables a character to examine an unfamiliar mechanical device and guess its basic operating and design principles. This is valuable when dealing with unusual artifacts discovered on expeditions and when unfamiliar equipment and experimental devices are assigned to a party for a mission.

The gamemaster makes a power roll with modifiers appropriate to the time and effort expended in examining the item and the character's familiarity with similar devices. If the roll is successful, the character learns the basic operational and design principles of the device.

If the roll fails, the character thinks he understands the device, but his information is

more or less incomplete or inaccurate. For example, a character discovering an ancient soldering gun in the ruins of an Old Reckoning homestead might guess that it is a primitive type of portable heat weapon. Or he might find the rusted remnants of a subcompact car and guess that it was a form of armored attack vehicle.

Mental Blast

The character can stimulate agonizing brain activity in all creatures within a five meter radius. The attack affects all beings (except the character) within this radius. He cannot exempt any creature from its effects.

If the power roll is successful, each being within the radius makes an endurance roll with modifiers relative to the success of the power roll. If a being fails its endurance roll, it suffers acute mental agony. If its roll succeeds, it feels a flash of mental discomfort, but experiences no ill effects.

If the power roll is unsuccessful, the effects of the mental blast are more unpredictable. Often nothing happens. Sometimes a couple of victims' brains explode. Sometimes it is the mutant himself who is stunned or knocked unconscious. Sometimes it seems as though nothing happens, but citizens in neighboring sectors pass out while operating heavy machinery or atomic piles.

Polymorphism

The character may alter his appearance, and indeed his physical form. Mimicking another human being is easiest; anything which involves actually changing bone structure is rather difficult; and changing total mass is virtually impossible.

Have the player state what form he wishes to adopt, then make a power roll. Modify the power attribute for the difficulty of the change; anything other than human appearance should be a considerable strain. If the roll succeeds, the character has achieved more or less the form he wants — the lower the roll, the closer he gets. If the roll fails, so has the character — the higher the roll, the worse the failure.

Exactly what happens in the event of a failure is up to you. Maybe he doesn't change form at all. Maybe he changes all right, but to something completely different from what he intended to become. Maybe he changes, and everything is fine — but when he tries to change back, he finds that he can't — the modified form is now his "natural" one.

The mutant remains in his changed form for 1 to 5 minutes, after which he spontaneously reverts to "natural" form.

Precognition

The character has an imprecise and limited ability to see into the future. This usually takes the form of a conviction of the "rightness" or "wrongness" about a proposed action, or a sense of danger or reward about events in the immediate future.

Metaphysical Note: In order to preserve the GM's free will, we game designers/metaphysical philosophers have arranged that Alpha Complex's future not be rigidly determined.



Traitor Suck-R flaunts his machine empathy mutation.



Intelligent, self-aware beings may always change the course of the future — any time the gamemaster wants. So don't sweat details like self-consistency, time paradoxes, and reliable prophecy.

Further, the fundamental elements of this mutant power are deeply connected to the unconscious and subconscious mind of the character; therefore, precognition may commonly suggest "rightness" or "wrongness" in ways that are difficult for the conscious mind to interpret. For example, a character with deep-rooted guilt about his mutant power and his treasonous association with a secret society might consider crawling down a missile launch tube a "rightness." Each character will have to learn to interpret the ambiguous prophecies of his gamemaster as best he can.

A successful power roll means the precognition is more or less helpful and accurate. An unsuccessful roll means the GM can feed the player any line of hooey he likes. "You have this unquestionable certainty that it is perfectly safe for you to put your hand in that slot. Go ahead. Perfectly safe."

This power sometimes triggers itself spontaneously in situations of grave potential danger. The gamemaster makes a secret power roll. If the roll is successful, the character is warned of imminent danger. If the roll is unsuccessful, the character is cheerfully ignorant of his peril.

Pyrokinesis

The character can spontaneously generate a fire upon any flammable object within a five meter radius. The size, intensity, and rate of propagation of the fire are relative to the combustibility of the fuel substance and how successful the power roll is. If the roll is unsuccessful, the fire doesn't ignite, or it ignites where it's not supposed to (like, in the mutant's utility belt), or it burns out of control.

Regeneration

The mutant has the ability to send biochemical messengers via the bloodstream to the site of an injury, directing all resources from other parts of the body to aid in its healing. The result is accelerated creation of healthy tissue and regeneration of tissues and organs that don't normally regenerate (nervous tissue, fingers, lungs, and so on).

When a mutant with this power is wounded, incapacitated, or suffers some other sort of injury, make a power roll. If successful, the damage begins to heal itself — the more successful the roll, the swifter the recovery. Further, the greater the success, the more the mutant can control the outward appearance of healing — particularly important when you realize how embarrassing discovery of mutant powers can be. As a rough guideline, a power roll of 1 means the injury is instantaneously healed (a real advantage in combat, though tough to explain), but a power roll that just barely succeeds might mean that the injury heals in several hours or days, depending on its seriousness.

An unsuccessful roll means that nothing



A traitor employs the telekinesis mutation to postpone his richly-deserved execution.

happened, or, worse yet, the regeneration went awry. Maybe lots of parts duplicate themselves. Maybe the rapid tissue growth occurs in the wrong place, or the wrong tissues are produced (scales, gills, fins, feathers, chitinous carapace).

Telekinesis

The mutant can manipulate objects *with the power of his mind alone!* In theory, this can mean lifting a 10-ton safe by concentrating real hard, but in practice masses that large are virtually impossible.

Have the player state what he wants to do, and make a power roll. As a general rule of thumb, lifting 10 kilograms (about 22 lbs.) is a task of average difficulty — do not modify the user's power. Modify the power appropriately if the user attempts to lift larger or smaller masses. Also modify it for range and duration — obviously, lifting a banana in Tibet is a lot tougher than lifting one around the corner.

If the power roll succeeds, so does the character. If it fails, you're encouraged to invent an adequately amusing alternate effect. Perhaps the object moves in the opposite direction from that intended, or Newtonian mechanics take hold and the mutant does what he wants but is hurled away by an opposite and equal force, or maybe his brain explodes with the effort. Or maybe it just plain doesn't work.

Note that telekinesis can be used for more than lifting — it can be used for any sort of manipulation — squeezing the trigger on someone else's laser, for instance.

Telepathy

This permits a character to read the surface thoughts of another human. The character must concentrate to use this power, and the subject has to be in line of sight.

The quality of reception varies greatly. A successful power roll reads the conscious thoughts of the subject; the more successful the roll, the more complete and coherent the reception.

An unsuccessful roll means the mutant still receives mental images and impressions, but they may be terribly garbled and unintelligible, or they may be the thoughts of another human in the vicinity, or in some remote location. The more unsuccessful the roll, the lousier the reception or the more distant the unintended victim.

This potent mutation is potentially destructive of the atmosphere of fear and ignorance you want to maintain, so scatter irrelevancies, misinformation, and utter nonsense throughout any useful information. Victims should conveniently be thinking of everything but what the player needs to know — jumpsuits at the Cleanatron, annoying supervisors, tonight's exciting episode of Teela's Celebrity Traitor Roast, *ad nauseam*.

A character cannot listen to the thoughts of more than one person at a time (unless the GM finds this an entertaining way to garble things), and he cannot change subjects (that is, step from one mind to another) without making another power roll.



Teleport

This power creates a field around the user (along the contours of his body, six inches from the skin) which instantaneously transports him from one location to another. Any objects or garments within the field are also transported — most of the time, anyway.

This mutation works both as a voluntary action and as an involuntary response. As a voluntary action, the character must first visualize the location to which he wishes to teleport. It may either be a location in line of sight or one he knows intimately. The closer the location, the better the chances of reaching it intact, but with very successful power rolls, mutants have been known to teleport huge distances and arrive more or less unscathed.

A successful power roll means the mutant is teleported; the more successful the roll, the more likely the mutant reaches his destination in good working order.

If the roll is unsuccessful, the teleport may not occur, or it may occur in such a way that the mutant wishes it hadn't. Sometimes the mutant is parted from his garments and possessions. Sometimes he pops in right in front of a Vulture Squadron on maneuvers. Sometimes he ends up in dark, mysterious, unfamiliar, and unfriendly places. Sometimes he arrives with his elbow sticking out of his ear. Sometimes he winds up in Oz.

As an involuntary response, the character automatically teleports from any situation that presents a real and immediate threat of death. This happens whether the player wants to

teleport or not. In this case, the gamemaster acts as though he were the subconscious mind of the character. The reaction is instinctive, like flinching from a blow. **Caution:** Don't overdo this involuntary teleporting; if you're getting bored, find some other way to torture the poor bastards.

A successful power roll means that the mutant was fortunate in instinctively (i.e., at the GM's discretion) selecting a safe place to teleport to. An unsuccessful roll means the mutant's instincts have betrayed him, delivering him to a locked closet, or an elevator shaft, or in front of a speeding autocar, or inside a reactor or something — and who knows where the poor devil's gear ended up...

Some examples of involuntary teleports:

- The character turns the corner and finds himself facing two opponents with hand flamers. *Tweedle...*
- The character is defusing a bomb. He hears the ominous click of the arming mechanism. *Tweedle...*
- The character has managed to get the hoverbot to take off, but he cannot get it to make the canopy transparent. The instruments indicate a mountain range approaching. *Tweedle...*

X-Ray Vision

Elaborate organs have evolved in the skull which permit the mutant to perceive a wide range of electromagnetic radiation as sense perceptions which are more-or-less intelligibly interpreted by the brain as visual impressions. Just how intelligible the impressions are

depends on how well the mutant understands what he is "seeing" and how well the brain translates the data into images. The more elementary or inaccurate the mutant's understanding of what he is studying, the more cartoonish and inaccurate his impressions. Also, the more dense the material, the smaller the chance of receiving useful information.

A successful power roll means the sense data are more-or-less complete and coherent, and that the brain has made useful sense of what it perceives. Modifiers are appropriate according to the mutant's knowledge of the structure and nature of his subject: for example, if he is skilled in medicine, he understands the bone structure he perceives; if he has no medical training, he may see the body's structure in terms of robot design, or electronic wiring, or lumps of disgusting goo in varying consistencies.

An unsuccessful roll means the mutant receives unintelligible and bewildering impressions (they may be real colorful and pretty, but totally incomprehensible), or they may be cartoonish or misleading in concept. The more unsuccessful the roll, the more off-the-wall the impressions. One mutant may see a citizen's insides as the contents of a food vat. Another may see the circuitry within a wall as a microcosm of the Alpha Complex transit system. And sometimes it's hard to get your subject in focus; sometimes you think you're studying a lock mechanism when you're really studying the heat sensor relays on the atomic furnace in the next room.



7. Non-Combat Perils

Vehicular Accidents and Falling from Great Heights

Occasionally characters fall off something tall, or are inside something moving very fast that suddenly comes to a halt against something relatively massive. Such characters are said to have *had an accident*.

We wanted you to know what happens to a character when he has an accident, so we made a nice chart (see Fold-Out B). We cheerfully admit that we haven't tested it out to see whether it is realistic. We couldn't get hold of any supersonic aircraft (or any volunteers who wanted to ride one into the ground). So you'll have to make do with this chart. Or you can experiment on your own and make up your own chart. Maybe you can get a friend to jump off a small cliff and see what happens. Let us know how it comes out.

Drowning and Asphyxiation (and Swimming)

A character who is surprised and unable to hold his breath dies within ten rounds or so if he cannot breathe (roll the die to see how many rounds he lasts). If the character has time to prepare himself, he can hold his breath for at least as many rounds as his endurance attribute. To hold his breath longer, he must make an endurance roll each round thereafter. If he fails, he inhales water and dies in ten rounds or so unless rescued. A character may hold his breath a maximum of ten rounds longer than his endurance attribute.

Swimming is not a skill taught in Alpha Complex. What a *Paranoia* character does in water over his head is called "delaying drowning." The character may make an endurance roll to keep his head above water. This does not include moving in any direction. If nobody rescues the character, he will drown.

The gamemaster may introduce a swimming skill at his discretion. Native cultures in the

Outdoors will certainly have the skill, and may be able to teach it to a Troubleshooter. Of course, the skill would be treasonous.

Hunger, Exposure, and Thirst

Alpha Complex citizens are used to three substantial meals a day. For each day a character doesn't eat (or eats real poorly), he temporarily loses one point of endurance. If a character's endurance drops to zero, he has starved to death. Assuming the character isn't dead yet, these points can be regained at a rate of up to one point per normal meal (therefore, at a maximum rate of three points per day under optimal circumstances).

If it is real hot, a character's brain may cook. He makes an endurance roll — modify the attribute number depending on how hot it is. If he fails the roll, he becomes delirious and dies within ten hours or so (roll the die to see how many) unless he receives treatment. Treatment means getting out of the sun and lying around for a long time.



If it is real cold, a character could get hypothermia. He makes an endurance roll (modify the attribute number depending on how cold it is and how poorly the character is dressed). If he fails the roll, over a period of ten hours or so (roll to see how many), his ability to think straight begins to diminish until he lapses into a coma and dies within an hour. If caught before he goes into a coma, he can be treated by being returned to a normal human environment. If he has lapsed into a coma, he requires medical treatment within the hour or he will die.

If a character doesn't get enough fluids, he can get dehydrated and die of thirst. A character can go without water for 24 hours without penalty. Thereafter he must make endurance rolls every 12 hours or pass out. If the character is not rescued (given water) within 12 hours after he passes out, he dies of thirst. In any event, a character will die of thirst after going five days without water (fewer days if he happens to be stuck in a hot desert or someplace).

Disease and Old Age

If the gamemaster wants a character to get a disease, he should name the disease (Collywobles, for example) and make it equivalent to either a wound or incapacitation for recovery purposes.

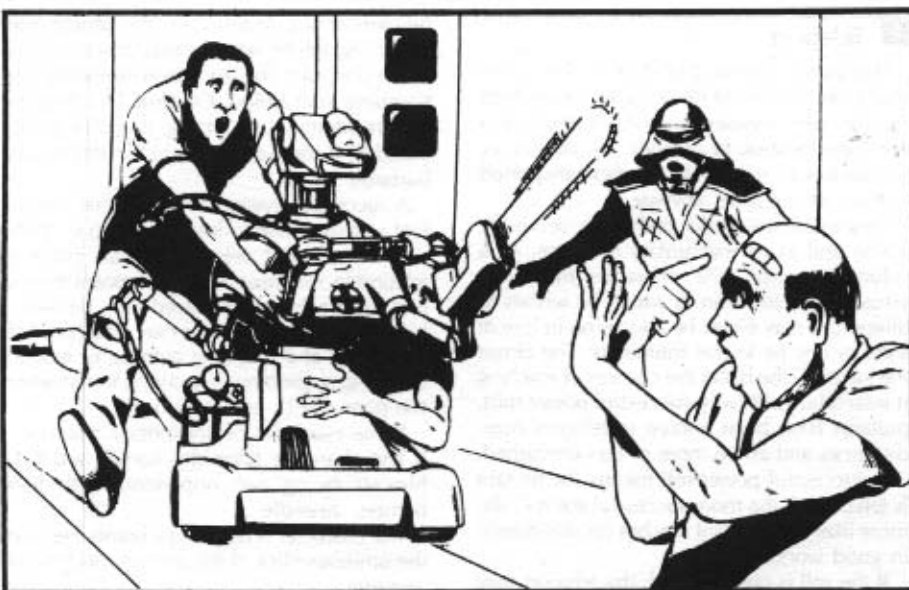
Note: Most diseases do not provide much entertainment for players or gamemaster unless they produce immediate results, like limbs falling off or fevered ravings or something.

Old age is not a problem experienced by many Troubleshooters. If you feel a character is getting too old, be direct, and assassinate him. It is generally more dramatic than running sessions in geriatric settings.



Insanity Clause — as in “Don’t You Believe Insanity Clause?” (Optional Rule)

A Troubleshooter must be able to live with circumstances that would drive most humans crazy. However, even Troubleshooters reach the limits of their endurance at times, and they slip off into the Wonderful World of Mental Illness.



This is a perfectly normal occurrence in Alpha Complex, and would not justify an insanity roll.

Of course, one can argue that all Troubleshooters are clinically nutso already and that no particular rules are needed to enforce this. We agree, actually. But if your players persistently refuse to gibber in fear, you can use these rules to make their characters act appropriately. If they're roleplaying properly, you may never need the insanity rules, so use them sparingly. And don't feel obliged to make insanity checks every three minutes; these rules are optional, okay?

When to Make an Insanity Roll

Whenever you feel like it.

Well, okay. How about this: Make an insanity roll whenever a character feels:

- overwhelming insecurity (e.g., when he discovers that everyone is out to get him)
- shock upon encountering the unimaginable, alien, or incredible (e.g., when leaving Alpha Complex for the first time to discover that the Outside has no temperature control)
- unbearable stress (e.g., when struggling futilely to remove a plasma generator backpack as the malfunction buzzer screams in his ear)
- despair (e.g., when the flybot, in response to a request for estimated time of arrival, asks if you want the period stated in decades or centuries).

Obviously, these circumstances are simply routine in *Paranoia*, and if you rolled for insanity every time a character was confronted with one, that is all you'd end up doing. Restrain yourself. Save insanity rolls for truly extreme cases. The following guidelines are suggested:

1. No more than one insanity roll per character per adventure. (After the first shock, the character will be comfortably numb to succeeding surprises.) Many adventures will not even produce a single occasion for an insanity roll.

2. Make insanity rolls only for circumstances that are truly unique or overwhelming — once-in-a-lifetime events.

3. The event should take the character completely by surprise to qualify as an insanity-producing event.

Warning: If insanity is used too often, the players will resent your interfering with their control over their characters. They are usually all too happy to have their characters act in crazy ways, even without your prompting, but your requiring them to act crazy can take the fun out of it. Use it, but don't abuse it.

How to Make an Insanity Roll

The player makes an attribute roll against his power index. The seriousness of the circumstances determine how difficult the attribute roll should be.

If the attribute roll is successful, the character weathers his mental crisis and suffers no ill effects. If he fails the roll, roll on the Insanity Table (see Fold-Out B) to determine the scale of his mental disorder.

Insanity Table Results

Stunned: Unable to perform any action except gibbering incoherently for one round.

Anxiety Attack: The character is temporarily unable to cope with his situation. The character eagerly avoids all responsibility and looks to others to solve his problems. For several minutes, all attribute and skill rolls are subject to a -4 modifier.

Paranoia/Personality Disorder: The character develops a conviction that everyone is an enemy, and interprets others' behavior as motivated by a desire to “get” him. In addition, the character refuses to take responsibility for his own failures, blaming them on everyone around him. “It's not my fault! He did it!”



Whacko: Berserk. Bonkers. Both oars not in the water. Elevator doesn't go to the top floor. Ding-dong-nobody-home. Amateur psychologists are invited to be more specific and clinical about neuroses and psychoses, but it is sufficient to tell the player that his character is completely nuts, and let him improvise from there.

Recovery from Insanity

Recovery from "stunned" or "anxiety attack" is automatic, since the condition is only temporary. "Paranoia/Personality Disorder" and "Whacko" persist until treated. Fortunately, Alpha Complex has excellent facilities for the treatment of insane Troubleshooters. In fact, The Computer has some fairly enlightened ideas about mental health. If the character gets back to Alpha Complex in one piece, he will get pumped full of drugs and given plenty of

Computer therapy. The character will be completely cured in time for the next adventure. Completely.

Optional Rule: The character is completely cured... except for this little quirk....

The character retains a minor but permanent mental disorder even after successful drug-and-therapy sessions. Maybe a nervous tick in his eye. Or a fear of darkness. Or a funny habit of whistling "Smoke Gets in Your Eyes" to himself whenever he's nervous. The nature of the disorder is left to the gamemaster's and player's discretion.



8. Treason and Its Fruits

Treason Points

Every player character has a treason point total. This is a number between 0 (trusted implicitly by The Computer) and 20 (dead, or close to it). Everyone begins with 1 point. Points are gained and lost in the course of play.

It is recommended that you keep a record somewhere of each PC's treason points. It's important, of course, that the players never get a gander at it. Perhaps you should keep it in your wallet at all times, or develop a code so they can't figure it out, or write it on the inside of your arm. When a PC gains or loses treason points, alter his total.

The Treason Chart (see Fold-Out B) lists a bunch of actions for which characters gain or lose treason points, and recommended point awards. Feel free to substitute your own point awards at will.

Also, if you take this treason point bit too far, you'll be carefully considering every player's every action and deciding how many, if any, treason points to assign as a result. You'll spend more time bookkeeping than running the game. That's no fun, for you or for your players.

So here's what you do: if you happen to notice that a player is doing something treasonous and happen to have your treason record handy, increase his treason point total accordingly. If you don't notice, or don't have the treason record handy, or are feeling lazy, don't increase his total. (Don't worry about it; The Computer wasn't looking, or no one reported the action.) When the players start tattling on each other, then get out your treason record and start adding 'em up.

The Postman Only Rings 20 Times

Actual treason (like being a convicted Communist) merits immediate and summary execution. However, it's also possible to become a traitor by degrees, as it were. If a character acts



Especially fortunate Troubleshooters receive skill training directly from R&D's crack Human Resource Refinement and Protein Recovery specialists.

suspiciously long enough, The Computer becomes convinced that he is a traitor, even if no single act itself truly warrants execution.

So any character whose treason point total reaches 20 is declared a traitor (see page 52).

Treason Points as Computer Trust

A character's treason point total is also a convenient measure of how much The Computer trusts him. When a character asks The Computer for information or equipment, you may if you wish roll the die and compare it to his treason point total. A lower roll means The Computer rejects the request. A roll that's

greater than or equal to the treason total means The Computer thinks it's fine.

Of course, you shouldn't feel obligated to roll dice every time anyone asks The Computer something. Use your own good sense to determine what The Computer does; use a treason roll only when you can't think of anything better.

Assigning Treason Points

During the debriefing at the end of an expedition, weigh each player's story, and then decide how many treason points to award. Failure to complete a mission ought to cost



every character at least one treason point; successful completion ought to mean each character's total is reduced by at least one point. Point awards for accusations of treason, mutant powers used, and so on are in addition to these awards.

Promotion

Surviving an expedition without being killed, lost, incinerated or convicted of treason is a considerable accomplishment. At the conclusion of a typical adventure, non-treasonous survivors ought to be promoted one clearance level.

Actually, the higher a character's clearance, the tougher it ought to be to rise. Here's a rule of thumb you may adopt:

Reds, Oranges, and Yellows: Surviving an adventure means promotion to the next clearance level.

Greens and Blues: Surviving two adventures means promotion to the next level.

Indigos and Violets: Surviving three adventures means promotion.

Ultraviolets: You've got Ultraviolet characters? Whoops. Turn yourself in for a vigorous brain-scrub. Clearly you're defective. Whyncha kill the bastards?

Skill Points

At the end of any adventure, whether successful or not, each character ought to receive skill points. We suggest an average of 4 points apiece for each session of play, but modify your point awards according to how much fun you had: players who contributed to a good time should get more, and those who were boring less.

Spending Skill Points

Players must immediately spend skill points to increase their characters' skills. A skill point can be spent on any skill, and increases the skill level by one. Players can spend their skill

points any way they like (although you may tell a player that he's restricted to spending points on specific skills). Skill levels can be increased above 12 or 14 (or indeed above 20); the limits on skill levels apply only to designing characters.

Credits

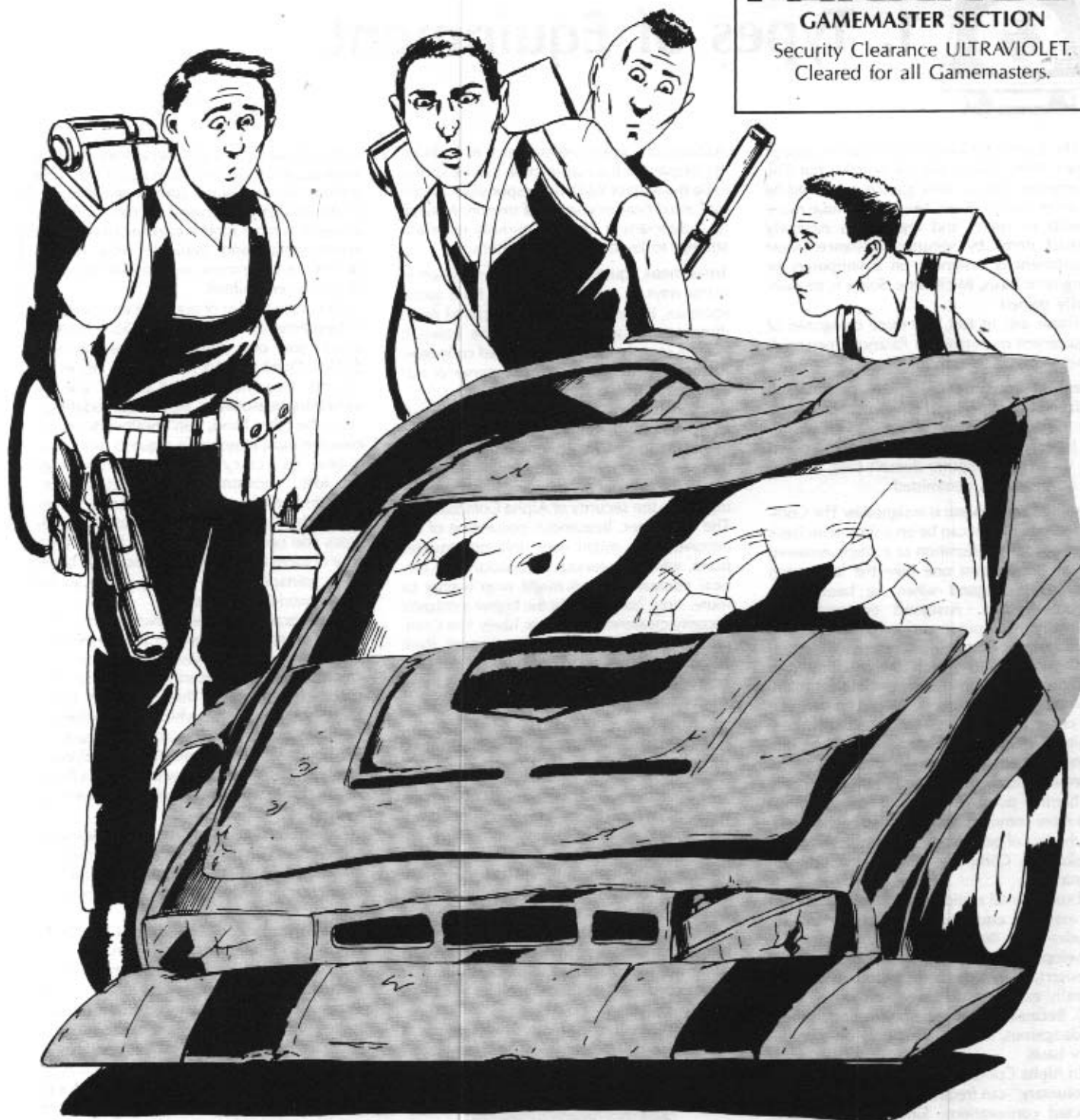
You might also consider credit bonuses or fines at the end of an adventure. Generally, bonuses should be provided at the end of successful missions, although they might also be awarded to individuals for the apprehension or execution of traitors or other meritorious services. Fines should generally be imposed for the loss or destruction of equipment or Computer property. We consider any award or fine of 1000 credits or less reasonable, but if you really want to put someone in debt to the tune of 1,000,000 credits, fine by us. Also, don't be shy about awarding huge amounts of money, as you can't buy much in Alpha Complex anyway.



PARANOIA

GAMEMASTER SECTION

Security Clearance ULTRAVIOLET.
Cleared for all Gamemasters.



Equipment



1. Types of Equipment

The Computer keeps close tabs on equipment. Some things can be bought, but The Computer casts a stern glance on would-be hoarders. In any event, few citizens have many credits to spare, and regulations narrowly restrict items by security clearance. Most equipment is assigned, on a temporary or long-term basis, to citizens. Some is treasonously owned.

Those are, in fact, the three categories of equipment ownership in *Paranoia*: personal, assigned, and treasonous.

Personal Equipment: is, like, personal. A citizen obtains personal equipment by paying for it. He can use and abuse it as he wishes — he can eat it, burn it, jump up and down on it — The Computer doesn't care, as long as no treason is committed.

Assigned Equipment: is assigned by The Computer. Assignment can be on a short-term basis (perhaps for the duration of a single mission) or on a long-term one (like the laser each citizen is assigned when he becomes a Troubleshooter). Assigned equipment is, naturally, Computer property, and losing, damaging or destroying it is treason.

The citizen to which the equipment is assigned is personally responsible for maintaining and protecting it. Should he permit it to come to harm, he would, naturally, be a traitor. Since accidents do happen, The Computer does not invariably execute citizens who permit equipment assigned to them to come to harm — punitive fines (and treason points) are more common. Still, repeated carelessness, or the loss of particularly valuable items, could make The Computer call for the ultimate penalty.

Experimental equipment is one special class of assigned equipment. "Experimental" includes any item that is currently under development or being studied by Research and Design (and includes both "experimental" and "really experimental" weapons — see page 67). Because testing experimental equipment is dangerous, it is assigned only on a voluntary basis.

In Alpha Complex, as in the army, the term "voluntary" can frequently take on, ah, unexpected connotations. Since The Computer considers R&D's efforts to develop new and better devices of the utmost importance to Alpha Complex, every good citizen should be eager to serve the cause by testing experimental equipment. Refusing to do so is not treason, but would certainly disappoint The Computer.

Just as with all assigned equipment, the citizen to whom experimental equipment is assigned is responsible for it. Being responsible for experimental equipment can be unhealthy, because experimental equipment

malfunctions, often spectacularly, with alarming frequency. If a malfunction can be shown to be the fault of R&D, the responsible citizen may avoid fines or charges of treason. Naturally, technicians at R&D strenuously resist any attempt to lay the blame on them.

Treasonous Equipment: may be obtained in many ways. It may be available from secret societies. It may consist of undeclared items discovered on a mission. It may be stolen. It may be secretly looted from a dead colleague. All equipment that is neither personal nor assigned is treasonous.

Failure to report and surrender all treasonous equipment is treason. If a citizen is discovered in possession of treasonous equipment, he receives one or more treason points, depending on the value of the item and how threatening it is to the security of Alpha Complex and The Computer. Treasonous possession of expensive shoes might earn only one treason point, while treasonous possession of a tactical nuclear weapon might earn twenty or more. Note, however, that the higher a citizen's security clearance, the more likely The Computer is to ignore treasonous equipment. Rank hath its privileges, and The Computer does not begrudge a few special possessions to those whose loyalty to The Computer is proven.

Equipment and Availability

The sections that follow describe many varieties of equipment. However, not all are necessarily available at any time. There are limited quantities of each item in Alpha Complex, and they are rationed on a security clearance basis — a bunch of Red level Troubleshooters are well down on the totem pole. Certain sophisticated devices are no longer manufactured in Alpha Complex, and some are manufactured infrequently and at great expense (robots, most vehicles and high-technology gear).

As gamemaster, you can always refuse a request for equipment because it is not cur-

rently available, and you can assign woefully inadequate or inappropriate equipment to a mission because of the current unavailability of the proper equipment. Further, you may decide that more sophisticated models are still experimental, and available only for experimental assignment (with the attendant risk of equipment failure).

Of course the list of available equipment is not expected to be exhaustive. Don't hesitate to add your own items, or delete ones you dislike. Don't be too fussy about prices or security clearances. If the players ask for something reasonable, be accommodating.

On the other hand, don't hesitate to refuse even the most reasonable requests from time to time. It's a crazy world. Sometimes things get lost. Sometimes things get broken. Sometimes the inventory gets confused. Sometimes The Computer gets confused. Sometimes you can't even get a laser barrel. Or a case of room fresheners gets mistakenly labeled as grenades. That's the way it goes in the wacky world of *Paranoia*.

The Personal Equipment Chart (see Fold-Out B) lists all equipment which Troubleshooters may purchase themselves with their own credits. It also lists a security clearance for each piece of equipment; that clearance is the security clearance at which the equipment becomes available. At the indicated clearance, the Troubleshooter will receive the equipment if he requests it and can pay the cost in credits. At any lower clearance, his request will be refused.

However, the chart itself is clearance *Ultraviolet*! The player characters themselves are never told what equipment is available at their clearance. The only way to find out is to ask.

The Miscellaneous Equipment Chart (Fold-Out B) lists equipment that players can never purchase, that can only be assigned to them. Nonetheless, credit costs and security clearances are included. The listed cost is the suggested fine for loss or damage to the indicated item. The security clearance is the level at which a player character can requisition the item with a reasonable expectation of his request being granted. When equipment is requisitioned in this way, a character must explain why he needs the item, and must sign documents accepting responsibility for it. His request may be refused if The Computer doesn't think he needs it, or if other (non-player) characters have already requisitioned all available items. In other words, notwithstanding the printed security clearance, feel free to refuse a request if you wish.

These charts are, of course, also clearance *Ultraviolet*.





2. Weapons

Dying repeatedly can sometimes get a little dull. That's why you need to give the players lots of entertaining, unusual and different ways to die.

Weapons in Alpha Complex are deadly — to their users as well as their targets. You know how everyone says the American work ethic isn't what it used to be? Well, in Alpha Complex they don't even have a work ethic. The few citizens who work in Alpha Complex's automated factories turning out mass-produced weapons are more concerned with fulfilling their quotas than with quality. As a result, even the most reliable weapons malfunction with alarming frequency.

If you like, you can use the optional malfunction rules (page 67) to determine when a weapon malfunctions. Or, you can be insouciantly cavalier, and have weapons malfunction whenever you like — when things are moving too slowly, for example, or when a weapon's failure will add to the usual slapstick atmosphere of *Paranoia* combat.

Each weapon, of course, malfunctions in its own charming fashion. Moreover, the user of a weapon usually has one chance to try to remedy the malfunction before it proves deadly — by making a weapons skill roll. The descriptions below say how weapons malfunction, and what happens when a user tries to "remedy" the problem.

Weapon Types

Different weapons kill you in different ways. Lasers puncture you with beams of coherent light, flamethrowers cover you with burning liquid, and grenades send lots of little jagged pieces of metal through you. While the distinction at first might seem unimportant — Dead is dead, right? Who cares how you got that way? — some armor protects against certain forms of damage and not against others (see "Armor" in the "Combat" section). It is therefore helpful to know what kind of damage weapons inflict upon you. So, weapons are divided into "types" according to the damage they do (see the Weapons Chart).

Laser Weapons (L): These send beams of coherent light through you. Shiny, mirrored surfaces provide some protection, as does armor reflecting light of the same color as the laser's beam.

Projectile Weapons (P): These send pieces of metal, plastic, ice, or other hard substances through you. To offer protection against projectiles, armor has to be able to withstand high impact over a small surface area.

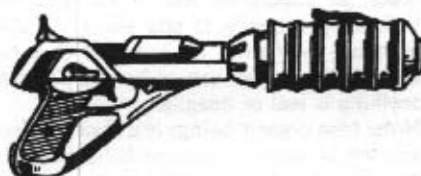
Armor Piercing Weapons (AP): A lot like projectile weapons, except that these punch through armor better.

Field Weapons (F): These attack areas, not specific points (e.g., flamethrowers cover you with flames). Armor must cover you entirely to protect you against these things.

Impact Weapons (I): These crush you or cut you. Stuff like plate mail or lots of heavy sweaters protects you from impact damage.

Energy Weapons (E): These shoot beams of electrons or other high-tech molecular junk at you. As you might expect, only high-tech armor protects against this stuff.

Lasers



A laser weapon's barrel can be unscrewed and removed from the main body of the gun, then replaced with another barrel. Replacing a barrel takes one combat round, during which the user can take no other action. Each barrel may be fired with reasonable safety up to six times. If fired more than six times, there is an increasing chance of malfunction each time. (If using the malfunction rules, the malfunction number decreases by 1 each time, so on the seventh shot, the weapon malfunctions on a skill roll of 19 or 20; on the eighth, on a roll of 18, 19 or 20; and so on.)

Each laser barrel can shoot a beam of only one color of the security clearance spectrum. The main body of a laser weapon can be mounted with a barrel of any color (although possessing a barrel that shoots a beam of higher clearance than your own is treason). Reflex armor is designed to reflect all laser fire of its wearer's color and below. See page 64 for more details.

Traditionally, each laser barrel is manufactured with six rings around the snout, each the same color as the barrel's beam. Each time the weapon is fired, one of the rings changes color. A glance at the weapon reveals how many shots remain, and the barrel's color.

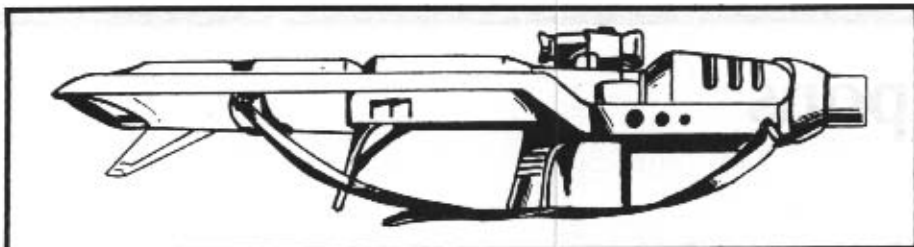
Malfunction: If a laser pistol or rifle malfunctions, it emits a high-pitched beeping sound. Within a few combat rounds (roll the die, and halve the number rolled, rounding down, to determine how many) it explodes. The gamemaster must roll on the Damage Table for each being within 3 meters of the weapon at that time; treat the explosion as a "P5" attack.

Remedy: A successful weapon skill roll prevents the explosion, but the weapon is unusable thereafter.

Slugthrowers and Cone Rifles

Slugthrowers are a development of the modern hand-gun, semi-automatic rifle, and SMG. Cone rifles are neither cone-shaped nor rifles, but a development of the modern bazooka. Both can fire a variety of different shells. Ammunition for both weapons are available in these forms:

- **Solid slugs** are solid metal slugs which do damage by impact.
- **Dum-dums** are solid slugs designed to fly apart upon impact. Dum-dum shells have lower range than solid slugs, but do more damage.
- **HE** or **high explosive** shells explode on contact. For slugthrowers, these are explosive bullets, which do more damage than solid shells or dum-dums; for cone rifles, these are explosive shells which can affect a 5 meter radius.
- **AP** or **armor piercing** shells are designed to penetrate armor. For slugthrowers, these are "greased" bullets designed to penetrate kevlar or other body armor. For cone rifles, these are explosive shells designed to penetrate tank or flybot armor.
- **HEAT** or **high explosive antitank** shells are similar to AP shells, but are somewhat more effective (and costly).
- **Napalm** shells are designed to explode on contact, spreading jellied petroleum or white phosphorus over the skin of the target (or, in the case of cone rifle shells, over the surrounding area). Napalm continues to burn for some rounds after contact (roll the die to determine how many), doing damage to the target each round. Since both jellied petroleum and white phosphorus contain their own supply of oxygen, napalm cannot be extinguished with water or by suffocation, but can only be removed by scraping the stuff off the skin.
- **Flare** shells are designed to illuminate rather than cause injury. Flare shells fired by slugthrowers are tracer bullets — they produce streaks of light which light up the area within the radius listed on the Weapon Chart (see Fold-Out B). Flare shells fired by cone rifles light up the area indicated on the Weapon Chart, and continue to burn for several rounds after launch (roll the die and divide by 2 to determine how many).
- **ECM** shells contain electronic jamming equipment. Only bot targets are affected by ECM. Additionally, radio, radar, and other



devices which rely on the broadcast or reception of electromagnetic signals become inoperative. The shell's radius of effect is listed on the Weapon Chart.

- **Tacnukes** shells are available only for cone rifles. They are small nuclear devices, and can be quite devastating.

- **Gas** shells spread a cloud of gas over the radius indicated on the Weapons Chart. The effect of gas depends on the specific type used:

Poison gas does damage to any living being within the gas radius. Roll for damage for each such being; treat it as an "F3" attack.

Smoke reduces visibility and scatters laser fire. When a character fires any weapon at a target visible through smoke, halve his skill number. In addition, treat the smoke as L1 armor when laser fire is directed through it.

Corrosion gas does damage to all metallic beings (i.e., bots) within the area of the gas. Treat as poison gas, but it affects only inorganic and not organic beings. It also reduces the damage protection abilities of metal armor (e.g., plate); reduce the armor rating by 1 for each round the armor is exposed to the gas.

Vomit gas causes organic beings in the area of the gas to vomit. Each round, each being must make an endurance roll. If he fails, he begins to vomit, and may take no other action for several combat rounds (roll the die and halve the number rolled to determine how many).

Gauss gas is a substance which dramatically increases the permittivity of free space* within the area of the gas cloud. If a gauss or

energy weapon is fired into the area of the cloud and hits its target, add 3 to the damage number when rolling on the Damage Table.

Dirt gas rapidly adheres to any solid substance, coating it with a black slime. Apart from being disgusting, this reduces the damage protection from reflex armor. Reflex coated with dirt gas is only L2 armor. It returns to L4 if the wearer gets a chance to clean his armor. It takes two rounds and a plentiful supply of water or other solvent to clean armor.

Hallucinogenic gas contains a potent hallucinogenic drug. Each combat round a human remains in the gas cloud, he must make an endurance roll; if he fails, the hallucinogen begins to take effect. All skill numbers are halved for the next daycycle because the human cannot be sure whether anything is real or imaginary.

Note: Non-organic beings (e.g., bots) are not affected by poison, vomit or hallucinogenic gas. Characters wearing gas masks are similarly immune to these gases, as are characters in environment and combat suits.

Triggers for Cone Rifle Ammunition

Cone rifle shells are usually equipped with contact fuses, which explode upon impact, but other types of fuses are also available. (All slugthrower ammunition uses contact fuses.) Any type of shell may be equipped with any type of fuse. Other fuse types are:

- **Heat** fuses activate a shell when it gets hot. How hot is hot? That varies from shell to shell — some activate at 30° C, some at 100 degrees, some the moment they feel body heat, some only in the midst of a thermonuclear explosion. When a character requisitions a shell with a heat trigger, he should specify the heat level he wants, and pray that PLC doesn't screw up.

- **Gauss** fuses activate when subject to violent electromagnetic flux. This flux can be caused by gauss or energy weapons, powerful radio signals, lightning, etc.

- **Remote** fuses are designed to activate upon reception of a coded radio signal. They are usually used with com units modified to transmit the appropriate code. The user fires the shell, lets it fall, and waits. When he wants to activate the shell, he transmits the code. If the remote fuse is in an area blanketed by ECM jamming, it will not activate.

- **Timers** activate a certain amount of time after being fired. How much time? Like heat fuses, this varies, from nanoseconds to geological epochs. Again, a character can try to specify when he requisitions a timer. Timers which can be set by hand prior to being fired are also available, but are rarer than pre-set timers.

Malfunction: The slugthrower or cone rifle jams. If the weapon was firing any kind of shell other than solid slug or dum-dums, the shell explodes in the weapon's chamber, destroying it and doing damage as indicated by the Weapons Chart. The shell also has whatever effect such shells normally have (e.g., flare shells emit light).

Remedy: A successful weapon roll clears the jam. If the shell fired was solid slug or dum-dum, this returns the weapon to normal function. Otherwise, the weapon is a total loss.

Other Hand Weapons

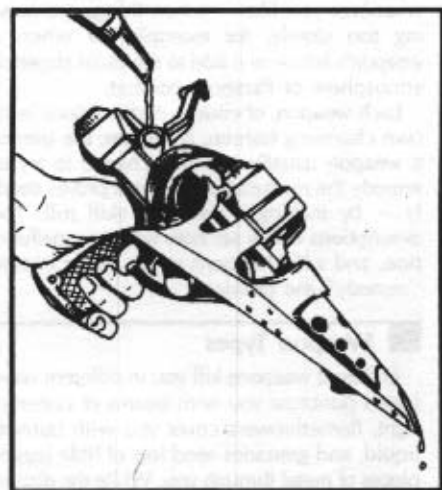
Sonic Weapons

Sonic pistols and rifles are experimental weapons which project a cone of deadly ultrasonic vibrations.

Malfunction: The weapon shakes itself to pieces, doing damage to its wielder. Roll on the Damage Table; treat it as an "E4" attack.

Remedy: No remedy is possible.

Ice Guns



The ice gun: just add water.

Ice guns operate by freezing water and rapid-firing needles of ice. They are reloaded by pouring water into a nozzle at the top of the weapon.

Malfunction: The freezing chamber jams and over-freezes. Roll the die; if the number rolled is even, the weapon is inoperative. If odd, the gun shatters, spraying the wielder with shards of ice. Roll on the Damage Table; treat it as a "P8" attack.

Remedy: A successful weapon skill roll prevents the ice gun from shattering, but the weapon cannot be repaired.

Energy Weapons

The principles by which the blaster and energy pistol work are so secret that virtually no one knows them. The blaster is a large (2-foot long) weapon fired with one hand

*"Permittivity of free space" is a variable used in certain equations dealing with electromagnetic radiation. The speed of light varies with the medium through which it travels; light moves faster in a vacuum than through air for example. (In fact, this change in speed is responsible for the phenomenon of refraction.) "Permittivity" is a material constant which determines the speed of light through a medium. The "permittivity of free space" is a fundamental physical constant which determines the speed of light through vacuum. There is no known way to change the permittivity of free space; indeed, if one were able to do so, one would be juggling with fundamental physical laws.

The reference to the permittivity of free space here is what is technically known as "pseudo-scientific gobbledegook." Paranoia is not a hard science fiction game; it is utterly unreasonable, for example, to expect that any mutation could give a human being the power to eat lead, let alone read the thoughts of another. However, authenticity in pseudo-science is as important as in other things, and if you're going to invent pseudo-scientific gobbledegook, you might as well draw your terminology from the real thing (c.f. "Paranormology" in the Ghostbusters Training Manual).

which has flashy fins and is styled like a Corvette; the energy pistol is much smaller, and ends in an antenna surrounded by rings.

Malfunction: Roll the die. On an even roll, the weapon stops working. On an odd roll, it heats up suddenly, then vaporizes. In the latter case, the holder suffers damage; roll on the Damage Table — treat it as an "E8" attack.

Remedy: A successful weapon skill roll prevents vaporization, but the weapon is useless.

Needle Guns

Needle guns look much like modern automatic hand guns, but appear to be made of plastic. When the user presses a button on the handle, a door opens to reveal a roll of tiny plastic flechettes. The weapon is reloaded by removing the spool on which this roll is mounted and replacing it with a new one (much like replacing a typewriter or printer ribbon). When fired, the weapon separates the flechettes, and fires them in a steady stream.

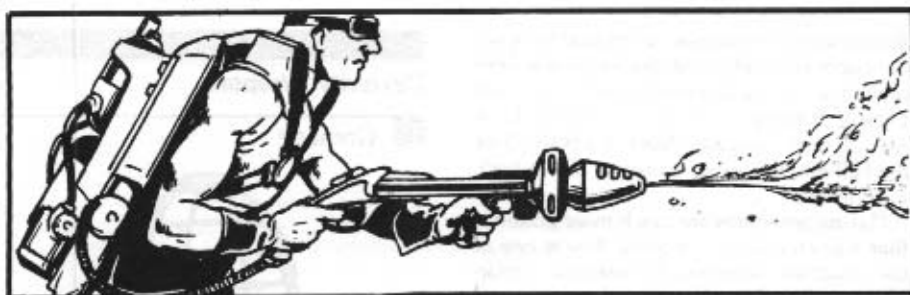
Malfunction: The plastic ammunition jams in the pressure chamber and the weapon may explode. Roll the die. On an even roll, the weapon is unusable. On an odd roll, it explodes. In this case, roll for all beings within 1 meter on the Damage Table (treat it as a "P9" attack).

Remedy: A successful weapon skill roll clears the jam and prevents an explosion, but the weapon malfunction number decreases by 1 (to 18) whenever fired thereafter.

Hand Flamer

Sort of a mini-flamethrower; it fires a thin jet of flaming liquid at high velocity.

Malfunction: It may explode. Roll the die; if the roll is even, the weapon stops working. If the roll is odd, the weapon explodes; roll damage for its wielder on the Damage Table (treat it as an "F8" attack).



Remedy: Nothing can stop the weapon from exploding. If the weapon stops working, a successful weapon skill roll returns it to normal function.

Stun Guns

Stun guns do no damage. Instead, any living target which is hit is stunned for several combat rounds; roll the die, halve the number rolled and round fractions down to determine how many rounds. During this time, the target may not take any action.

Malfunction: All beings within 5 meters are stunned (roll as above to determine the number of rounds).

Remedy: A successful weapon skill roll repairs the weapon. If a character attempts to repair the weapon and fails, he is knocked unconscious and the weapon is permanently busted.

Tanglers

A tangler throws a 4 meter adhesive rope, which wraps itself around the target and gradually contracts. It does no damage, but when a target is hit, the gamemaster rolls on the Hit Location Table (Fold-Out B) to determine the body location to which the tangle rope adheres. If the head is hit, the rope is assumed to have wrapped around the target's neck, and the target will die of strangulation

in several rounds (roll the die to determine how many) unless the rope is removed. The victim needs the aid of another to remove it, but this takes only one round. If any other body location is hit, that area is immobilized and the target loses its use. Again, he may remove the rope in one round with the aid of another.

Malfunction: It stops working.

Remedy: A successful weapon skill roll fixes it. An unsuccessful roll means all the adhesive ropes burst out and stick to the character attempting the repair.

Heavy Weapons

Flamethrowers

This is your classic World War II-type flamethrower. It's a pretty devastating weapon; on the other hand, it's of limited use in enclosed spaces (like, oops, most of Alpha Complex) because the stream has a habit of bouncing back when it hits an obstruction. Also, they do have a nasty tendency to explode, and the user is strapped into the weapon — hard to run when things go bad.

Malfunction: It explodes. Roll for everyone within 5 meters on the Damage Table (treat as an F9 weapon).

Remedy: A successful weapon skill roll prevents the explosion, but the weapon is useless.

Gauss Guns

Gauss guns project a violent electromagnetic flux which wreaks havoc on bots and electronic equipment. Organic beings do not suffer damage from gauss guns.

Malfunction: If the weapon malfunctions, it stops working — no other ill effects.

Remedy: A successful electronic engineering skill roll fixes the weapon.

Plasma Generator

A plasma generator consists of a tank backpack which contains plasma held in a magnetic bottle, a magnetically-sealed hose which leads from the backpack to a hand projector, and a shield which protects the firer from the hand projector. When fired, a ball of plasma (superheated gas) is emitted from the hand projector, and travels forward from the firer, expanding as it moves. Each combat round, the ball moves 5 meters forward,



A traitor demonstrates the tangler.



though its movement may be affected by wind. It expands outward in a 60 degree cone in front of the firer, doing damage to anything in that cone as it moves. It continues moving for 4 rounds, then dissipates. **Note:** If a player fires the ball into the wind, it may be blown back into his face.

Plasma generators are much more powerful than flamethrowers — indeed, they're one of the deadliest weapons in *Paranoia*. Unfortunately, like flamethrowers, the wielder is strapped in, and the weapon malfunctions frequently.

Malfunction: A warning alarm buzzes. After several combat rounds (roll the die and halve the number rolled to determine how many), the weapon explodes. Roll for all beings within 10 meters on the Damage Table (treat as an "F20" attack).

Remedy: This is a tough one. The weapon is very expensive, and The Computer will be very displeased if it is damaged. On the other hand, a character may understandably prefer to run. A successful weapon skill roll turns off the buzzer. A second successful roll prevents the weapon from exploding. A third roll would repair the weapon and return it to normal function — good luck.

By the way — if the magnetic containment bottle is ever hit by laser fire, the plasma generator is not long for this world.

Dexterity Weapons

Grenade



This is, like, a grenade. You throw it, see? Unlike all other dexterity-based weapons, grenades are "ranged," that is, they are not used in melee but thrown at targets. All the combat skill modifiers which affect other ranged weapons also affect them.

Malfunction: The grenade is a dud and fails to explode.

Remedy: No remedy is possible.

Unarmed

Bare fists. These don't malfunction.

Brass Knuckles

Like the name says, although brass is rare in Alpha Complex — these are more likely to be made of steel or aluminum. They don't malfunction particularly, either.

Knife, Club, Sword, Truncheon

Do you really need definitions of these?

Malfunction: It breaks.

Remedy: There ain't none. Oh, you can take it home and fix it up with some superglue, I suppose.

Neurowhip

A nasty whip-shaped weapon which delivers a stinging jolt to the nervous system.

Malfunction: Lashes back and hits its wielder; roll damage for him as for a target.

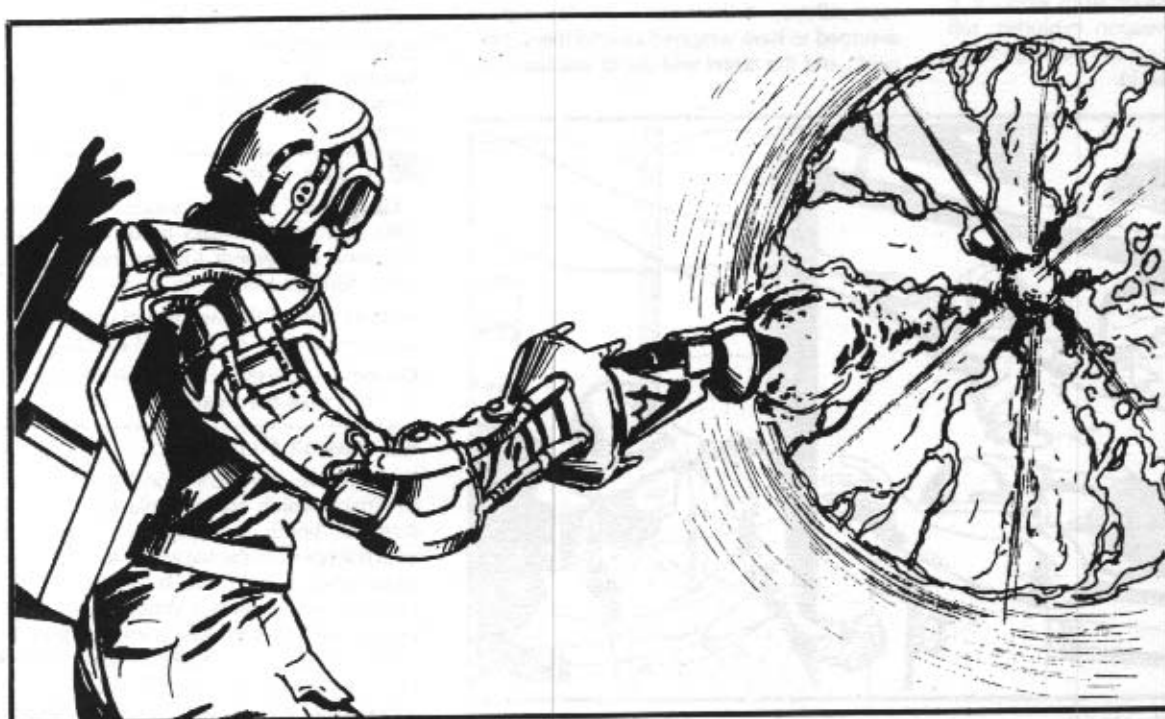
Remedy: None (the weapon didn't break; the user just screwed up).

Force Sword

This weapon is a monofilament fiber encased in a force field sheath. It can cut through just about anything short of neutronium.

Malfunction: The force field ceases to exist, and the monofilament becomes a loose wire which may whip around and injure its user. In this case, the user makes a skill roll; if he succeeds, he avoids injury. If he fails, he rolls for damage as a target.

Remedy: Nothing can prevent the malfunction. A successful weapon roll returns the weapon to normal function.



The plasma generator in action.



3. Bots

"Bot" is a contraction of "robot," and refers to any sapient non-organic mechanism capable of manipulating abstracts and intuitive leaps. (Wahoo. Don't you love techie talk? That means, "They can think.")

The term "bot" is sometimes loosely used to include machines that aren't truly intelligent. For instance, not all flybots are equipped with bot brains, but the most sophisticated models are, so the term "flybot" is indiscriminately used to describe all models of the series.

Bots consist of two distinct parts: central processing units (CPUs), and peripherals. A CPU is a programmed three-dimensional silicon or gallium arsenide matrix. (That means it's the bot's brain.) CPUs are generally enclosed in tough protective casings and plugged into the rest of the bot. CPUs are the most sophisticated and irreplaceable elements of any bot. Their casings are often removable, to permit recovery of the brain if the rest of the mechanism is damaged or destroyed.

Everything else — motivational appendages (feet), manipulatory appendages (hands), vocoders (mouths), video scanners (eyes), and like that — are peripherals.

Bot brains are not necessarily interchangeable. One cannot remove a flybot brain and expect it to successfully operate a docbot, for example, since a flybot brain is programmed to fly a flybot, not to repair an injured human. However, bot brains are frequently reconditioned by The Computer and reprogrammed for another task. Reprogramming is not always completely successful. For example:

Player Character: Docbot XRT-4-331. What is your primary function?

Docbot: To heal the injured and cure the sick.

PC: What functions have you served most recently?

Docbot: Inventory of weapon parts.

PC: What medical operations have you performed most recently?

Docbot: Grafting a gun stock to the damaged limb of a Troubleshooter.

This sort of thing is not uncommon. Anyone operating such a bot would have to be extremely explicit in his instructions to avoid the confusion of human medicine with weapon maintenance.

How Bots Think

Bots are logical devices, and think logically. Appeals to emotion are useless when dealing with a bot; that's the reason for the existence of the spurious logic skill.

All bots are programmed with the *Five Laws of Robotics (Newly Revised)*, which basically

say that they must follow The Computer's orders above all else; human orders except when they conflict with The Computer's; and must try to preserve themselves from damage, except when orders have priority. Bots do not themselves have security clearances; all bots are considered inferior to all humans. However, bots are frequently programmed to refuse instructions from any citizen below a certain security clearance.

The Five Laws are enforced by *asimov circuits*. Some bots' asimov circuits are faulty or have been removed; they may operate treasonously, i.e., disobey Computer or human orders. These bots are said to have gone *frankenstein*, roughly the robotic equivalent of treason.

Many bots resent and fear humans because of the immense power they have over bots. These bots frequently interpret human commands in the most annoyingly counterproductive manner possible; it is wise to be extremely careful when wording orders to bots.

Resident Memory and Mem Cards

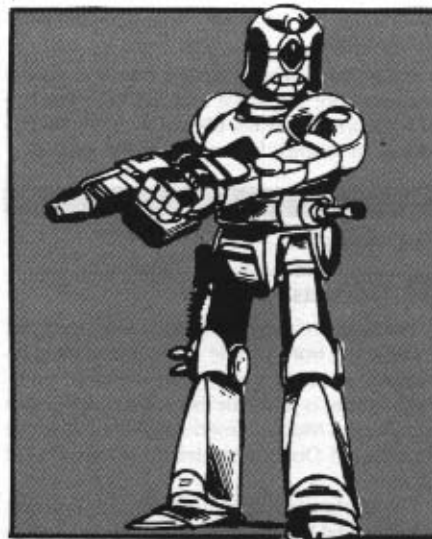
Each bot has a certain amount of *resident memory*, expressed in *memory sectors*. One memory sector is enough memory for a bot to have a skill at skill level 1. Twenty memory sectors could be filled with software for one skill at level 20, or twenty skills at level 1, or any other combination of skills.

Usually, software is loaded into a bot, and rarely changed. However, some bots are assigned *mem cards*. A mem card is a packet of chips, about the size of a cassette, in which software is stored. The bot can plug the packet in (like loading a home video game), and load the software into its resident memory.

Each mem card contains software for a specific skill, at a specific level. For example, a card labelled "Laser Weapons 7" loads the bot with software letting it fire laser weapons at skill level 7. If the bot doesn't have at least 7 memory sectors, it couldn't load the software. If it has 7 or more sectors, but all were already occupied by other software, it would have to erase some software to make room for the laser weapons software.

Note that while a mem card can give a bot *knowledge* of any skill, the bot's ability to use the skill is constrained by its physical makeup. Even if a cranebot has a memcard with Medicine 15 software, the fact that its manipulatory digits are the size of station wagons might make it a little difficult for the bot to perform microsurgery.

By the way, it is completely untrue that PLC occasionally mislabels software packages. It just never happens that a bot is loaded with what PCs think is one skill, but turns out to be another one entirely. Never.



The typical combat bot isn't your friend.

There is also absolutely no truth to the rumor that robots with severe personality dysfunctions can "infect" mem cards, passing the dysfunctions on to other bots who use the cards. Rumors are treason.

Combat with Robots

Combat with robots is similar to combat with human beings. Robots can possess weapon skills, just like humans. Some have built-in weapons similar to those available to humans, or human-like appendages which can employ weapons designed for humans. (If equipped with more than one weapon, all weapons may be fired in a single round.) They may be equipped with armor, or shielding that provides protection similar to armor. A warbot may be even more heavily-armored than any human could be.

A bot's combat characteristics can be summarized by three basic factors: its weapons skills, the types of weapons either built-in or carried, and the armor rating of its shielding.

Bot Damage Effect Equivalents

When using the Damage Table to determine the effects of damage on a bot, terms like "wounded" or "killed" are inappropriate. The following equivalents apply:

Stun = Short Circuit: Momentary short circuit; no action for one round.

Wound = Minor Damage: Damage requiring a minor repair; no action for one round; minor malfunction; -4 or more on bot's skills. (Two minor damage results equal a major damage result.)



Incapacitated - Major Damage: Serious damage resulting in severe malfunction or complete disablement. (Any subsequent minor damage or major damage result equals destroyed.)

Dead - Destroyed: Completely disabled; damage unrepairable. Parts salvageable (particularly the well-protected bot brain).

Vaporized - Vaporized: Total Loss. No parts salvageable.

If a damage result calls for minor or severe malfunction, the robot may act in unpredictable or unusual ways. Improvise freely for the amusement and discomfort of the players.

Bot Types

Docbots

Docbots are medical robots. They range in complexity from simple first-aid bots to fully-automatic surgery-and-intensive-care units. Each model is rated for its medical skill, from the Docbot Model I (medical skill of 4) to the room-sized Docbot Model XII (medical skill of 15).

The docbot most familiar to Troubleshooters is the Model V (skill of 8). The body is shaped like a small, powerful human dwarf, and it can go almost anywhere a human can. In its massive torso it stores the equivalent of a small mobile medical unit, including a veritable pharmacopeia of drugs (pain-killers,

coagulants, peptides, amphetamines, emetics, etc.), medical supplies, a small chemical/biological analysis unit, an ample supply ofplastiflesh, and emergency surgical gear.

Since the Model V can set limbs, staunch bleeding, and seal all but the most ghastly wounds, even a very serious injury need not lead to death if a Model V is nearby. With drugs, even a severely-wounded victim can be anesthetized and hopped-up enough to cheerfully charge back into combat. (On a mission, the authorized operator has complete authority to order the docbot to use whatever treatment is necessary to return a Troubleshooter to operational effectiveness.)

When a docbot is assigned to a mission group, one member of the group (not necessarily the group leader) is assigned as its controller; it will obey only his orders. The controller may assign a second controller in the event of his demise, the second controller may assign a third controller in the event of his untimely death, and so forth.

Jackobots

Jackobots are all-purpose robots designed to do anything a human can. They stand about 1.5 meters tall; the transport module is a flexible, articulated chassis with two sets of soft plastic treads. On this chassis is mounted a turret-like cylinder roughly corresponding to a human torso. On top of the cylinder is a cluster of sensors and communications equipment that corresponds to a human head in size and basic function. Two arms that mimic the function of human arms extend from the cylinder.

Jackobot brains have true intelligence, and therefore develop human-like personalities. In addition, they have a large reprogrammable memory which permits the user to plug in

mem cartridges. Thus, any jackobot has potentially any skill, if it is supplied with the proper cartridge. Because of the memory limitations of individual models, only a certain number of skill programs can be resident in memory at any one time. However, a jackobot can reprogram itself within three combat rounds simply by unplugging one cartridge and inserting another (just like a home video game machine).

Others

Docbots and jackobots are the robots most frequently encountered by player characters. Others include:

Scrubots: Small stupid bots mounted with rotary scrub-brushes and cleaning instruments; these keep Alpha Complex clean.

Warbots: Death machines used by the Armed Forces in their interminable struggle against the Commies. Notoriously well-armed, and notoriously prone to faulty asimov circuits.

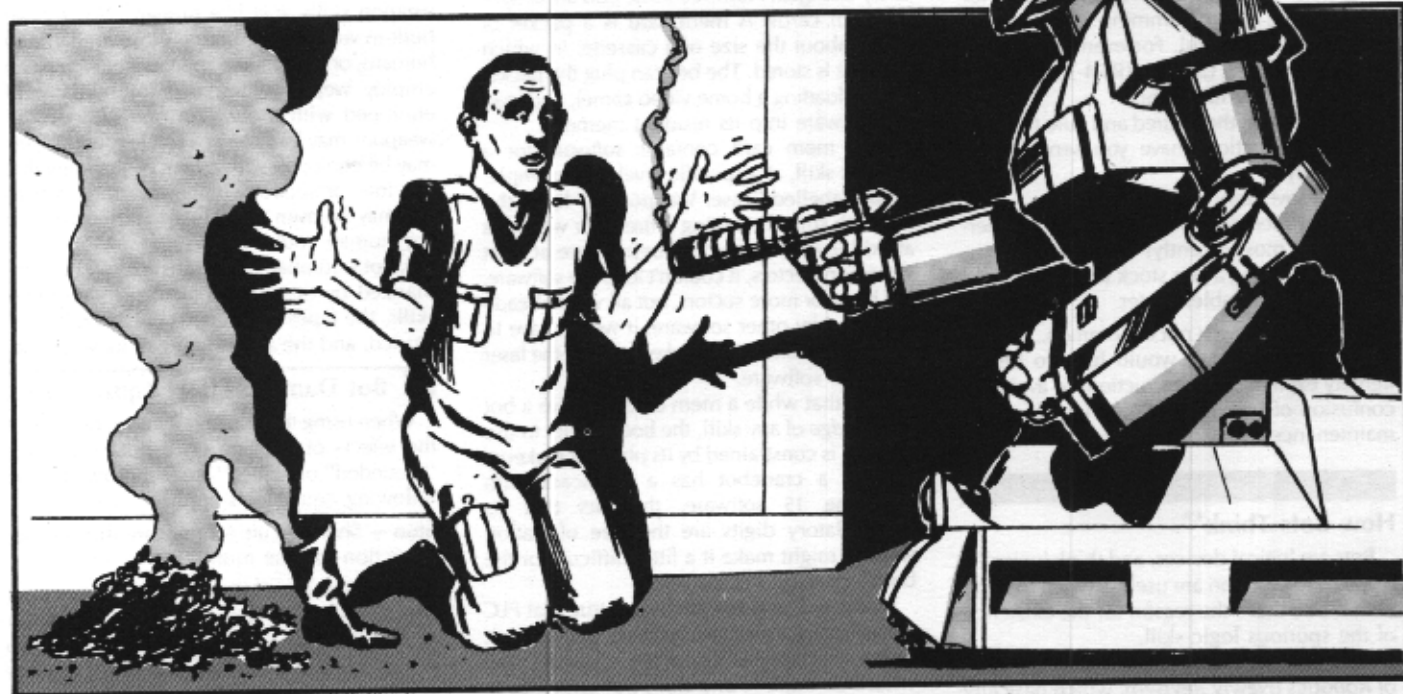
Combots and Guardbots: Less well-armed military bots.

Teachbots: These teach the children of Alpha Complex.

Flybots: Intelligence aircraft; see "Vehicles" below.

Petbots and Funbots: The less said the better.

Many others exist as well. Feel free to introduce new bots at the drop of a hat. Or, you could buy *Acute Paranoia*, which has lots of nifty bot rules, including bots as PCs.



Pleading for mercy with a warbot requires use of the spurious logic skill.



4. Coms

The Miscellaneous Equipment Chart indicates the costs and security clearances of a variety of communication devices. These *coms* are sometimes issued as portable units to Troubleshooter teams (especially those visiting the Outdoors), and are often installed in vehicles.

Com Descriptions

Field Telephones: Two or more phones, a power source, and lengths of wire connecting them. Messages are transmitted along the wires, which can be strung out on the ground or buried beneath the surface (to hide the wires and to protect them from damage). Messages can be transmitted without breaking radio silence, but mobility is restricted by the wire. The wire is also easily cut. Gauss weapons and ECM devices disrupt any field telephone within 500 meters.

Shielded Field Telephones: These are identical to field telephones except that the wire is shielded from gauss and ECM effects.

Com I: These are like walkie-talkies. They can broadcast on five channels and have a range of about ten kilometers. A more powerful com can rebroadcast the signal of a com I, thus

relaying it over a larger effective range. Inside Alpha Complex, signals may be blocked by walls, doors, ceilings, etc.

Com II: These unabridged dictionary-sized units are more powerful versions of the com I. They can be tuned by the user to broadcast on any radio frequency. They can also scan the spectrum for broadcasts. Com II's have a range of 100 kilometers at short wavelengths, and a range to the horizon at longer wavelengths. Inside Alpha Complex, signals may be shielded by heavy metal objects.

Com III: These are even more powerful and have a virtually unlimited range. At shorter wavelengths, they can blanket the earth, while at longer wavelengths they can reach to the horizon or line of sight. They are not portable, and are usually installed in vehicles (e.g., flybots). They are rarely used inside Alpha Complex, as their signals are strong enough to disrupt regular civilian communications.

Com IV: The ultimate in communication power. They can broadcast simultaneously on up to 100 different wavelengths. They have input jacks which permit various telemetry devices to be connected. For example, an electronic thermometer could be connected, and the unit would then broadcast a signal indicating the current temperature on a wavelength chosen by the user. These units are most

often installed in unmanned probes or in sophisticated robot units. Their transmission rate is extremely high, the equivalent of modern-day space probes.

Standard Communications Procedures

Characters are required to remain in communication with Alpha Complex at all times. Failure to do so is treason (but more likely to result in treason points than actual execution). On long-range expeditions, each character is required to carry a com II, unless the party is equipped with a flybot or other vehicle with a com II, III, or IV. In the latter case, characters carry com I's; their transmissions are relayed to The Computer by the more powerful unit.

Coms carried by characters transmit continually, so The Computer can monitor what goes on. Com units can be turned off, but a character who wishes to turn his com off must first obtain permission from The Computer. If it is turned off without proper authorization, he earns treason points. (Rumors that some com units explode violently if turned off without prior Computer authorization are treason.)



5. Multicorders

Multicorders are all-purpose detection devices. Each is fitted with a variety of sensors. They are operated with the use of multicorder programs which come in the form of plastic cassettes. Programs permit the multicorders to process and display sensor data in various useful ways. There are four models of multicorders, increasing in sophistication as the model number rises. Some programs can only be used with the more sophisticated models.

Multicorder Models

Multicorder I: This portable device is often carried on missions into the Outdoors, or as backup on other missions. Only one program may operate at any one time.

Multicorder II: This is available as a rather bulky portable model, and is often installed

in vehicles. It can run three programs at one time.

Multicorder III: This is only installed in vehicles or large bots. Up to five programs may run at once.

Multicorder IV: This is the most powerful multicorder; it is only installed in vehicles or large bots. Up to ten programs may run at once.

Multicorder Programs:

Radar: Available in all models. Displays a variety of processed radar images in various scales. The effective range of the radar varies with multicorder number: model I — 1 km; model II — 10 km; model III — 100 km; model IV — 1000 km. (The maximum range is never greater than line-of-sight.)

Infrared: Available in all models. Displays a variety of processed infrared images in various degrees of magnification with overlays interpreting temperature levels. Hot areas appear brighter than cool areas. Animals and humans appear lighter than the surrounding terrain, while a jet's contrail would be distinctly brighter. The effective range varies with the model number: model I — 100 m; model II — 1 km; model III — 10 km; model IV — 10 km.

Radio/Radar: Displays a variety of processed images indicating the location of radio/radar emissions in the vicinity. Also serves as a radio receiver. Effective range varies with the model number: model I — 10 km; model II — 100 km; model III — 1000 km; model IV — 5000 km.



Visible Light: Operates like a video camera, with a variety of enhancements like magnification, image recognition, and filtering. This is used as the visual sensor element in most robots, permitting the robot to broadcast what he "sees" directly to his brain, an operator, monitor, or The Computer. Available for all units. Range is line of sight.

X-Ray: Available only for models I & II. Allows unit to be used as a portable x-ray machine, primarily for medical purposes. Range — 3 m.

Radioactivity: Displays graphic representations of radioactivity levels and types of radioactivity in the environment.

Translate: Available for all models. Each program permits basic translations of one language into another. The more sophisticated the multicorder, the more refined and reliable the translation. All models translate spoken language; model IV permits limited translation of printed material in certain languages.

Dead Reckoning: Available for all models. Stores and displays a variety of maps, or accesses map libraries via radio. When the program is running, the operator must input current position; thereafter, the unit will display the map on request with current position, route, and identified features on the map.

Lie Detector: Available for all models. The multicorder is connected to electrodes which are attached to the subject. The multicorder

then interprets the subject's spoken and biochemical responses to a series of questions, indicating which of the subject's statements are true, false, or ambiguous. The test is only partly reliable. (When a character attempts to lie while hooked up to a lie detector, roll against his chutzpah.)

Psi Phenomena: Experimental. Detects and graphically displays psi activity in the environment. Presence of psi activity is detected with some reliability, but indication of direction and range of psi activity from unit is extremely unreliable. (Psi activity is defined as the use of any psionic mutant power.) Available only for models II, III, and IV. Range varies with model number: model II — 0-25 m(?); model III — 0-100 m(?); model IV — 0-1000 m(?).

Toxic Analysis: Identifies most of the more common toxic substances. Samples are placed in a small lab unit connected to the multicorder. Rarer and more subtle toxins may not be identified. Available for all models.

Life Form Recognition: Compares visual, x-ray, infrared and other data with library references to identify plant or animal forms. Provides a concise summary of significant facts about the life form and permits remote radio access to more complete reference libraries. Programs are available for various different ecological provinces; life forms not native to that province will probably not be identified properly. Available for all models.

Bot Damage Analysis: Runs a series of tests designed for each specific type and model of robot to determine nature and extent of any damage or malfunction. **Note:** Does not indicate alterations in software or frankensteins. Available for all models.

Disease Analysis: Analyzes tissue and blood samples for foreign bacteria, viri, etc., as well as chemical imbalances, genetic disorders, and so forth. Standard installation on many doc-bot models. Available for all models.

Recorder: Available for all models. May operate like a sound or video tape recorder, and can also record data, images, and interpretations from any other multicorder program. The recorder program is routinely loaded into the portable or vehicle-installed multicorder assigned to each Troubleshooter mission. The recorder program may thus provide a complete record of a party's activities. Often the data recorded is simultaneously broadcast directly to The Computer to permit it to monitor the mission's progress. It is a treasonous act to prevent the multicorder from maintaining a complete record of a mission's activities.

Self-Destruct: Loading this program into a multicorder causes the unit to wipe all currently loaded or recorded programs. The hardware is not damaged, but new program cassettes will be required before the multicorder can be used again.



6. Vehicles

No citizen (legitimately) owns a vehicle as personal equipment (though an Ultraviolet clearance permits a citizen to commandeer any vehicle at will); vehicles are temporarily assigned to Troubleshooters according to the needs of each mission and the vehicles' availability.

Vehicle Operation

Any character can normally operate a vehicle on autopilot with the assistance of The Computer. Any character with operation and repair skill can operate a vehicle on manual drive.

Inadequately skilled operators always manage to get themselves into some kind of trouble — frequently, fatal trouble. And even if they are fortunate enough to survive their mistakes, they are faced with the prospect of stiff fines for damaging valuable equipment. Of course, this encourages Troubleshooters to be careful with their assigned vehicles. Unfortunately, being careful isn't always enough.

Each vehicle has a security clearance. A character of the same clearance or higher as the vehicle can access its users' manual, and

find out how to operate it and all about its capabilities. In normal circumstances, only citizens of the appropriate clearance are assigned vehicles.

However, The Computer considers Troubleshooter missions of the utmost importance to Alpha Complex, and unstintingly assigns resources to Troubleshooter missions when needed. Frequently, Troubleshooters are assigned vehicles of much higher clearance — Blue, Indigo or Violet. These vehicles are extremely powerful, and often heavily armed. Unfortunately, the Troubleshooters do not have the requisite security clearance to access the users' manual, and The Computer is not about to permit such a drastic breach of regulations.

Trying to operate a vehicle with no knowledge of its capabilities can be frustrating: **Troubleshooter:** Okay, I ease the flybot into gear.

Gamemaster: With a dramatic WHUMP, the steam cannon launches you out the tubes at Mach 3. Gone-R is sucked out his window by the slip stream.

Troubleshooter: I hit the "close windows" switch.

Gamemaster: Which switch is that?

Troubleshooter: Ah — the one by my arm rest?

Gamemaster: Ah, the emergency eject. Another WHUMP; the explosive bolts fire and the doors and roof fly off... Did you have your seatbelt on?

Troubleshooter: What seatbelt?

Gamemaster: Aha. Your chair launches upward with tremendous velocity — you tumble out of it. You are thrust suddenly into a Mach 3 wind (rolls dice) — a wound. Okay, you're falling. Below you crazily tumbles a green-blue-and-brown object — it fills an entire hemisphere.

Troubleshooter: The Earth?

Gamemaster: That's right. Nearby, you hear a third WHUMP — and a parachute opens. The empty chair descends slowly at the end of its chute. The green-blue-and-brown object is approaching rapidly. What do you do?

Troubleshooter: Spread my arms real wide?

Gamemaster: Right. Whammo. New clones. Briefing. Outfitting. R&D. Your clones are conducted to the Experimental Flybot Launch Station. The duty officer shakes his head sadly and says, "Sure hope you do better than that last bunch."



General Vehicle Types

Crawler: These are tracked all-terrain vehicles used for missions in the Outdoors. They come in various sizes and designs. Some are specifically intended to carry personnel; some are for transporting raw materials from the Outdoors; some are armored and designed for military applications. They are relatively slow but can travel in extremely rough terrain and are reliable water craft in the calm waters of lakes and large rivers.

Autocar: This is the most common type of vehicle inside Alpha Complex, corresponding to modern personal cars, small trucks, and vans. They are "auto" cars in the sense that they may be slaved to automatic guidance systems that run beneath the surface of all the roadways in Alpha Complex, but they may also be operated manually for unusual maneuvers or where the guidance systems are no longer maintained. They come in all shapes and sizes and are in relatively good supply.

Hover: This is a specialized variety of air-cushion vehicle that was very popular in Old Reckoning times. It is still used in the Outdoors when missions permit using the ancient roadways. Hovers can also cross lakes and large rivers. They are capable of high speeds on good road surfaces and across calm water, but they are not safe in difficult terrain or rough water. They make poor combat vehicles, since they bear little armor or armament. Hovers come in various sizes, but the four-to-six man version is most commonly used for Troubleshooter missions.

Copter: These are very similar to modern helicopters. Small, two-man models are relatively common. In addition to the equivalent of personnel carriers, transports, and gunships, there is also a small combat jet-copter capable of high speeds and agile maneuvers.

Flybots: This is a general term for a variety of aircraft designs that have one feature in common — robot guidance systems. Less sophisticated flybots have no more than elaborate autopilots and computer-assisted combat capabilities. More complex flybots are guided by bot brains with true intelligence (and personalities — just like people, varied and unpredictable). For most missions flybots are assigned to low-clearance Troubleshooters, since they often lack the skills and clearances to manually operate any other aircraft. The most serious problems in dealing with flybots have to do with the often quirky robot intelligences that guide them.

Transbot: This vehicle corresponds to the tractor-trailer/railroad transport systems of the modern world. Each transbot is controlled by a bot brain. Transbots can be manually guided by skilled operators along sections of roadway where the automatic guidance systems are no longer maintained or where they were never installed. Transbots can also be used on surface roads in the Outdoors (if the roads have not deteriorated significantly). Transbots are

not designed to carry passengers, but ingenious Troubleshooters and traitors manage to catch rides on transbots in same way that bums used to jump old-fashioned freight trains.

Vulturecraft: This is a general term for a variety of combat and close support aircraft used by elite Vulture Squadrons of the Armed Forces. They represent the acme of Alpha Complex's military strength, and are often equipped with the latest technology in weapons, sensors, and guidance systems.



Bot Brains

Have you ever ridden in a Chevrolet K car? The ones that talk? "A door is ajar. A door is ajar. Please fasten your seatbelt. Thank you." There's nothing more annoying.

It's bad enough to have an idiot voice nagging you over trivia; imagine how much worse things would be if the voice had intelligence, and even control over the vehicle. That's about how things are in Alpha Complex; many vehicles, especially the more elaborate models frequently issued to Troubleshooters, are equipped with their own bot brains, e.g.,

Flybot: Please fasten your seat belt.

Troubleshooter: Shut up!

Flybot: Hey look, you're supposed to wear your seat belt.

Troubleshooter: Shut up, I tell you!

Flybot: Well, okay, buddy, I mean, it's your life.

Troubleshooter: Okay, we turn left here. (Turns wheel. Flybot fails to respond.)

Flybot: Are you sure you want to go left here?

Troubleshooter: Yes! Yes, dammit! Do what I tell you!

Flybot: Well, okay. If you insist. (Flybot turns.) (Time passes.)

Flybot: Shouldn't we climb a bit or something?

Troubleshooter: Huh? Why? (Through the viewscreen looms a huge mountain, shrouded in mist.) *Gulp* Why didn't you tell me we were headed into a mountain? (Wrenches at wheel.)

Flybot: You said "left turn," so I turned left. I suggested maybe we should do something else, but no. You were pretty rude about it, too. (Turns desperately; a wing-spar snaps; wing begins to shudder; G-forces rack the cabin.)

Troubleshooter: Sorrysorrysorryohgodplease...

Vehicle Movement and Maneuver

With *Paranoia*'s dramatic tactical combat system, the gamemaster improvises all the details of vehicle movement and maneuver. No hexes and movement rates. No opportunity for tactical wargaming and careful rules exploitation. Just dramatic action and roleplaying. Like this:

1. The driving player describes the maneuver he wants a vehicle to perform.

2. The gamemaster considers the player's request. Is it plausible? Could the vehicle perform such a maneuver? How skilled is the operator? (The gamemaster can require a skill roll if the maneuver is dangerous or unusual, or if the operator is unskilled.) What other factors might affect the intended maneuver? (Is the vehicle under hostile fire? Has it been damaged? How reliable is the design, construction, and maintenance of the vehicle?)

3. The gamemaster makes a judgment and describes how successfully the vehicle performs the requested maneuver. Routine maneuvers usually go without a hitch. Difficult or dangerous maneuvers with unskilled operators often turn out very badly. The vehicle may go out of control and crash. The wings may fall off in a high-G combat maneuver. Instead of skimming over a tree, a flybot may attempt to ram and board it.

Be dramatic. Be entertaining. Scare them to death. Reward ingenuity and bravery with thrilling success (or ironic failure). It's your movie. Just make sure your players have a sense of some ability to influence events with cleverness and audacity. Make sure the action is (usually) at least plausible, though an occasional implausibility is common fare in all adventure action. And don't overdo the "Crash-you're-dead" stuff. That can be amusing once in a while, but a steady diet of it will drive your players back to TV.

Attacking Vehicles and Their Occupants

When attacking a vehicle and/or its occupants with a weapon, the attacker has two options: he may either shoot at the occupants or the vehicle. (Area attack weapons may only be fired at vehicles, not at the occupants themselves.)

In either event, first determine whether he hits. Modify his weapon skill number in accordance with circumstances and whim; if you like, you may use the optional Combat Modifiers Chart (Fold-Out B) and the Vehicle Combat Modifiers Chart (Fold-Out B) as guidelines for how to modify the skill number. However, don't spend a lot of time looking things up; get on with the fun.

After modifying the skill number, make a skill roll, just as in regular combat. If the roll is a success, the firer has hit something.

Vehicles can have armor, just like characters. Whether the firer is shooting at the vehicle or its occupants, subtract the vehicle's armor rating from the weapon rating (if appropriate).



Shooting at Occupants

If the firer was shooting at an occupant, also subtract the occupant's armor rating from the damage number (if appropriate) — that is, occupants are protected both by the vehicle's armor and their own. Then, roll on the Damage Table (Fold-Out B) to determine what damage the occupant suffers.

Shooting at Vehicles

Roll on the Damage Table (Fold-Out B) to determine what damage the vehicle suffers. Damage results translate as follows:

Stun — Insignificant Damage: Bullet-holes, dents, scratches on the paint job. Describe appropriately to the players.

Wound — Minor Damage: Some vehicle systems may be disabled; repair is possible using the vehicle maintenance and operation skill. Occupants not affected unless a crash occurs.

Incapacitated — Major Damage: Vehicle systems shot to hell. Repair would be difficult (halve skill number or worse). Occupants not affected unless a crash occurs.

Kill — Destroyed: Vehicle is a total loss. A crash occurs.

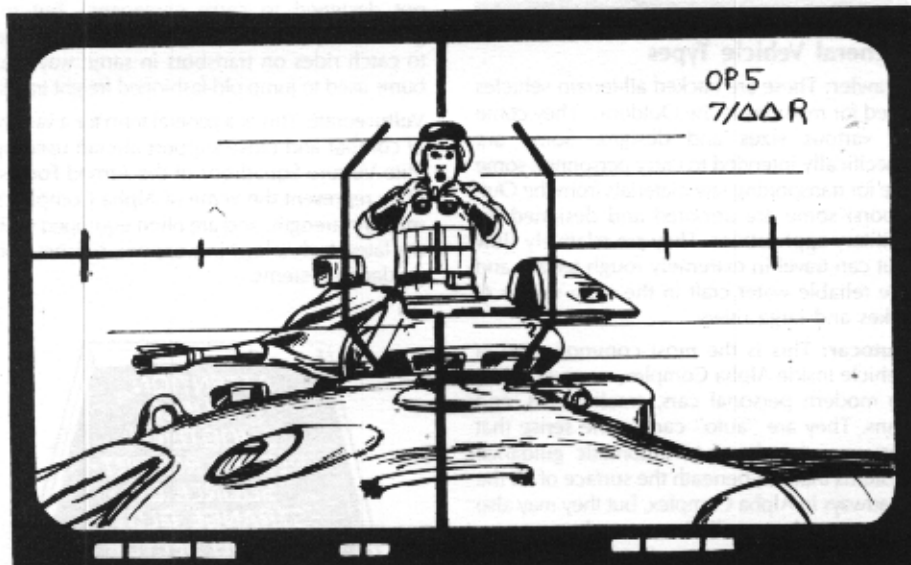
Vaporized — Vaporized: Roll for all characters on the Damage Table; damage number is 19.

If the vehicle crashes as a result of its damage (this automatically occurs on a "destroyed" result), roll on the Vehicular Accidents and Falling from Great Heights Table (see Fold-Out B) for each occupant of the vehicle to determine what damage he suffers. Normally the determining factor is the speed of the crashing vehicle, which must be estimated by the gamemaster. However, the gamemaster may permit a strength, agility or power roll for a character to jump from a crashing vehicle or aircraft. In that case, the gamemaster may, at his discretion, permit rolling on a more favorable column.

Note: Normally melee, primitive melee, and primitive aimed weapons have no effect on vehicles or their occupants. However, if a character attempts such a dramatically correct but absurd attack on a vehicle or its occupants, play it by ear. If a Troubleshooter armed with no more than a hand-made bow is standing up against traitors in a flybot, perhaps that arrow will find its mark in a jet intake or an operator's eye. When in doubt, give them a chance — after all, a skill roll of 1 is always success, right?

Vehicle Weapons and Defense Systems

A whole bunch of different weapons and defense systems are commonly mounted on Alpha Complex vehicles. They can be fired either on manual, or by the controlling bot brain (if there's one installed in the vehicle). Bot brains can fire all devices in a single round; a human operator can only fire one (although different operators could fire different systems). A bot's chance of hitting depends on how



Supersonic heat-seeking missile about to impact on traitor — leaving valuable Computer property intact.

good its software is — basically, the bot has a skill number with each of its weapons.

Data on these weapons and defenses can be found in the Vehicle Weapons Chart (see Fold-Out B).

Laser Cannon: These are large lasers mounted on vehicles. Laser cannon Is are charged from a capacitor. Recharging the weapon after firing takes 10 combat rounds. Laser cannon IIs have larger capacitors, and can fire three times before recharging. Recharging takes five combat rounds. Laser cannon IIIs have massive power systems that permit an unlimited rate of fire of one shot per combat round, but the power systems are so big that only the largest and most powerful vehicles can carry them.

Sonic Blaster: The sonic blaster delivers a sonic shock wave in a 60 degree arc to the front of the weapon. Any individual within that arc and within range may suffer damage.

Tube Cannon: Tube cannon are vehicle-mounted cone rifles which fire shells at the same range and with the same effect as cone rifle shells. Tube cannon Is do not have automatic reloaders, so a person must be available to reload the cannon after each firing. The rate of fire is one shell per round. Tube cannon IIs are equipped with very fast automatic reloaders and can fire two shells per round.

Firethrower: This is a very large, vehicle-mounted flamethrower. It fires ten times before it needs reloading.

Missile Rack: This is a mount for a missile. Each rack may hold one missile. When the missile is fired, the rack must be reloaded before it can be fired again. Missile racks can only be reloaded from the outside of the vehicle as it is resting stationary, so they cannot normally be reloaded during combat. Each missile moves at 300 m/sec, and remains live for 10 combat rounds (unless it is triggered before then). A missile consists of four parts: the warhead (identical in effect and variety to

cone rifle shells); the propellant (which moves the missile); a fuse (identical to the varieties available for cone rifles), and a homing device. Below are the available types of homing devices:

None: The missile continues in the direction it was fired until the fuse is triggered or the propellant is exhausted.

Heat-Seeking: The missile heads toward the hottest object in front of it. This is usually an enemy vehicle's exhaust, but can sometimes be the sun, a camp fire, or even a PC's body heat.

HARM: The missile heads toward the strongest radio signal in front of it. This is usually an enemy radar, but may sometimes be a com unit, a commercial radio station, or a Walkman. The enemy can foil the missile by turning their radar/radio off.

Radar Homing: The missile is equipped with radar, and heads toward the "brightest" object its radar detects. This is usually the biggest, most metallic object in the sky, though, for example, chaff or a large metallic object on the ground could divert it.

Painted Radar-Homing: The vehicle which fires the missile must follow its target, "painting" the target with a radar signal. The missile heads for the "painted" target. If the painting vehicle changes course and stops painting the target, the missile loses the target and just keeps on going.

Painted Laser Homing: Like above, only the target is painted with a laser instead of a radar.

Gas Thrower: This fills the area around the vehicle with gas of any of the types available for cone rifles. Essentially, everything within 20 m of the vehicle is affected by the gas. It is usually used by stationary vehicles to discourage curious natives or hoodlums who want the hubcaps. The gas reservoir allows the weapon to continue operation for 10 combat rounds.

Anti-Missile Lasers: This is a battery of several dozen low-power lasers which fire all in the



same general direction at once. The idea is to destroy an incoming missile before it strikes the vehicle. Anti-missile lasers can also be used against individual targets, such as human beings, but they do not do much damage because of their low power. (If used against humans, the damage number is 1B.) Anti-missile lasers are usually mounted at the rear of the vehicle, since missiles often pursue a fleeing vehicle.

Smoke Generator: When a smoke generator is operated by a stationary vehicle, it increases the "L" (anti-laser) armor protective rating of the vehicle by 5.

Chaff Casters: These devices may divert a radar-homing or painted radar-homing missile from its target. If the operator makes a successful weapon skill roll, the missile is diverted. After ten uses the chaff-caster must be reloaded.

Radar Jammers: They work in the same way as chaff casters. Radar jammers also prevent any radio communication within 10 km of the jamming device.

Gaussers: Gaussers work in essentially the same way, but also affect HARM missiles.

Heat-Maskers: These work in the same way as chaff casters, but affect heat-seeking missiles only.

Armor: Vehicles can be mounted with armor of any armor type and rating.

Vehicle Descriptions

Here are two sample vehicles:

Vulture Warrior 920

Clearance: Violet

Appearance: Sleek, carefully machined, incredibly fast and deadly, the Vulture Warrior 920 is a VTOL (vertical take-off-and-landing) twin-engine fixed-wing vehicle. Engine intakes are mounted on the wings and central exhaust

at the rear of the craft. The tail fin is as large as the wings, permitting the craft to "fly" while rolled 120 degrees right or left for considerable periods of time. Cockpit is forward; four mounts under the wings can be used for missiles or rocket pods.

Function: The Vulture Warrior 920 is a fighter-bomber, used primarily on strike or infantry-support missions, but usable also in air-to-air combat. It is one of the fastest aircraft available to Alpha Complex, and, because it is capable of VTOL, is sometimes used to deliver Troubleshooter mission groups to remote areas when quick delivery is required.

Vulture Warrior 920: I am the Vulture Warrior 920, the most sophisticated aerial combat vehicle in the world. I can defeat dozens of lesser aircraft in air-to-air combat. I can take off and land on airstrips less than ten meters in length. My fusion generators permit me to fly for decades without refueling. I have destroyed twenty-three tankbots and assisted in the destruction of a Mark IV Continental Siege Machine. I can destroy cities at a single blow. I am to act as your transport on Mission X76V. I, the Vulture Warrior 920, am to act as a glorified transbot.

Weapons: The Vulture Warrior 920 is equipped with 2 laser cannon IIs; 4 missile racks; anti-missile lasers; a smoke-generator; heat-maskers; radar-jammers; a chaff-caster; and electronic counter-measures. The Vulture Warrior 920 has been used from time to time to deliver small nuclear warheads on suspected Commie concentrations. Armor is All4.

Bot Brain: The Vulture Warrior 920 is incredibly arrogant. It knows it is the pinnacle of Alpha Complex technology and one of The Computer's most deadly war machines. It thinks Vulture troopers are the finest of clonekind, the cream of fighting men. It thinks Troubleshooters are scum, and it is greatly galled that it is called upon to carry them.

Troubleshooter: Vulture Warrior 920! Where are we going?

Vulture Warrior 920: Quiet, maggots.

Use in Troubleshooter Missions: The Vulture Warrior 920 usually seats two — a pilot and weapons officer. In fact, it needs neither, as the bot brain itself is quite capable of flying and operating the craft singlehandedly. The Computer sends a pilot mainly because The Computer always sends at least two beings along on any mission, to keep an eye on each other. For Troubleshooter delivery missions, the bomb bay of the Vulture Warrior 920 is converted to seating. Crude chairs are installed, and the PCs strapped in.

Before the mission begins, a grizzled Violet-clearance Vulture captain gives orders to the Vulture Warrior 920. The Vulture Warrior 920 will follow these orders enthusiastically and to the letter. It will interpret them in the way least convenient to the Troubleshooters, whom it despises. It will not respond to any order or suggestions from Troubleshooters once in the air. If the Troubleshooters want to issue the Vulture Warrior 920 any orders or instructions, they had best ask the captain nicely.

The Vulture Warrior 920 responds in the best English sergeant-major tradition to its orders:

Captain: Vulture Warrior 920!

Vulture Warrior 920: Sah!

Captain: You are to deliver these Troubleshooters to coordinates X7Y9Z17.

Vulture Warrior 920: Yes, sah!

Captain: You are to fly directly to those coordinates, evading enemy fire as necessary.

Vulture Warrior 920: At once, sah!

Captain: You are to deliver them safely and in good condition.

Vulture Warrior: Yes, sah!

Captain: Any questions?

Vulture Warrior: No, sah! I understand, sah!

Captain: Very good. Dismissed!

Vulture Warrior: Sah! All right, maggots; embark!

Once airborne, the Vulture Warrior 920 pays no attention to the fact that its passengers are human. It accelerates at several Gs, turns sharply, climbs and dives, etc. Any citizen not strapped in will tumble about the cabin dangerously. Anyone strapped in must make endurance rolls to avoid vomiting.

If the Vulture Warrior 920 runs into opposition, it sees no need to inform its passengers of that fact.

Vulture Warrior: (Turns sharply and goes into a steep dive.)

Troubleshooter: Hey, what's going on?

Vulture Warrior: (No response. Goes into continuous barrel roll.)

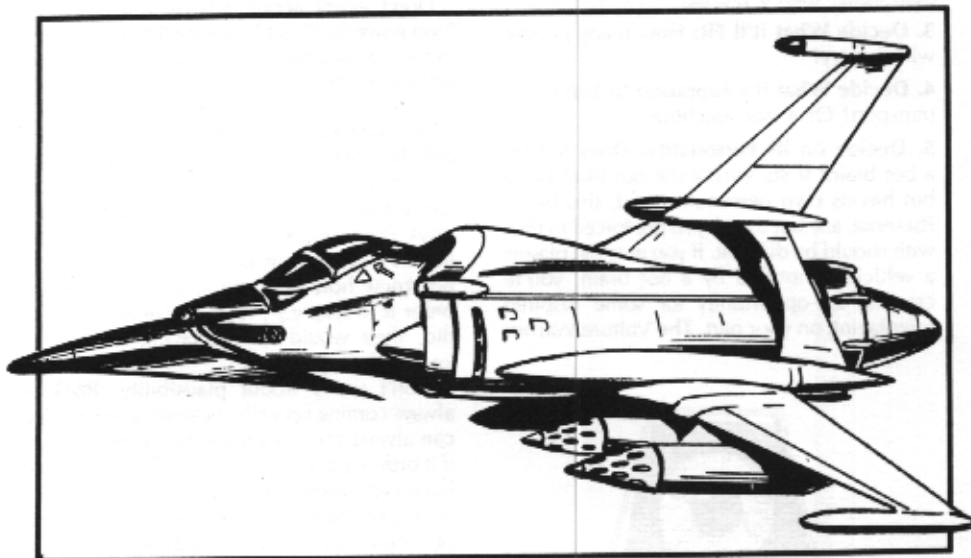
Troubleshooter: (Gagging.) Hey, what are those explosions outside?

Vulture Warrior: Flak.

Troubleshooter: Uh oh. Evade!

Vulture Warrior: Morons. I'm carrying morons. What do you think I'm doing?

The Troubleshooters may assume that the Vulture Warrior 920 will use its VTOL capability to land at its destination and let them off. That, in fact, was what The Computer assumed it would do. However, the Vulture Warrior 920



The Vulture Warrior 920.



sees no reason to waste time and energy making things comfy for a bunch of maggots. It will fly over its destination, open the bomb bay doors, and expect the PCs to jump. Yes, parachutes are available. No, none of the PCs has any training in their use.

Flybot 17(ATV)

Clearance: Indigo

Appearance: At first glance, Flybot 17 appears to be a bulbous, ant-like subcompact car — a little like a VW bug. A mud-spattered exterior and rusted dents do nothing to improve its looks. Normally, Flybot 17 is driven along the ground. However, in the trunk, four folded rotors are stored. These can be removed, unfolded, and bolted to a shaft which protrudes from the roof.

Function: "ATV" stands for "all-terrain vehicle," and that's what Flybot 17 is. It was designed during a period of budgetary stringency in Alpha Complex, and hence is constructed with the cheapest materials and in the simplest way. It is, *mirabile dictu*, remarkably sturdy and reliable. It is also — so what else is new — remarkably limited.

Flybot 17 can travel on land, using its dinky subcompact wheels. However, any terrain rougher than a superhighway is tough going. The shock absorbers are practically useless, any slope over 15 degrees is impossible.

It can travel on water — like a VW bug, it can float, and, by spinning its wheels rapidly, make some slight headway. However, it can't really steer on water, any surf is likely to swamp it, and in a river it can do little more than drift.

And it can travel in the air. With its rotors attached, Flybot 17 becomes a helicopter, of sorts. Its little micropile engine can turn the rotors just fast enough to lift off — if the vehicle is not too heavily loaded. It can carry six passengers — if they're not bringing much of anything with them.

The shaft which turns the rotors passes directly through the passenger compartment, linking up with the drive shaft under the passengers' feet. It is unshielded. Consequently, when the Flybot 17 flies, the passengers will be sitting right next to a drive-shaft spinning at several hundred revolutions per minute. If the Flybot 17 is fully loaded — with six passengers — the middle passenger in the back seat will be sitting with on leg one either side of the shaft. This ought to make him nervous.

When flying, Flybot 17 can move at a little more than 50 kilometers per hour (30 mph). It has difficulty climbing, especially with 6 passengers, so there may be some scary moments clearing tree tops. Flying over mountains means circling and circling and circling for hours, trying to get enough altitude.

Because of the flybot's slow speed, when flying in a brisk wind the passengers may find themselves moving very slowly indeed — or even backwards.

Weapons: The Flybot 17 is completely unarmed and unarmored. If fired upon while flying, a "minor damage" result means one

of the rotors has been shot off. As a result, the flybot crashes. Luckily, it's unlikely to be flying at high altitude. Unluckily, this means that passengers are tossed about the passenger compartment, possibly into the speeding drive shaft.

Bot Brain: The Flybot 17 is not equipped with a bot brain or any other autopilot device. This means the gamemaster should call for frequent flybot operation and maintenance skill rolls. "Failed your roll, eh? I guess that means you fly into the tree. Yup. Your engine cuts out, and everyone is safe and sound — but Flybot 17(ATV) is now thirty feet up in a healthy-looking maple." It also means that the PCs must find their own destination — which Complex-raised citizens with no experience of the Outdoors may find difficult.

Use in Troubleshooter Missions: Because of its reliability, sturdiness, and expendability, the Flybot 17(ATV) is frequently used on Troubleshooter missions in the Outdoors.

Inventing Your Own Vehicles

These two vehicles, plus the MTV from "Into the Outdoors With Gun and Camera" are good examples to study when constructing your own *Paranoia* vehicles. Here's how to design your own:

1. Choose a Form of Movement: Wheels, walkers, treads, hovercraft, propellers (in the water or in the air), jets, fixed wing aircraft, helicopters, submarines, tunnelers. Maybe it runs on tracks, or in tubes, or is launched from a catapult.

2. Choose a Shape: It can look sleek and deadly or battered and used. It can be huge, tiny, or in between. It can look like anything, as long as the way it looks and what it's supposed to do make some sense together. For instance, we wouldn't build a spherical jet fighter. Generally, extremes are more funny than the middle ground; huge or tiny are both better than middling. A flying wing or a jet pack are both better than a DC-10.

3. Decide What it'll Fit: How many people will it carry?

4. Decide What it's Supposed to Do: Is it a transport? Or a war machine?

5. Decide on its Personality: Does it have a bot brain? If so, what's the bot like? Every bot has its own personality, and, this being *Paranoia*, any bot the players are forced to deal with should be difficult. If you give the players a vehicle controlled by a bot brain, you're creating an opportunity for some inspired roleplaying on your part. The Vulture Warrior

920 "drill sergeant" and Lucky the Autopilot (from "Into the Outdoors") are examples, but lots of other personalities are possible.

6. Decide on its Weapons and Capabilities: Look over the list of vehicle weapons above, and decide if your vehicle carries any of them. Decide what its armor is, and what the weapon skills of its bot brain (if any) are. Decide on any other capabilities you want to build in.

7. Build in Obvious Fatal Flaws: Every *Paranoia* vehicle should have some obvious fatal flaw to trip up its users. Flybot 17 has a bunch of them — the spinning rotor shaft, its inability to climb quickly, its limited carrying capacity, and so on. Here are some other possibilities to consider: limited fuel supply; autopilot with a tendency to travel in circles; collapsing landing gear; "walking" vehicle with a tendency to trip; etc. A moment's thought should give you half a dozen awkward, inconvenient or dangerous ways to build a vehicle — inflict them on your players.

8. Throw in a Surprise or Two: Some flaws shouldn't be so obvious. It's always fun to spring a nasty surprise on your players when they're well into the wilderness and can't do anything about it. Much of *Paranoia's* humor comes from placing PCs in horribly dangerous circumstances and forcing them to act; dangerous and inconvenient vehicles are an obvious gimmick.

So go on. Invent your own vehicles. There are dozens of possibilities. Walkers. Rolling vehicles. Hovercraft. Jet-propelled autocars. Tunneling vehicles. Subways. Intercontinental rockets.

A vehicle is mostly a way to get player characters from point A to point B; all you really want it to do is provide some comic relief in between. Comic relief in *Paranoia* usually means horrible danger. As a result, PCs frequently don't get to point B. That's no problem; activate the next set of clones and start them over. They won't make the same mistake twice, and eventually someone will get to B.

Don't worry about making your vehicles "too powerful," that is, giving them too much in the way of armor or weapons. You can give vehicle as much power as you want — just don't let the PCs use it. Vulture Warrior 920 is an example; its controlling bot brain has definite ideas of its own and is not about to let a bunch of maggots tell it what to do. You can get the same effect in a number of other ways. For example, since a vehicle's capabilities are classified higher than the PCs, they may not know how powerful it is, and could not order it to use, e.g., its laser cannon. If they did, they would be displaying treasonous knowledge.

Don't worry about plausibility; R&D is always coming up with cockeyed gadgets. You can always claim a vehicle was experimental if it proves too silly. Don't worry about "game balance;" there's always a way to crock a device so the players don't get much use out of it (and The Computer is always around if things start to get out of hand).



PARANOIA

GAMEMASTER SECTION

Security Clearance ULTRAVIOLET.
Cleared for all Gamemasters.



**Gamemastering
Paranoia**



1. Running Game Sessions

Here's some advice for how to get the best use out of the time you've got available to play.

Creating Characters

For beginning players, rolling up a character and filling out a character sheet can be an involved and puzzling procedure. You can make it a lot less intimidating by talking them through the process. This can be done in 15 to 20 minutes — less, if your players have read through the Player section.

It might be even better to give your players pregenerated characters. We include a set with each adventure we publish, and you can always roll up a bunch of characters on your own and hand the filled-in sheets to your players.

Using pregenerated characters is a good idea for two reasons:

First, *Paranoia* characters need personalities that fit the peculiar *Paranoia* universe. We tailor the abilities and idiosyncrasies of our pregenerated characters to fit the adventure. We design the characters as a team, anticipating the charming and homicidal interactions to be expected among Troubleshooting colleagues. After studying the pregenerated PCs, you'll see how it's done. In fact, as you design your own adventures you'll be better able to match your own characters to your twisted dramatic needs, and certainly you'll be better able to match your characters to the strengths, peculiarities, and psychological instabilities of your players.

Second, using pregenerated PCs is a big help to novice players. They don't have to master the intricate details of a new character system right off the bat; instead, they start playing immediately. *Paranoia* sessions are ideally brief, intense, and fast-paced, and starting off a session by rolling up characters is like starting a James Bond movie with twenty minutes of "Meet the Press"-style talking-heads exposition.

For more experienced and ambitious players, cooperative character design is fun. Give your players a rough outline of their characters and let them fill in the details. In any case, you'll still have to work up the distinctively paranoid refinements every character should have:

- Some possession that is ambiguously valuable, partially incomprehensible, and eminently treasonous.
- Current secret society status — reputation within the group, standing orders, special interests, etc.
- Tidbits about other characters — vague rumors, fragmentary evidence, puzzling observations — that foment distrust and provide tan-

talizing hearsay evidence of treason. (Note: This is not always necessary — sometimes throwing complete strangers together works just fine.)

Seating Order

Get in the habit of going around the table from left to right when players declare their actions. Get a quick statement from the first character, go immediately to the person next to him, and so on — bang, bang, bang. No stalling, no going back for second thoughts, no interrupting with out-of-order comments. This keeps things rolling along and maintains a subtle stranglehold on the players' sense of free will.



A *Paranoia* gamemaster in action.

There are two popular methods of ordering the seating of the players:

- In ascending order of moxie score: this way the dumbest character acts first — without the tempering guidance and consultation of more sensible characters — a good way to encourage irresponsible, ill-considered, and entertaining actions.

- In descending order of agility score: this way the quickest character acts first, encouraging impulsive action.

And it's a good idea to reverse the order now and then, just to keep them all on their toes.

Introducing Characters

Before the session begins, have each player introduce his character to the rest of the group. Keep intros short and to the point. Limit the comments to details like:

- **Name and security clearance:** A great cheap trick is to scribble the character's full name on a piece of paper and tuck it in a pocket or pin it on so it looks like the identification strip on a military uniform. Encourage players to refer to each other by their Alpha Complex handles by executing a few who use real-world names. Establish polite phrases for addressing one another — "At your service, Citizen Hart-I-TAX," or "Serve and Protect, Newt-R."

- **Distinctive appearance:** Clearance color of garments, armor, weapons carried, plus any unusual details — nifty scars, registered mutant stripes, medals or decorations, odd widgets, etc.

- **Distinctive behaviors, attitudes, and dialog:** A well-designed character has one or two distinctive personality traits. A black marketeer may always seem to be well-equipped. A goon may absently fidget with a pair of brass knuckles. A mad scientist may constantly tinker with a widget. A heavily-drugged citizen may occasionally wander off into walls jabbering to himself. A marksman may regularly clean and polish his weapon.

With beginners, you might introduce the characters yourself, giving the players a model of brevity, detail, and wit that they can follow when they introduce their own characters after they become more experienced.

Private Briefings

After characters have been handed out and introduced, take the players aside one by one and give them some special tidbits — unsubstantiated rumors about other player characters; vague hints from obscure informants; secret society tips, warnings, or missions; odd notes about strange happenings in Alpha Complex; and so on. The point is to give the players numerous reasons to blast one another and to fill their heads with generally unreliable intelligence seasoned with occasionally critical information.

In the "blast one another" department, you can be direct ("Skwee-G is a traitor. Waste



him.") or subtle ("Your mentor in Power Services keeps getting this funny tic in his face when you talk about your comrade Skwee-G — sort of a winking thing — and he keeps rubbing his finger across his throat — odd, eh?"). The hints can come from familiar and reliable informants, odd rumors, or "personal observation." ("Say. You've noticed this funny thing — Skwee-G always seems to sort of... disappear when trouble appears. Literally. I mean, you haven't really seen anything, but somehow you turn around and he isn't there.")

The mixture of nonsense and essential info (heavy on the nonsense, please — fear and ignorance, right?) may provide clues and red herrings for the adventure, or resources and contacts through service groups, secret societies, and the black market.

For examples, see the private briefings prepared for "Into the Outdoors with Gun and Camera."

The private briefing is also an opportunity for novice players to ask about things they don't understand — especially secret societies, mutant powers, and so on.

Master the Technology of Note Passing

Because of all the sneaking, backstabbing, and secret information in *Paranoia*, private communication between the GM and the players is critical. It is also incredibly annoying when players call the GM aside every two or three seconds with vital questions and fiendish plots.



2. Presenting Adventures

When you're actually running an adventure, there are some things you can do to ensure a good time for all.

Improvise with Gay Abandon

No matter how thoroughly you prepare, players always want to do something you hadn't anticipated instead of marching down the hall to the destination you assigned them. Like a mass of wriggling puppies, they tarry in the hall, fiddle with the wiring behind inspection panels, buttonhole passers-by, wander down side corridors, ask all sorts of embarrassing and irrelevant questions about the decor — in general, doing everything but what you expected.

Get used to the idea. Then revel in it. The best encounters are often the unexpected ones, in which minor details blossom into brief gems of roleplaying art. And *Paranoia* is the perfect setting to polish your improvisational skills.

A lively traffic in notes is an excellent alternative. It lets the GM schedule his interruptions, and putting things on paper forces the players to be brief and direct, while the GM can be flip and irresponsible in response, offhandedly ignoring the request, or nodding yes or no. It also produces written memos to remind the GM of certain ongoing conditions ("The next time Skwee-G is even briefly separated from the group, I'll start a fire with my pyrokinesis mutant power and frame him with the caper.") and provides nice tidbits to tuck into a character's Personal File as a record of treasonous actions.

Paranoia players love to write notes. It gives them a chance to scheme and tattle all the time, even when the GM is busy with something else. Notes often concern clever little boobytraps and double-crosses, or the player wishes to go on record as being on guard against sneaky stuff from other players. Most popular and adorable is the habit of making private com reports concerning the suspicious or treasonous actions of other characters.

The wonderful thing about notes is that everyone knows you're up to something, but what? A mound of notes growing in front of the GM is a good indication that the players have the proper *Paranoia* spirit. "Does that note concern me? Am I being set up? Should I shoot first? And who? Well, if I shoot everyone, I'm bound to get at least some of my enemies..." In fact, GM and players often pass blank notes back and forth, just to keep everyone nervous.

Here's a good way to handle notes. All notes are placed in front of the GM, with the most recent note received on top. From time to time (every five or ten minutes at least; sometimes much more often when there is a heavy note flow or when the GM isn't busy) pick up the notes and read them in first-received order (bottom up).

Explain to your players how you judge your notes. A good rule of thumb is that the shorter the note, the more promptly the action takes place, but the more latitude the GM has in judging the specific results of the action. On the other hand, a long, detailed note implies careful planning and execution, and the result is likely to be closer to the player's stated intention.

Session Length

We hear tales of marathon sessions lasting 10 to 12 hours. Phew! The idea of that much soul-crushing gaiety makes us flinch, but more power to you. We recommend two to three hour sessions for most typically impossible missions. The fast pace, high tension, and constant player involvement of *Paranoia* gives you a full and satisfying evening of roleplaying in a couple of hours. Four or more hours are fine when plot and character development are emphasized and when player characters have limited motivation to blow one another up every minute or two.

In other games, you're always worrying whether your improvisation fits in with the adventure and the campaign world. In *Paranoia*, self-consistent settings and coherent plots are nice, but really don't matter. *Paranoia* is a state of mind. Who cares if minor — or major — inconsistencies show up? Pointing them out is treason. Play fast and loose with insignificant niceties like cause-and-effect, logical consistency, and the laws of physics. Twist the structure of reality like a pretzel. Who cares? You're in charge here in Alpha Complex. Anything goes, in any order, any way you choose. The atmosphere of *Paranoia* is the key, and an unreliable reality actually enhances the atmosphere. For an instructive example, see *Alice in Wonderland*.

Paranoia is rich with running gags — familiar narrative fragments that support improvisation. The supposed plot is often relatively unimportant or even completely bogus; the real fun is in the dozens of encounters that occur along the way. Because these en-

counters have little to do with the story, you don't have to worry about making up something that doesn't fit. It doesn't matter. All it has to do is fit the tone, and we give you plenty of ideas about how to do that.

Once liberated from the fetters of self-consistency, logical coherence, and narrative relevance, you're free to improvise at the drop of a hat. And if a player is so bold as to bring little matters of inconsistency to your attention, just get pleasant and steely-eyed, and ask the citizen if he perhaps has some perceptual impairment — something that might require Reconstructive Memory Engineering down in R&D, or perhaps a little chat with the Loyalty Counselor at the Correctional Recreation Resort and Brainshrinking Spa.



Maintain Triple Redundancy of Player Character Coercion Systems

Players who tarry and do the unexpected are charming for a while, but eventually they become tiresome. Sooner or later, you'll want to use all the spiffy plot elements and neat encounters you've dreamed up for your players, so you'll want to get them on track. Fortunately, in *Paranoia*, when the PCs aren't doing what you want them to do, there are plenty of ways to make them.

The Computer: The Computer is everywhere. Cameras scan every room and corridor. Electronic ears bring every whisper to The Computer's attention. Like Santa, The Computer knows when you've been bad or good.

And the voice of The Computer is everywhere. Public address systems carry public and private messages to every corner of Alpha Complex. Even if a PC is outside the Complex or in an abandoned corridor, The Computer can speak through his personal com unit.

And you know how fervently citizens attend to the voice of The Computer. A formal command is seldom necessary. A polite hint is usually sufficient, particularly if you make an object lesson out of anyone who fails to respond cheerfully and loyally to polite hints.

Mission Alerts: Give the PCs very specific orders:

Go to Room 36-24-38. Immediately. Now. Walk in a straight line. No talking. No poking or shoving. Keep your blasters in your holsters. Don't even think about going anywhere but Room 36-24-38. Don't touch walls, doors, or other citizens on the way. No, you may not go to the bathroom. Serve The Computer. Right now. The Computer will fix your wagon if you don't follow directions. Thank you for your cooperation.

Messengers: If the PCs encounter a circumstance not specifically covered in their orders, or find some annoyingly clever way to warp or ignore the intentions of their orders, send a messenger (a breathless Infrared, perhaps, or a flustered jackobot, or a gleaming duralloy combot the size of a caboose) with an urgent mission update clarifying The Computer's exact wishes in the matter.

High-Status NPCs: The timely arrival of an NPC with a higher security clearance than the ranking PC is a perfect channeling device. Failure to obey a higher clearance citizen is, after all, treason. Even when PCs whine about having priority orders from higher authority ("But The Computer told us to do this..."), it is mysteriously difficult to get official confirmation of such orders ("Pardon me, but the line is busy, he's away from his desk, and you have the wrong number. Will you hold?").

Bots: Assign a bot to the party. Store all information critical to the mission's success in the bot's brain. Then prohibit the PCs from accessing that information. ("I'm sorry. That information is not available at your security clear-

ance, nosy human.") Now the PCs have to follow the bot around and do what it tells them to do when it feels like telling them.

Of course the PCs should also have signed an intimidating form when the bot was issued to them, clearly indicating how valuable the bot is and how tragic it would be if the bot were to come to harm. Thus, when the bot darts off down a corridor for parts unknown, the PCs must cheerfully and frantically pursue and protect the equipment they signed for.

Non-Player Character Party Leaders: This is a sure-fire way to drag the PCs around by the nose — until the leader dies. Leader death is likely to become a regular event when the PCs figure out what you're up to.

Worse things could happen. Just keep hustling clone replacements to the party, and have the new leader hint darkly about explaining the high leader mortality rate at the debriefing. Or send the clone replacement with a detachment of jovial Vulture Squadron bodyguards.

Internal Security Troopers, Combots, Guardbots, and Vulture Squadrons: These faithful servants of The Computer often show up in conjunction with special messengers and dispatches. Or in response to citizen complaints about annoying disturbances (like weapons fire and tortured shrieks). These Defenders of Law and Order often have helpful suggestions about PC manners and social observances. "Don't be alarmed. These surface-to-surface missiles are for your protection. Now, don't you loyal citizens have some pressing business elsewhere?"

Give the Players Lots of Stuff to Do

Paranoia presents the gamemaster with a terrible temptation to be entertaining. A witty and enthusiastic GM can make a *Paranoia* session almost as exciting as watching "Brady Bunch" reruns. Unfortunately, a well-intentioned witty-and-enthusiastic GM can also fall into the error of hogging the stage.

Remember — let the players do things. This is a game. And the players are gaming. Gaming is making choices and taking actions. The players have to be able to make choices and take actions, early and often, or they will be annoyed, no matter how entertaining you are.

Here is a little checklist of the most popular *Paranoia* activities. Stay-alert; pay attention to what's going on in each session. If you find yourself doing all the talking and thinking, it's time to cut down on your own radiant personality and get your players more involved in the following:

Shoot One Another, Smash Things, and Blow Things Up (very primitive problem solving): They do an awful lot of this. They seem to enjoy it.

Talk/Lie/Whine (talking your way out of problems, or talking other people into problems): They do this when they can't shoot, smash, or blow things up. It isn't as destructive, but it requires more creativity and wit, which players seem to enjoy exercising.

Puzzling (thinking and discussing problems): When they can't shoot or talk their way around a problem, sometimes they will think about it. Sometimes they come up with



Serving The Computer in the food vats.



brilliantly original, charmingly entertaining, and occasionally effective solutions, which seems to make them happy.

Experiment (solving problems by devising little tests): This is science along the lines of, "let's put these ants in an aluminum pot, put it in the sun, and see what happens." Kid science. Fun stuff. Most of this has to do with testing experimental equipment, though with the uncertainty inherent in operating any equipment in *Paranoia*, using a toothbrush may qualify as basic research.

Choose Between Two Evils (the problem of choosing between the horrible and the terrible): A common occurrence in *Paranoia*, and hard work. PCs spend lots of time agonizing over which variety of treason they want to be executed for, or which of two hopeless courses of action to take.

Respond to Desperate Circumstances (solving problems before you have time to think about them): This type of PC activity often takes the general form, "Gee, it looks like you're doomed. Now what do you do?" This is real knee-jerk problem solving — the PCs don't really have time to think; they can only flail about in panic. Lotsa fun, you bet.

Understand the Purpose of the Rules

At the beginning of the Rules section (page 54), we told you that rules were made to be broken. That needs elaboration.

It's the way rules are used that's important. Rules should fit the purpose of the game. The purpose of *Paranoia*'s rules is to support a fast-paced, free-wheeling, improvisational, fun roleplaying style. Other roleplaying games have other purposes, so their rules need to be used differently. Some roleplaying games are combat competitions — wargames — in which the fun is in winning through clever tactics and knowledge of the game. Other roleplaying games are simulations of historical or fantastic cultures, where the fun is in creating a detailed, plausible model of an imaginary past, present or future. Still other games are power-and-loot-accumulating contests, where the fun is in grabbing goodies and improving your character's wealth and power.

Paranoia's rules are designed to serve the needs of roleplaying and dramatic appropriateness. A good interpretation of the rules is one that seems aesthetically appropriate for the character involved, and to the humorous, ironic tone of *Paranoia*. Consider the following example:

Someone wants to murder a helpless innocent in order to advance his personal and political goals. Here's how it might go in four different roleplaying games:

The Wargame

GM: Yep, you got 'em. Unarmed, unarmored, prone — perfectly fits the rules definition 'helpless.' Go ahead. According to the rules, you can kill any helpless character in one round.

Simulation

GM: Scoundrel! Butcher an unarmed man? Let's check the Political Climate Table — ah, yes, a period of unrest, good, and the Bystander Reaction Table — oh-ho, looks like the crowd won't stand for such villainous behavior, even from an armored knight.

Loot-and-Pillage

GM: Go ahead. Whack 'em. (Rolls dice.) No problem. Okay, you search the body, as usual — hmm, Treasure Table III, Class R, the roll says — five coppers and a chance of a magic scroll... yes! A magic scroll to boot. Good haul, Sir Knight.

Paranoia

GM: Quite courageous, citizen, jamming that plasma generator into the mouth of the soon-to-be-indisputably-established traitor. Now, as I recall, plasma generators are experimental devices — significant chance of malfunction, yes? And you've been so busy (rolls dice, ignores them) — haven't maintained it properly? (snicker) — so a substantial modifier to the malfunction roll...

Player: (whining) Say, I used that plasma generator a dozen times, and you never made a malfunction roll...

GM: Gee. What a coincidence! A malfunction roll just as you are about to slaughter your forty-second helpless Infrared — excuse me — Commie traitor. (Exaggerated expression of grieved sympathy.) I don't know how to account for it. Just one of those things I guess. At your service.

See? In *Paranoia*, the GM is more concerned about what the character deserves, and what is a fitting resolution to an action, than in the rules that formally govern the action. Rules are the GM's excuse for doing what's appropriate and entertaining. If the rules get in the way, ignore them.

Be Impartial... Sort Of

Normally you ought to be impartial in applying the rules of any game, at least in the sense that no player should think that he is being undeservedly singled out for persecution. In *Paranoia* this hinges on an ambiguous sense of what "undeservedly" means. If you think a player is just asking for it, well, you're right. If he's annoying you or the other players, he ought to be persecuted. For example, if he always defends his character by referring to the rules, and if he bores everyone with painstakingly detailed, out-of-character tactical plans for firefights, well, his weapon ought to malfunction a lot, and the bad guys should always be real interested in him, and The Computer ought to be particularly credulous of treasonous indictments.

Maintain a studiously sincere appearance of impartiality; assure your players that you are only following the rules and evenhandedly dispensing justice as you ruthlessly oppress their characters. This helps reinforce

the paranoid atmosphere, and it teaches the players to assume that something especially sinister is afoot whenever you earnestly assert principles of justice and fair-play.

You are, in a sense, The Computer. Your own "impartiality" is merely an aspect of The Computer's infinite benevolence. Tell the players over and over that Alpha Complex has been carefully ordered for their comfort and security, that their friend The Computer would never let anything bad happen to them, and that no matter how horrible things may seem at the moment, that everything is perfectly all right... nothing to worry about... no problem at all... honest.

Constantly reinforce these themes: "impartial and generous," "comfort and safety," "their benevolent friend The Computer," "nothing to worry about," "no problem..."

Telling them these things may seem a bit insincere, given the inevitable widespread slaughter, disaster, and betrayal that routinely attends *Paranoia* adventures. Your toothy grins as you turn clone after clone into vapor may seem to contradict your earnest protestations of benign impartiality.

But don't worry. Your players won't make a fuss. They know they're doomed. They know your real job is to slaughter them like sheep. But that's okay. They'll slaughter each other, anyway, if you don't get them first. That's the whole idea.

Be Colorful

Be colorful in your application of the rules. Avoid mechanics talk. Don't distract from the atmosphere by making specific rules references and using the jargon of game mechanics. Imagine you're a play-by-play radio announcer for a Christians-Lions game at the old Coliseum. For example:

Rules Talk: Okay. You fire your laser at your colleague, who is dodging. Your skill is rating 7, you're at point-blank range, which is a +4 bonus, and he is dodging, which is a -4 penalty, so you need a 7 or less. (Clatter.) Okay. A 3 — a hit. Now, we check the Damage Table. Your colleague has reflex armor, so let's shift four columns left and roll... (clatter) a 12, and a stun result. Okay, your colleague can perform no action next round.

Colorful Talk: Okay. You turn and casually point your laser at your buddy. He suspects something and dives for cover. (Clatter.) Sizzle. Well, you hit him in the chest — bet he's grateful to The Computer for his reflex armor. (Clatter.) Hmm. No smell of charred flesh, no death wail... but he doesn't look too active.

Rules talk is fine in the beginning. It helps you learn the rules and shares the responsibility for judging action sequences with knowledgeable players. But you get the point — move toward the dramatic presentation style as fast as you can.



Know When to Ignore the Dice

Suppose you roll the die and get a "20," and your favorite villain is dead before he has time to complete Stage 1 of his diabolical plan to destroy Life, the Universe, and Everything. So much for the nifty adventure you've carefully planned out.

Are you really going to waste all the work you put into preparing that adventure, just because of a stupid die-roll?

Pointedly ignore the dice when you want to remind the players that There Ain't No Justice. Judicious and infrequent displays of arrogant indifference to die-rolls lets the players know that the rules can't save them. "Oh. Should I have given you an agility roll to duck out of the way of the runaway algae harvester? Well, excuse me. (Roll dice. Don't look at them.) Oh. Too bad. You failed the roll. That's the breaks. You know what they say — the dice don't lie, and neither does The Computer. Now, ready to continue?"

Paranoia GMs are supposed to be arbitrary and perverse. Alpha Complex is a horrible place to live. A friendly reminder now and then helps the players adopt that cheerful, carefree resignation to their doom that is the soul of Paranoia's unique and charming atmosphere.

Roll Dice A Lot

Find plenty of excuses to roll dice. Players love to hear rolling dice, even when the effect on their characters is negligible, obscure, or illusory.

When you don't need to conceal the result, let the players roll. Attribute and skill rolls can always be tossed in on impulse — "Say, give me an endurance roll. You must be getting tired of lugging that Semi-Portable Specimen Freezer Unit around."

You should always be rolling dice where the players can't read the results. Don't tell anyone why you're rolling. In fact, most of the time, you won't have anything in mind — "Hmm. (Clatter-clatter behind GM screen.) Ah, well. Aha! *Snicker* Oh, no problem... nothing at all... relax." You're just keeping the players nervous, and distracting attention from the really important secret rolls you make.

Interpret Rolls to Your Dramatic Needs

Paranoia's skill resolution system just tells you whether you succeeded or failed. Sometimes, though, you want to know how well you did, or how badly you bungled. Use the number rolled; roll much lower than your skill number, and you did real well. Roll a lot higher, and you really blew it.

"Oops. the security alarm — whoop, whoop, whoop! (Clatter.) You dive for the autocar controls and press the buttons for the security sequence... do you make it?... yes!... you're tapping... looks good... but, uh-oh... too

bad... well, it's tough using a keyboard with armored gauntlets... WHAM. Next contest-ant?"

"Sure. You summon up all you know about physics as you inspect the CosmoZoom Planetary Warp Shield device you've been assigned for testing. (Clatter.) Looks perfectly safe. Perfectly... oh, say. You remember some rumor about planets and gravity and stuff... some Commie named Copernicus or Newton or something. Say. Maybe this thing is dangerous..."

A wide margin of success or failure is a cue for epic hyperbole ("exaggeration for humorous effect" — you reluctant scholars).

"(Clatter — fail by wide margin.) Hmm. You missed your target. But don't worry. The explosive shell seems to have struck some unimportant structural supports... nothing serious, just a few toppling wall panels and a sizable piece of ceiling — your end of the room, incidentally — and a couple of tons of rock are above you — seems to be falling... on you, I fear. Have a nice day."

"You apply your extensive knowledge of robot design to repairing the bot brain... (Clatter — succeed fantastically.) My, my, you seem to have really outdone yourself this time. You run through the operation checks and turn him on — the scrubot nods politely, inquires about the current status of the search for a unified field theory, spreads its mop attachments and leaps nimbly across the room like Barishnykov. Nice work, citizen."

Manage Information

"I'm sorry. That information is not available at this time." Paranoia players are caught in a bind. They have to rely on the GM for information, but they know that the GM takes great delight in denying access to information. Further, they know that what information they do get is either muddled or incorrect — and therefore useless — or completely reliable and accurate — which probably means that they'll get executed if they're caught knowing it.

Information management requires a delicate touch. On one hand, you want to frustrate your players and erode confidence in the information they receive. That's Paranoia... ignorance and fear, fear and ignorance. On the other hand, you don't want to crush their spirit completely; they have to ask questions to keep the game moving, and they have to believe there is some point to asking questions or they'll actually get paranoid and avoid you and the game like the plague.

A couple of principles will help you maintain this tension between atmospheric despair and real despair:

Exploit the Ritual Paranoia Phrases: "I'm sorry. That information is not available at this time." "I'm sorry. That information is not available at your security clearance." "Information retrieval specialists are working on your request at this moment. All information will be forwarded to you at the earliest opportunity." "We've located that information you

were looking for. It's definitely lost. Glad to be of service."

Maintain an Exaggerated and Cheerfully Phony Pretense of Cooperation and Eager Service: Pretend to be ever so sorry for the delay, or confident that the information is forthcoming immediately. The spoken message should be one of hope; the tone in your voice should ooze with obvious insincerity.

Frequently Dispense Valuable Tidbits to Encourage False Optimism: About five or ten percent of the time, offer truly useful information, but bury it in useless and misleading information, or make it available through thoroughly unreliable sources. This conditions the players to look carefully for information in even the most obvious nonsense and hoopla, and to trust even completely unreliable sources, setting them up for even more colossal hose jobs.

Use Bogus Secret Attribute and Skill Rolls as a Screen when Feeding them Plausible Nonsense: "Oh. You want to know what security systems are protecting this installation. How about a security skill roll... (The GM, knowing that there are no security systems protecting the installation, rolls dice. Pretends to study them. Looks impish.) Well, well. You are absolutely certain that there's no security at all here. Isn't that wonderful news? Why, you can do anything you want..."

Players catch on immediately to the idea that when their dice indicate a major failure, you are going to gleefully misinform them. They haven't seen whether the roll was a failure, so they don't really know they can't trust the information, but you are way too happy about the whole thing for the information to be on the level.

When in Doubt, Invoke The Computer: "Surely The Computer, in its infinite wisdom and benevolence, would have given you that information if you really needed it. Certainly you wouldn't question the judgment of The Computer, would you?"

Vary Your Tone of Voice

When you talk to the players, make it clear whether you're talking as Referee, The Computer, Narrator, or NPC. Paranoia is a game of tone, and each gamemaster role has its voice or voices.

The Referee has an exaggerated sincerity and concern for fairness and impartial interpretation and application of the rules. To the players, this means that they are going to be hosed and there is nothing they can do about it except look cheerful.

The Computer is schizophrenic: on one hand, it is ever so solicitous of the citizen's welfare and safety; on the other hand, it is cool and matter-of-fact about dealing swiftly and ruthlessly with traitors and Commies. The Computer can also take on a variety of other personalities on occasion; a fuller treatment of the tone of Gamemaster-as-The-Computer is found on page 33.



The Narrator is neutral and reliable. Your tone should lead the players to trust you when you describe what their characters remember and sense. Occasionally circumstances may permit tampering with memories or sensory data (drugs, weird science, brainwashing, etc.), but only as distinctive exceptions. Don't mix this voice up with the other voices that make the players distrust GM statements.

NPCs have zillions of distinctive voices and manners. The important thing is to avoid letting your NPC voices blur into one or two standard characters.

Referee: Gosh, I don't suppose there's any chance that it could malfunction, do you? (Clatter.) Hmm.

The Computer: Yes, citizen. May I be of assistance?

Narrator: The room is about 10 meters across. A bot about the size of a microwave oven stands in its precise center. (Clatter.) John-R, you've seen this kind of bot before; it's an early-model scrubot.

NPC: Skwee-G says, "Okay, youse guys. Over de top. De last one out gets his brain fried, yunnerstan?"

Use Cheap Tricks

Relentlessly search for cheap tricks and dramatic flourishes that engage the players on a gut level and blur the boundaries between game reality and player reality.

Most experienced roleplaying gamers expect to sit around a table and listen and talk and look at diagrams and roll dice and consider strategies, while their alter egos — the player characters — dash about firing weapons, screaming and crying, groveling and cowering, teleporting and exploding, and buttering up The Computer and its malevolent servants. These are sensible expectations; after all, that is mostly what should happen.

But the hallmark of *Paranoia* presentation is to whip up little tricks which jab the players out of their complacency, which make them feel a little of the paranoia their characters are experiencing. For example, a warning klaxon sounds when the plasma generator malfunctions. Instead of simply saying, "A warning klaxon sounds," a GM might reach under the table, grab one of those little air horns you hear at football games, and press the button rhythmically for the next few minutes, emitting screeching, ear-assaulting squonks as he continues his typical GM spiel. The players, of course, jump out of their skins and frantically try to figure out how to stop that godawful noise — much as their alter egos would be doing in Alpha Complex. For a moment, the players are drawn into the the battering and terrifying atmosphere their characters live in.

Several of these cheap tricks have become *Paranoia* classics. In *The Yellow Clearance Black Box Blues*, the GM sticks a styrofoam cup small-end-first into his mouth and delivers a briefing, simulating the malfunctioning microphones of the briefing booth — the

players experience firsthand the terror of receiving an unintelligible briefing, but being too scared to imply that there's anything wrong with The Computer's equipment.

And in *Me and My Shadow, Mark IV* (from *Acute Paranoia*), the adventure begins with Alpha Complex's video wake-up exercises — all the players are told to stand up and do jumping jacks. Recalling distasteful memories of high school calisthenics, the reluctant players grumble — then realize that grumbling is treason. It's quite a sight watching fourteen assorted gamers doing jumping jacks before a large audience for a *Paranoia* demonstration at a game convention — a tribute to the evocative power of the *Paranoia* universe.

No more than one or two of these cheap tricks per session is necessary to keep the players intimately in touch with the emotions of their imaginary alter egos. Too much of this stuff would be overkill; this is a game, thank God, and let's all hope the world never gets to be as much fun as Alpha Complex. You only want to blur the boundary between the fun-filled game session and the fear-and-ignorance world of Alpha Complex briefly — and only for dramatic effect. No real-life games of "Bake the Traitor," okay? We don't want you guys killing off our potential customers.

We can't really give you any guidelines for conceiving these cheap tricks. We give you examples in our published adventures, but coming up with these things is hard work, even for us World Famous Game Designers. Consider it a challenge. Here are a couple of tips:

- Create Alpha Complex artifacts from real full-scale props. A vacuum cleaner sorta reminds us of a plasma generator — loud whining noises, a long hose for a plasma tube — sling the canister over your back, advance on a player and poke the suction end at him — he'll get the idea. Make things out of cardboard boxes and other rubbish. For generating noises, the TV and stereo have a lot of potential when played way too loud. And hardware stores are filled with odd-looking tools with obscure purposes — perfect R&D stuff.
- Do horrible things to character sheets, cardboard figures, and lead miniatures. Got access to a paper shredder? Want a graphic off-screen PC execution? Take the character sheet at the end of the session, then return it to the player at the next session — a small envelope of paper bits. Feed the sheet to your dog. Got a garbage disposal? A washing machine? Or tape it to the underside of a car on a wet or snowy day. The same goes for cardboard and lead miniatures, only moreso. All of those lovely gardening tools in the basement, just sitting around idle...

Be Sensitive to Play Style

Be sensitive to your players, and know what style of play they prefer and are capable of enjoying.

We have noticed roughly three styles in *Paranoia* players. Sometimes players progress slowly over a period of time from one style

to another. Because you can play several *Paranoia* adventures in an evening, sometimes the progression occurs overnight. Some players stick with one style; others bounce around from style to style according to impulse. Match your style of presentation to your players' game style if you want to have the most fun and the least frustration.

Stage One — Trigger Madness: Expect the initial reaction to *Paranoia* to be a joyous release from the generally solemn and life-revering themes of other roleplaying games. Players will gleefully exterminate one another at the drop of a hat, exhilarated by the prospect of ruthless play against the most imposing opponents — other player characters. They don't really need an adventure — just stick the characters in an enclosed space and they'll start blasting each other. If you do by chance get them moving into an adventure, they'll blast anything that gets in their way — or isn't running too fast to elude them — then they'll get back to the solemn work of annihilating one another.

Glorious fun though this is, it is only the lowest form of *Paranoia* merriment. Admittedly many will be perfectly happy with this — in fact, this is the preferred style of many World Famous Game Designers at West End. No stigma is attached to a preference for this style. I mean, they can't help themselves, right?

However, in order to advance to the more subtle and byzantine of Alpha Complex's "Catch-22 No-Win Terminal Runarounds," you have to get the players to put away their lasers for an instant and start moving in the direction of roleplaying and problem solving.

Here's some tricks you can use to get the players out of "OK Corral" mode and into "On with the Adventure."

The Computer, receiving reports of disturbances in the corridors and destruction of Computer property (large scale devastation of Troubleshooters, citizens, and their environs), announces over the PA system that the PCs are traitors, that a 2000 credit bounty has been placed on their heads, and that a Vulture unit armed with X-ray lasers has been dispatched to straighten them out. A reluctance to role-play molecules wafting about may deter the next clone generation from a repeat of their predecessors' trigger-happy behavior.

If the clones show the same criminal disregard for public safety and property, repeat the first step, but summon the third set of clones directly to Internal Security for a "weapons inspection." There the PCs are relieved of their weapons, and IntSec techs install remote-control switches in each of them. The weapons are returned, and a leader is assigned — the sanest player — and given a device that turns the other characters' weapons on and off. The leader is also breveted to a higher security clearance and given Kevlar armor. Henceforth the PC weapons only function at the whim of the sanest player. Alternatively, IntSec might install surgical implants that cause the PCs to explode or caper merrily when the leader



presses a control button, or all the PCs can be put on a regime of tranquilizers, drugs, and hypnotic suggestions that restrain their atavistic tendencies.

If this doesn't work, summon the PCs to a debriefing where they are all strapped into booths resembling iron maidens. Carry out an extensive debriefing with each player, reminding him how important it is that they achieve their mission without further delay — how terrible it is to damage Computer property — and how difficult it is to have roleplaying fun while their characters are restrained in debriefing booths for long, admonitory harangues. Then return them to the mission.

If they are still zapping each other, get out an incredibly complex wargame and start setting up the zillions of cardboard chiclets and enormous hexagonal maps of the Balkans or something. Maybe that'll get their attention.

Stage Two — Roleplaying: At this stage the players are still so tickled by the bizarre setting of *Paranoia* that they just want to explore the entertaining possibilities of roleplaying Alpha Complex citizens. They'll want to fool with their secret society affiliations and the black market, test their mutant powers, learn how to manipulate the bureaucracy and regulations, play with all the neat stuff they can get from PLC Outfitting and R&D, see what kinds of treason they can get away with, and what they can weasel out of.

This is loads of fun — simply learning how to stay alive in Alpha Complex is an adventure in itself — but the players won't have much interest in accomplishing missions. In fact, each player may believe at this point that the only effective strategy in *Paranoia* is to stall long enough so that you are the last mission group member killed or executed — that this is the highest accomplishment possible for a *Paranoia* character. Who cares about the mission? Of course the mission is impossible. That's *Paranoia*, right?

Good work, GM. That's the tone you've been struggling to maintain — cheerful and utter despair.

But, remarkably enough, when we World Famous Game Designers design our missions, we really believe that they could be accomplished. Honest. Admittedly, sometimes we don't know how they could be accomplished, but, on the other hand, we are absolutely confident that there are players out there that can outfox us. Bitter and exhilarating experience has proved that no matter how clever we GMs and adventure designers think we are, there is always a player, or a team of players, that will find a way to achieve the impossible. Clever, cocksure players with iron, indomitable wills and bizarre, deviant imaginations are ready for Stage Three *Paranoia*.

Stage Three — Problem-Solving and Mission Success: These players have learned an awful truth — that even the *Paranoia* GM, armed as he is with *Paranoia*'s unparalleled resources for coercion and PC oppression, is at the mercy of a group of players with equally twisted imaginations and perverse problem-solving strategies. To be honest, we've not met many players that can maintain this confident, competent style consistently, but we've often found it at least in flashes in even beginner groups and convention demos. This is one of the greatest pleasures of *Paranoia* — to confront players with an impossible mission and watch them solve it anyway.

Opinions vary on how to respond to this. Some recommend that you cheerfully slaughter PCs when they get too clever — nothing vicious or personal, just a normal, in-character response of The Computer and high-status NPCs who fear a competent competitor. Others recommend a judicious program of rewarding clever players with power, status and wealth — not too much too fast, but just enough to permit them to take on ever-tougher assignments. Still others recommend that no special notice be given to the character (perhaps the greatest security in Alpha Complex is remaining anonymous), but that the player be liberally praised when he end-runs around the GM's most fiendish plots. Which method is best? Who knows — we just don't have that much experience with Stage Three players. Follow your instincts here.



3. Packaged Adventures vs. Home-Brew

Sophisticated (and sometimes snobbish) roleplaying gamers often have a prejudice against published adventures: the notion being that published adventures are for clods too unimaginative to design their own. It's certainly true that there is great satisfaction in designing a neat adventure; we World Famous Game Designers (WFGDs) get a kick out of spending time and effort creating twisted entertainments for our friends, and we know folks that play *Paranoia* are likely to get the same kind of kick from designing their own adventures.

However, there are some valid reasons why you should run out Right Now and buy every *Paranoia* adventure ever published.

Seven Good Reasons to Use Published Adventures:

1. Inexperienced gamemasters get a lot of support from *Paranoia* adventures. We try to teach the rudiments (and esoteric refinements) of the gamemastering arts, and give plenty of tips and materials that help you present an adventure.

2. Published adventures provide useful models for organizing adventure information so it is easy to reference and present. After you've read a couple of adventures, you get a good idea of what stuff you need to prepare yourself and what you can expect in a game session.

3. Using a published adventure reduces a GM's pre-session preparation time considerably. If you can't afford time to design an adventure, or you'd rather spend time playing than designing, you can't beat a published adventure.

4. Even inspired gamemasters like ourselves find lots of wonderful and entertaining ideas when we read published adventures. We cheerfully steal these ideas and incorporate them into our own diabolical plots.

5. You can always take a published adventure, use its basic structure or premise, then twist it in whatever direction you like. There are no Game Design Police who come to your home to make sure you run an adventure the way it was published. In fact, for *Paranoia*, this is our recommended method — use the published adventure for structure and inspiration, then create and improvise to your heart's content.

6. We want your money.

7. Our marketing people want your money. I mean, they *really* want your money. Even more than we do. And our marketing people promise us that if they get all your money, they'll let us design even more appalling *Paranoia* products.

Sounds okay to us.





4. The Adventure Stereotype

In a *Paranoia* adventure, you always know what to expect. Almost all follow the standard outline we talk about on page 32. Roughly, adventures work like so:

The Troubleshooters receive a mission alert. It informs them that The Computer and Alpha Complex once again require their services, and summons them to a briefing where the specific nature of that service may be discussed in private.

The Troubleshooters go to the briefing and are told what they have to do.

The Troubleshooters go try to do what they have been told to do. They always have plenty of exciting adventures. Time passes. The body count rises. When the GM runs out of adventure or the players run out of clones, the adventure ends.

When (if) they complete their mission, the survivors are summoned to a debriefing where they report the results of their mission and get praised for their loyal service.

It sounds so simple. Somehow it always gets complicated. Each stage in the adventure always seems to get more complex than it has any right to be. Terrible things happen over and over again. We just can't understand it. You'd almost think adventure designers and gamemasters were trying to get the poor Troubleshooters killed.

All *Paranoia* adventures follow a standard scheme. They begin with a mission alert, follow with a briefing, and so on. Players become familiar with the scheme over time. You don't want to let them become too familiar with it; if they learn what to expect, the element of paranoia is lost. Give them the familiar — then distort it in some appalling and humorous fashion.

Mission Alerts

A mission alert is a Troubleshooter's summons to duty. Mission alerts may be broadcast over public address systems or com units (and bellowed cheerfully by the GM in his best football-stadium announcer voice) or they arrive as hardcopy via messenger or through a nearby Computer monitor (as is often the case when the summons is confidential).

The mission alert is our answer to the disconcerting unease we experienced GMs used to have in other roleplaying games when we announced the nature of the evening's adventure. We were always concerned that the players would simply refuse to do what we wanted them to do, because they knew it was dangerous and probably not in their characters' best interests, anyway. "Phooey.

Take the stupid ring to the Cracks of Doom yourself. Who cares. I'm going to hang around town and butcher orcs."

Nobody refuses mission alerts. This is The Computer talking. Everyone always cooperates. Cheerfully. And enthusiastically.

Here are some common features of mission alerts:

A Mission Reference Code or Codename (e.g., Mission Three-Ex-Eff-Dash-One-Four-Niner, or Mission Code Evinrude): Maybe the characters should memorize the code. Suppose some high muck-a-muck or IntSec goon demanded it? How could they prove that they're on official business without it? What if the code was incomplete, garbled, or inaccurate?

A Brief Description of the Nature of the Mission (e.g., "Find and apprehend citizen." "Treason in progress!" "Investigate disturbance in outer space."): These are frequently incomplete, garbled, inaccurate, obscure, or purposely misleading. Doesn't matter anyway. You got to do it, whatever it is. Or isn't. Often omitted for security reasons, or deferred until the Briefing.

Location of the Briefing and Identity of the Briefing Officer: This is real important; otherwise, you don't know where to show up for the briefing. Failure to show up for a briefing is treason. What if two digits in the room number were transposed? Or the typist's fingers were one key to the left on the keyboard when the whole message was typed up — makes it kinda hard to read. Or if there's no such room? They could request confirmation or assistance from The Computer or other citizens, but there's no guarantee it won't be equally garbled, misleading, or inaccurate. And sometimes The Computer and its servants get huffy if you haven't been paying proper attention to the mission alert. Maybe your clone will be more attentive.

A Stirring Appeal to the Troubleshooters' Loyalty and Dedication (e.g., "You have been generously permitted another opportunity to serve The Computer and Alpha Complex."): This is generally an opportunity to display the correct degree of fervent enthusiasm. "Oh, boy. A mission! What fun! And a chance to serve My Friend The Computer! Oh, thank you thank you thank you!" Remember, failure to be happy is treason.

A Misleading or Ironic Understatement of the Mission's Dangers (e.g., "I have the greatest confidence in this mission, Dave-Y. Don't worry. Everything is just fine."): This is a charming feature of The Computer's cheerful, positive style — everything in Alpha Complex

is safe, easy, and fun. As a result, Troubleshooters automatically assume everything is much worse than they are told — and even then they're being optimistic.

Briefings

Briefings generally take place in a briefing room. However, field briefings are not uncommon, and can take place anywhere — in corridors, zooming autocars, meter-diameter tunnels in the bowels of Alpha Complex, and so on.

The briefing officer (or officers) delivers any details of the mission cleared for Troubleshooter ears, and answers any questions the Troubleshooters are bold or foolish enough to ask.

Briefing officers are usually accompanied by imposing guards, guardbots, or automatic security systems, present for the very purpose of annihilating Troubleshooters who are surly, uncooperative, or disloyal, or whose jumpsuits aren't neatly pressed. Lots of Troubleshooters die in briefing rooms.

Here the Troubleshooters are given the details of their mission. Occasionally some of these details are accurate and reliable: Occasionally the briefing officer isn't teetering on the brink of insanity. Occasionally the briefing officer isn't involved in some nefarious plot to sabotage the mission. And occasionally the briefing officer isn't completely misinformed. Occasionally.

Often the mission leader is selected at this point, either by the group itself, by the briefing officer, or by The Computer. Then the mission group may be directed to stop by at PLC Outfitting to pick up equipment (a specific list may be assigned). Then the group may be directed to stop by at R&D to pick up experimental equipment for field testing. The group may also be ordered to seek out various experts, informants, or resource specialists in preparing for the mission. Sometimes these specialists are assigned to the group in an advisory or leadership role.

Then the group is given their mission orders. These usually include the objectives of the mission and any special directions or restraints to be observed. The Troubleshooters get one last chance to ask questions, then they are sent out to do the job.

Outfitting

After the Briefing, the next stop is usually PLC.

Production, Logistics, and Commissary handles production and distribution of the



material needs of Alphan citizens. To obtain needed items — mission equipment, food, clothing, work and recreational and personal gear — a citizen presents himself at one of PLC's distribution centers, fills out a request, and receives prompt and solicitous attention from ever-courteous PLC staffers, who make the needed item available as quickly as possible.

Right.

Actually, it is a little more complicated than that.

Sometimes it's hard to find a distribution center that isn't closed for lunch, or inventory, or Health Services inspection, or Saint Swivin's Day. And if you find one open, maybe it is jammed with desperate citizens, or back-ordered for certain items (like everything useful), or under water, or preempted by high-status citizens who hate crowds.

And sometimes it's hard to find the specific request form you need. (Ever visited an Internal Revenue office at the height of tax return panic? Got the picture?)

And maybe the PLC staffers aren't always cordial. Or competent. Or conscious. (Ever visited a New York City Post Office during Christmas season?)

And maybe you do find the right form, and someone to help you fill it out. And maybe The Computer or one of its loyal servants isn't too busy to review your form. And maybe it gets approved... if you have adequately established your need for the item. ("Well, this 20-page affidavit does seem to cover most of the salient points, but your mission group already has a pair of boots. Can't you share?")

Unfortunately, PLC's inventory is often depleted by circumstances beyond their control. Everything is often:

- around here somewhere,
- temporarily unavailable (permanently lost),
- broken or defective,
- awaiting health/safety/security inspection,
- reserved for high-status citizens,
- withdrawn for preventive maintenance,
- discontinued,
- already issued,
- withheld for security reasons,
- recalled for modifications,
- or right here, but we don't feel like giving it to you.

Even if the item you want is available, that doesn't mean that it will work. And the staff is always trying to substitute useless or overstocked stuff for the requested item. "Look, we don't have the autorifle you requested, but we do have these swell chapsticks..." And they won't take no for an answer. Particularly when a high status supervisor is present. Or when the automatic laser security systems seem to lock onto uncooperative customers.

Of course, Troubleshooters on a mission have priority over other citizens on purely personal business. They can march right to the head of the line and demand immediate service in the name of The Computer — along with the dozens of other citizens professing priority of some kind. Sometimes fights break out.

(Often Troubleshooters may be among the best armed of the combatants.) And there are certain forms to be filled out when you declare a priority mission. And staffers' palms to grease...

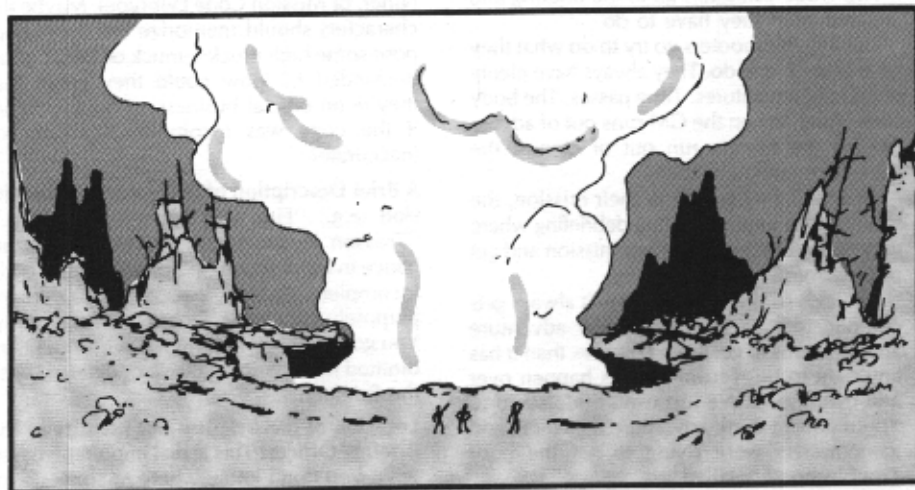
We wouldn't want to suggest that PLC staffers are corrupt. We want to state definitively that PLC staffers are corrupt.

Okay. Let's suppose the Troubleshooters manage to request some equipment that is actually available and offered to them. They have to sign for the equipment, making them ever-so-incredibly responsible for its safety. Equipment lost or damaged may result in fines and reprimands. Shrewd Troubleshooters always test the equipment before they sign for it. Testing automatic weapons and grenades in the PLC distribution centers is always exciting for the busy shoppers standing about.

nuclear reactors. Anti-gravity is just a matter of getting atoms to spin upside down, or inside out, or something like that. And ray guns. And plasma bottles. And hyper drives. And time machines. And fusion cannons. And X-ray lasers the size of ball-point pens.

Of course, the introduction of such incredible technology would produce fundamental changes in any society, changes we are too lazy to imagine and account for. So this super-technology is not available to most citizens in Alpha Complex. It is only in the experimental stages.

Such experimental technology is often assigned to Troubleshooters for two reasons: one, because The Computer believes it will be particularly useful in a given mission, despite its untested status, and two, because the R&D boys are always eager to have their



A visit to R&D is always an exciting experience.

R&D

In PLC Outfitting the characters are routinely assigned inoperative, inappropriate, or perversely intelligent equipment by surly, uncooperative clerks.

In R&D they are routinely assigned exceptionally dangerous inoperative, inappropriate, or perversely intelligent equipment by inspired psychotics.

"Better Living through Science" is the motto of Research and Design. The cheerful, overstimulated, and under-supervised technicians and geniuses of R&D labor long hours to produce the scientific and technological innovations that will catapult Alpha Complex into a future of unimagined luxury, productivity, and freedom from care (or, more likely, into a showy display of fireworks in the lower atmosphere).

These boys are playing with all the potent resources of superscience — that amalgam of semi-plausible, semi-stupid, semi-scientific ideas that are the heritage of pulp sf novels, superhero mutant-power comic books, and trashy sf films. In such literary traditions, everything — personal shields, glove warmers, toothbrushes — is powered by miniature

equipment field-tested — ideally, far away from R&D, where only innocent citizens will be hurt.

Experienced Troubleshooters know that R&D devices are exceptionally dangerous. However, refusal to accept assignment of an experimental device may be perceived as doubting the wisdom and generosity of The Computer. "Citizen, please accept the unparalleled honor of testing the Mark IX Portable Nova Cannon. Appropriate protective gear would normally be issued at this time, but our designers assure us that the weapon is perfectly safe. Perfectly. I'm sure we can count on your cooperation."

Methods of assigning experimental devices vary from adventure to adventure. R&D staffers come and go (often in small plastic bags), and R&D facilities often undergo extensive alterations as a result of unanticipated test results, so Troubleshooters might not visit the same R&D facility twice.

At some facilities, designers and techs demonstrate their devices for the Troubleshooters, eagerly answer questions and reassure them that the devices are completely safe, then allow the Troubleshooters to pick the devices they'd like to have assigned to



them. Sometimes the devices are assigned arbitrarily by officious clerks, and the techs and designers are unavailable for questioning. Sometimes the Troubleshooters are politely asked to describe the sort of device they'd like — then they are assigned devices at random. Sometimes troublesome or uncooperative Troubleshooters seem to get the most dangerous, most unreliable devices, while faithful bootlickers get nifty weapons that actually work.

Where do you get ideas for R&D devices? Easy. Just steal science fiction or superhero pseudoscientific concepts and warp them to your perversely destructive purposes. Or look through popular science magazines for inspiration. For example, I just picked up a magazine and saw advertised on the cover an article on superstring theory. I don't even know what a superstring is, but I'm sure I can whip up an R&D device with a nifty name... like Di-Variable Superstringatron, or a Superstring Ray, or something like that. (And if you actually read the article, you can even come up with something semi-plausible.)

Missions

The mission itself is the narrative thread, the central core of the adventure. In most roleplaying adventures (and most narrative genres, like books and films), the narrative thread is real important. A problem is set up in the beginning, and everybody is in suspense until the end, hoping to find out how the problem is solved.

Well, it works that way in *Paranoia* sometimes, but as often as not, the central problem is either unsolvable, imaginary, or completely bogus, and most of the things that happen during the adventure have nothing to do with that problem.

For example, fantasy literature and roleplaying games often center around some important quest to find a princess or grab some fabulous loot or achieve peace in our time or something. And space opera literature and roleplaying games often center around overthrowing evil empires or slaughtering nasty aliens or grabbing fabulous loot or searching for ancient astronauts or something.

In *Paranoia* there is always the mission, but no one (except The Computer) ever takes it all that seriously. And for good reason. Most missions are suicide festivals, wild bot chases, programming errors, or conspiracies so intricate and obscure that even the GM doesn't understand them. Often the PCs aren't supposed to be able to achieve the mission's objectives. Often they can't even *understand* the mission's objectives, much less achieve them.

But that's *Paranoia* for you. The central narrative isn't all that central in *Paranoia*. Often it's just an excuse to get the characters out into a hallway where they can shoot at each other while they are run over by transbots and incinerated by malfunctioning suit heaters and sniped at by traitors and cheerfully bullied by Their Friend The Computer and all its little playmates.

The incidental horrors that befall the characters are the real meat of a *Paranoia* adventure.

Debriefings

So the players have finally completed the mission. Or botched it beyond any hope of success. Or you're tired and want to break things up. Okay; the Troubleshooters are summoned to a Debriefing.

Here they account for their performance to their superiors (usually the briefing officer and any other interested parties) and The Computer. The mission report consists of a brief summary of the mission objectives and an assessment of whether those objectives were achieved. The report is usually delivered by the mission leader, with corroborating testimony solicited from other group members.

The report is received and reviewed by the superiors and The Computer. If the report is not satisfactory, the Troubleshooters are cross-examined. Other witnesses may be called, video and audio recordings of the mission may be reviewed, and interrogators may practice their solemn art.

Then The Computer and its loyal servants evaluate the mission group's performance during the mission. Diligence and success is rewarded — commendations, bonuses, even promotions may be bestowed on the fortunate. Incompetence and failure is chastised — reprimands, fines, retraining, and demotions may be visited upon the unfortunate.

Then individual citizens may bring charges of treason against other citizens. The charged are given a hearing, the evidence is reviewed, and judgment is brought by The Computer and its servants. Traitors confess or go down fighting.

Survivors of the debriefing are then dismissed. The adventure is over. Players blink at each other and slowly return to their own drab, wretched lives. Herd them gently but firmly to your door. Shove them outside. Close the door and lock it. Do something else for a while. If they're still out there a couple of hours later, throw some cold water over them. They'll get over it.

Ending the Mission

The mission should end when the mission objectives have been achieved. Since this is often when hell freezes over, sessions might run a little long. So here's a few ways to bring the adventure to a halt when you and your players have had all the fun you can stand.

1. The Terrible Accident: Suddenly something blows up. Anything. (In *Paranoia*, even shoe polish can be a high explosive.) The mission group is tragically annihilated. The mission is postponed until the cause of the terrible accident is determined. Time to go home.

2. Deus Ex Machina: That is a reference to a neat ancient Greek trick of lowering a guy dressed up like a god onto the stage to neatly

clean up any loose ends that the playwright was too lazy to resolve through professional plotting or characterization. For our purposes it doesn't have to be a god — though it might be a lot of fun to see a god's reaction to Alpha Complex.

Here you just crank in some super-competent high-level elite Troubleshooter hotshots, or a regiment of Vulture Commandos, or a crack unit of Registered Mutant Heroes, or a team of R&D Wizards armed with super-science marvels. They shoulder the PCs aside, casually achieve the mission objectives with a snap of their fingers, then turn and march haughtily back past the PCs, scornfully suggesting that they sweep up at least, if they can't do anything more useful. Mission accomplished. Time to go home.

3. Drop a Few Hints: The Computer or one of its more competent servants comes on over the com unit. In a patient and deliberate voice it calmly explains how to complete the mission. The PCs follow the advice (or else), and everything falls right in place; zip-zip-zip — the mission is over. Time to go home.

4. The Mission Objectives Wander Out in Front of the PCs, Roll Over, and Surrender: Villains, conspirators, and traitors trot up to the PCs with their hands in the air — "Please, no more! Our spirit is crushed by your relentless pursuit! We cast ourselves on your tender mercies!" Informants crawl out of inspection panels, eager to divulge all their secrets and dispel all mysteries. "Good work, men." Time to go home.

5. Just Kidding: The Computer or the Troubleshooters' superiors call up and say, "Okay. We were just testing you. This mission has been a drill. You're all dismissed. Good work." Time to go home.

6. You Must Be Mistaken, Citizen: Suddenly, no one knows anything about any mission. Anyone asked has never heard of the mission, the objectives, the people involved, or even the sector where it was supposed to take place. The Computer claims no mission alert was ever issued. (It was all a terrible mistake, and the responsible people are covering their tracks.) Everyone is promoted a security clearance level for no apparent reason. Troubleshooters who enquire too closely are obviously traitors trying to make trouble, and are executed. Troubleshooters who ask for new orders are told to go home and take a nap.





5. Designing Your Own Adventures

The Basic Outline

Now that you know the adventure stereotype, you can see how it's done. To design an adventure, all you need is:

1. A basic plot for the mission. Since the mission is often of secondary importance at best, you frequently don't have to worry too much about intricate details of plotting. However, you do need some kind of motivation for the players.
2. Some interesting characters for the players to encounter.
3. A couple of wacky ideas for hosing the PCs over and causing them frustration and angst.
4. Some ideas for how the PCs' secret societies and service groups will feel about the mission.
5. Some strange experimental equipment to saddle the PCs with.

Once you have preliminary ideas for each of these, organize your thoughts. Take a pad of paper and a pen or pencil, and follow these steps:

Write a Mission Alert on a Piece of Paper: If you have time or the inclination, you may

want to type this up. You can hand the alert to the players to read, or, if their characters receive it orally, read it to them at the beginning of the session.

Come Up With an Amusing Name for the Briefing Officer: And jot down a couple of personality quirks — maybe he calls all the PCs "children," or fries anyone who raises his hand, or picks his nose and whines throughout the briefing. It doesn't matter what the quirks are, particularly; they just help you identify the briefing officer as a unique character in your mind and in the minds of your players.

Devise a Dangerous, Weird or Silly Variation on the Briefing Theme: Maybe the briefing is inaudible because the briefing officer's microphone isn't working. Maybe the PCs receive the wrong briefing. Maybe the briefing officer is real nervous and omits important details. Any variation is acceptable, as long as it disturbs or hoses over your players.

Think up Secret Society Orders and Rumors to Tell Your Players During the Private Conference: You might jot down a few notes on these.

Decide What Equipment They'll be Issued at PLC: You might write out an equipment list.

Jot Down a Few Notes on Two or Three Pieces of Experimental Equipment: And what is dangerous or flawed about each.

Figure Out Where the PCs are Likely to go in Their Attempt to Complete the Mission: If you like, jot down a few notes describing the locations they will visit and the people they will meet. Try to figure out what could possibly go wrong at each location, and make a few notes about this catastrophe. *Paranoia* being what it is, whatever can go wrong almost certainly will.

Decide what Reward or Punishment The Computer is Likely to Offer for Success or Failure: Decide on appropriate measures.

And that's all there is to it — that, and a lot of creativity.

The last part of this section — "Into the Blender" — provides ideas which you can use to develop your own adventures. "Into the Blender" discusses the many popular-culture sources from which ideas can be stolen — schlock science fiction, schlock fantasy, schlock mysteries, schlock horror, schlock comic books — and suggests how they can be mutated into appropriate form for *Paranoia*.



6. Into the Blender

There are lot of ways to get ideas for *Paranoia* adventures. One way is to contemplate the idiosyncrasies of the *Paranoia* universe: what would happen, for example, if someone painted a heavily-used Infrared corridor white? Another way to is steal from other genres or roleplaying games. Steal plots, characters and settings, put them in a blender, and Presto! Instant *Paranoia* adventure.

We confess. We've all played lots of other roleplaying games. Some we even like pretty well. That's why we're eager to steal ideas from other genres and jam them into Alpha Complex where we can get away from all those stupid rules and silly concepts like impartial, benevolent GMs, and get down to some serious whacking-and-smashing.

Below we outline a lot of blenderized adventures. You can't just take one of these and run it; each has been thoroughly blenderized at speed setting 10. Each "adventure" is actually a mishmash of ideas, hackneyed plots, stereotyped characters and

weird settings. They're supposed to spark your imagination, and get you thinking about designing your own adventure.

For instance:

The Aliens Is Coming!

Mission: Aliens have landed and are infiltrating or invading Alpha Complex. Go blow them up or make friends with them.

Complications: Aliens are usually real ugly and leave trails of slime or dissolve things. They are either invulnerable or innumerable. They have lots of enigmatic high-tech stuff that R&D wants you to capture and kill yourselves with.

Everybody panics and you are sent on Crowd Control and Evacuation duty. (Trample.)

You can't communicate with the aliens, but they seem so nice. (Slurp.)

Resolution: Aliens eat everyone and go home. Pretty original, we think.

Or aliens turn out to be high-tech Commies masquerading as aliens. Once unmasked, the full military might of Alpha Complex is arrayed against them. Real big weapons. Used underground. In small spaces. Where there are a lot of people hanging around. Big mess.

Or Aliens make friends with The Computer, arrange treaty which lets aliens eat traitors while aliens join R&D in designing even more dangerous devices.

Staging Hints: No need to have the aliens of one species — it's a Galactic Confederation Survey Expedition or something. Use all aliens from all science fiction movies and fiction. All at once. Too good a chance to miss.

Here's a big chance to leave really dangerous alien devices around for the PCs to pick up and hoard or sell on the black market.



To The Moon, Alice-R!

Mission: Go to the moon and find a lost civilization there.

Complications: Go down to R&D and see if they can figure out a way to get you up to the moon. First, you have to explain where it is. Then you have to explain how you got this treasonous information.

R&D tries solutions:

- helium balloon
- big cannon
- strap PCs to small missiles
- mutant power teleport device — works perfectly, delivers PCs to moon where they decompress explosively. No one returns, since no device is made available for the return trip.

Eventually, an R&D genius reads old sf novels, figures out about vacuum and rockets and stuff, designs rocket, and sends PCs to moon.

The PCs crash, of course. Then they are rescued by members of the Soviet Lunar Occupation.

Resolution: PCs join Commies, betray secrets, and lead Soviet Lunar Fleet to invade Alpha Complex.

The PCs steal Soviet ship, fly back to Earth and crash.

The PCs steal Soviet ship, fly back to Earth to warn Alpha Complex of Soviet menace — and are shot down by Armed Forces.

The PCs survive, return to Earth, are misidentified as aliens, given lavish welcome and are elevated to positions of great respect in a High Programmer's private zoo.

Staging: The best part of this is the R&D interplanetary travel devices. You could kill PCs for hours with this trick.

There are millions of ways to kill clones in hard vacuum. Low gravity might produce some interesting improvisation in the escape from the Soviet lunar base — which should probably be real clunky and primitive with plenty of vodka and peasant farmers in air-tight babushkas.

The White Programmer's Burden

Mission: The Computer learns of all the poor savages living in poverty and misery Outside Alpha Complex. The party is sent to bring enlightenment and the Alpha Complex Way to the savages.

Complications: PCs are stripped of weapons (to prevent unfortunate accidents when contacting the natives) and sent Outdoors on foot without any high-tech that cannot be easily concealed, but with many copies of *The Computer Is Your Friend* and other primers for children.

R&D provides many charming miniaturized and useless devices — very delicate and expensive, of course.

Natives meet Troubleshooters and try to kill them. PCs protest that it is all a mistake.



An early attempt in Alpha Complex's spaceflight program.

PCs are brought before Big Chief who listens to their spiel. He wants to see magic as proof of Great Computer's power.

PCs try to impress natives. Native respond by outshining each PC demonstration — through native mutant powers. Unimpressed natives decide to sacrifice PCs to their god.

PCs taken before sacred idol — a video tape deck and monitor. PCs are treated to reruns of "I Love Lucy," then it's time for dinner.

Resolution: PCs are cooked and eaten. Any PCs with the regenerate power? Natives are possessed by PC's DNA, become a hive intelligence, return to Alpha Complex, pretend to convert, but take over by diving into food vats.

PCs combine mutant powers and high-tech R&D devices to escape. Natives follow PCs to Alpha Complex where they are gassed by IntSec, retrained, and turned into useful members of society. Commendations are in order.

Teenage Mutant Ninja Citizens

Mission: Treasonous mutants in hot-pink-and-salmon tights have been zooming around and bothering IntSec troopers and high-status citizens. Find them and bring them to justice.

Complications: The traitors are a radical fringe group of Psion who have decided to protect all mutants from persecution at the hands of The Computer and the apathetic or corrupt citizens of Alpha Complex. Assembling garish costumes in day-glo and pastel hues and adopting the title of the Mutant Justice League, these Psions zoom around the complex and use their powers to attack the enemies of mutants.

Off to R&D for mutant detection equipment that goes off whenever it's turned on. (Ironical-

ly, it actually works, but mutants can't be everywhere, so everyone ignores its readings.)

Then off to the Mutant Registry at IntSec HQ to get some registered mutants to assist in the search for the naughty mutants. The Mutant Justice League just happens to have planned an attack on the Mutant Registry, and the PCs walk into a trap. Lots of gunplay, mutant powers, and incinerated furnishings. The muties escape after destroying the sector's mutant registration files.

PCs go to another sector and get some registered muties. These NPCs are ostensibly completely cooperative, but actually part of the Psion conspiracy. Runarounds and hose jobs ensue until the PCs get wise and incinerate the muties.

The Computer gets a hot tip. Anti-Mutant has found the Mutant Justice League's headquarters and is about to storm the standard superhero stronghold. The PCs are sent along as backup.

Resolution: Anti-Mutants loaded down with high-tech gimcracks take on the Mutant Justice League. PCs pick sides and join in. Some folks survive: heroes are commended; mutants are terminated.

Operation is a fake. Anti-mutants and PCs are caught in standard evil superhero death-trap and forced to listen the mad ravings of the villain. PCs either escape from deathtrap and start battle (conclude as above), or die in deathtrap.

PCs sit out. One side wins. PCs figure the odds, then join or attack the surviving mutants, or annihilate the surviving Anti-Mutants and claim credit for terminating both mutants and secret society traitors.

Staging: Stronghold and deathtrap can come straight out of any dumb comic book or superhero RPG. NPC supervillains should get plenty of chances to make long-winded, in-



coherent speeches. PCs should get smart and interrupt speeches with weaponfire.

My Laser is Quick

Mission: A series of unexplained Terminations Without Proper Documents have been discovered in the nightcycle corridors of Alpha Complex — and the victims are all high status citizens. The PCs are put on the case.

Complications: Also put on the case are a couple of pushy IntSec goons with a tendency to incinerate witnesses and evidence alike in their loyal fervor — that is, unless the PCs beat them to it.

PCs drop by R&D and pick up the Acme A-1 Experimental Clue Detector and Ratiocinatory Analyzer Mark XII. Everything is a clue, especially if it is something dangerous. Every five minutes it broadcasts its latest hypotheses-and-percentage breakdowns — lots of absurd theories and wildly varying probabilities.

PCs are sent to CPU Central compnode to get temporary authorization to enter high-clearance areas. "Sorry, we're out of temp-jumpsuits in the right colors."

Lots of PCs get shot in high-status corridors.

Some PCs reach the various scenes of the crimes. The Acme A-1 Experimental Clue Detector and Ratiocinatory Analyzer Mark XII is a big help. Victims all died the same way — apparently picked up by throat and shaken until tissues gave way. (Ughch.)

Resolution: PCs check security videos, eyewitnesses, black market contacts, or entire population of Alpha Complex. Data is fed into Analyzer and one common factor in all killings pops up — a deliverybot. Deliverybot is brought in for questioning, where it is revealed that the bot has "gone frankenstein" (had its asimov circuits removed), and that it used cocktail shaker software (left over from an earlier assignment) and heavy-duty manipulators to slay its victims. PCs get commend-ed. Bot gets the chair.

Or bot is present in background each time the victims are viewed. If PCs get close to truth, or if GM wants some action after all this clue-and-ratiocination crap, then deliverybot goes berserk and attacks.

Staging: Detective/mystery stuff doesn't work real well in *Paranoia* (but Dashiell Hammett-style strong-arming does). Thinking about clues is hard work and slow-paced, and mysteries are real complicated plots, full of details the GM doesn't want to have to keep straight. So stick gratuitous gunfire and annoying encounters in here and there, and if the PCs get tired of puzzling over the mystery, send in the berserk bot.

It Came From Beneath HPL Sector

Mission: Workmen on the new sewer project tunneled into an ancient limestone cave. The workmen were later discovered scattered



The term "garbage strike" will soon have an entirely different meaning for these troubleshooters.

throughout the sewer system, and citizens are complaining of strange dreams of a huge, slithering, sentient mound of Foamy Organic LatticeYum. PCs are sent to investigate.

Complications: The sewers are yucky. Viscous liquids ooze down dank tunnels. Things drip. Things squish. Noxious smells and sights assault the senses. The PCs come across sprawled bodies of eviscerated workmen as they wander the tunnels. There's a gurgle, a thump — and the last character in line has disappeared. All of the PCs are gradually killed in varied horrible ways; the last one is found babbling and singing tunelessly at the sewer entrance.

Bodies begin to appear in HPL sector. The Thing is loose.

The next set of clones are sent in, but this time R&D equips them with megadeath weapons. The PCs catch sight of something horrible. Those who don't fail sanity checks attempt to use their weapons. The monster is not affected, but the PCs sure are — using megadeath weapons in the enclosed spaces of the sewers is a bad idea. And a bunch of weapons malfunction, of course.

New clones. This time The Computer is really worried, and sends a couple of priests from the First Church with them. They intone, "Om, resident diagnostics CPU pass RAM pass I/O pass interrupt interrupt system dysfunction abend," as they sway down the corridor, incense burning and ringing a large bell. This doesn't work too well, either.

Resolution: It's a "September monster" — totally invulnerable until you say the word "September," upon which it keels over dead.

Or HPD & Mind Control's Entertainment Division was filming a horror film, and it's all a big mistake.

Or it's all part of a High Programmer's power play to divert The Computer's attention while he takes over.

Or the Thing is really a nice, misunderstood fella, and once he's discovered and the PCs explain that killing people is a no-no, he becomes a socially useful citizen, and joins a song-and-dance group.

Or one of the PCs is a psycho who has been doing all the killing and using props to make it look like a monster.

Staging: Lots of gruesome gore. Lots of sanity checks. Lots of quiet stretches punctuated by sudden, mind-numbing violence. (Sounds a lot like regular *Paranoia*.) Maybe it can control minds, and some party members are under its control.

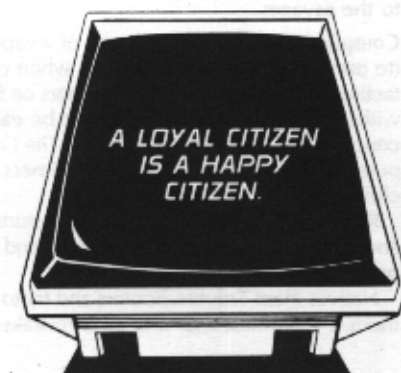
And More

...Conan shows up looking for a fight.

...R&D has been experimenting with biological technology, and a bunch of its experiments — huge fire-breathing lizards with wings, small furry humanoid who like to work metal and whistle while they work, other small humanoids with pointy ears and large eyes — have gotten loose in DND sector.

...PCs are sent to investigate reports of a lost civilization in a valley in the Outdoors. They discover dinosaurs, gorgeous priestesses, and a volcano god.

...The ever-popular "go find out what happened to the last party we sent into certain death."





7. Using First Edition Adventures with Second Edition Rules

We'll be publishing a whole slew of adventures for use with 2nd edition *Paranoia*, but as the 1st edition adventures can be used with 2nd edition rules and there are already a whole bunch of 1st edition adventures on the market, you might as well take advantage of them.

Most publishers' adventures are filled with game mechanics — they call for skill rolls every third line, or discuss hit points or armor classes every paragraph. That's antithetical to the spirit of *Paranoia*; most of our adventures provide lots of "Catch-22" situations from which there's no hope of escaping, lots of equipment which malfunctions in weird ways, lots of deranged non-player characters, and bizarre plots. We keep the mechanics to a minimum.

That's why you can use adventures originally designed for use with the 1st edition even if you're using the rules from the 2nd edition. Since rules-type stuff isn't mentioned much in our adventures, the changes in the rules don't require that many changes in the adventures.

Even though we keep the mechanics to a minimum, though, we can't avoid them entirely. Here's what needs to be changed to make 1st edition adventures work with the 2nd edition rules:

Percentages: Sometimes an adventure will say something like "there's a 40% chance that Skwee-G will buy the excuse," or "Gone-R's chance of hitting is 32%". The old edition used percentile rolls instead of 20-sided dice. To convert from a percentage number to a 20-sided die roll, just divide by 5, and round to the nearest whole number. 40 divided by 5 is 8, so Skwee-G buys the excuse if you roll an 8 or less on the die; 32 divided by 5 and rounded down is 6, so Gone-R's weapon skill is 6.

Attribute Rolls: Attribute rolls used to use a different system. If an adventure says:

make this kind of attribute roll	or	make this kind of attribute roll	modify the character's attribute like this
extremely easy		1D10	x 2
easy		2D10	x 1
difficult		3D10	x 3/4
very difficult		4D10	x 1/2
outrageous		5D10	x 1/4

and then make an attribute roll against the modified attribute number. **Example:** The adventure says "make an easy attribute roll" or "make a 2D10 attribute roll." Instead, just roll against the character's unmodified attribute to see whether he succeeds or not.

Checks: Adventures sometimes say "make an attribute check" or "make a skill check."

"Check" is just the old term for "roll." Make an attribute or skill roll instead.

Armor and Laser Barrel Colors: We used to have a complex system whereby armor and barrels came in multiple colors. So you may see something like "1 ROY reflect armor." That means the armor was supposed to reflect Red, Orange and Yellow laser fire, but not higher levels. Well, gosh — that's the same thing that Yellow reflect does in the new version of the game. So just look at the *rightmost* color in the description of reflect armor or laser barrels — in this case, "Y" for Yellow. That's the actual color of the item.

Pregenerated Characters

Okay, that's all you need to understand to handle all of the problems that arise in the main text of an adventure. However, in the middle of each adventure, you'll find a pull-out printed with pregenerated player characters. Almost everything printed on these sheets is mechanics stuff. So a lot of it needs to be modified.

Modifying PCs is a bit of a pain. We explain how to modify them below, but doing so does require a considerable knowledge of the differences between 1st and 2nd edition *Paranoia*. If modifying PCs strikes you as too much of a bother, here's a suggestion: cut out each PC's "Background," "Current Secret Society Mission," and other background stuff, and the "Personal Equipment." Hand these to a player, and tell him to generate his own character, according to the rules, using the secret society mentioned in his "Current Secret Society Mission". That way, you get to use the neat part of each character, without the bother of translating stats.

But suppose you want to translate the stats:

Secondary Attributes

These include what we now call carrying capacity, damage and macho bonuses, and skill bases.

Carrying capacity and damage and macho bonuses work the same way in both editions of the game. No change needed.

However, you'll find things like "melee bonus," "aimed weapon bonus" and so on listed. These have been superseded by the skill bases. Ignore them. Either calculate skill bases for each character and write them on the sheet, or be willing to look up a character's skill base when you need it.

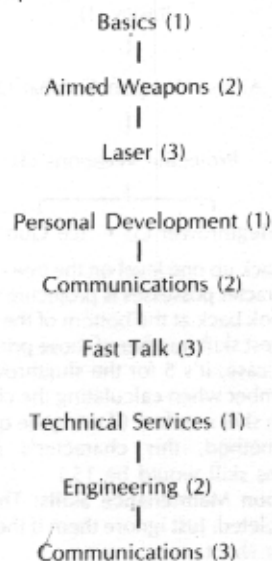
Skills

Now we get to the tricky part. Skills have

changed considerably from the first edition to the second.

The actual skill names themselves are essentially unchanged. However, the first edition had a complex "skill tree" system according to which you started with a little broad overall knowledge of a topic, and then specialized to more specific skills as you got better. We thought it was kind of neat, but it was complex and hard to explain, and we got a lot of complaints about it. So we killed it.

But in the skills section of 1st edition characters, you'll find these funny trees. Look at the *bottom* skill names on each tree; those are the actual skills possessed by the character. For example:



The actual skills the character possesses are laser, fast talk, and communications engineering.

There are two ways to handle skills from 1st edition characters:

• **The Complicated and Time Consuming But Eminently Fair Way:** Calculate the character's skill bases from his attributes. Look at the bottom skill names on the skill tree; find the number next to each skill name. Double this number and add it to the skill base. **Example:** Let's suppose a character with the skill tree above has a manual dexterity of 10, a chutzpah of 15, and a mechanical aptitude of 2. His skill bases for those three attributes would be 2, 4 and 0 respectively. Laser weapons is a manual dexterity skill, and the number printed next to the skill name on the skill tree is 3. 3 doubled is 6; plus the manual dexterity skill base of 2 is 8; so the character's laser weapons skill is 8. By similar calculations, his fast talk skill is 10, and his communications engineering skill is 6.



• **The Quick and Dirty Way:** Look at the bottom skill names on the skill tree; find the number next to each name. Triple it. That's the character's skill number with that skill. **Example:** A character with the skill tree above would have laser weapons skill of 9, fast talk skill of 9, and communications engineering skill of 9.

If a character uses any skill not printed on his sheet, calculate his skill base for the governing attribute, and roll against that number.

Okay, so now you know how to convert skill trees into second edition skill numbers. There's still one problem: some of the skills have been merged or deleted, so when you look at a skill at the bottom of a tree, you may see an unfamiliar skill name. Here's how to handle them:

• **Weapon Skills:** The first edition broke weapon skills like "laser weapons," "projectile weapons" and "vehicle launched weapons" down into individual weapon types — so you may see a skill tree that looks like this:



Just back up one level on the tree — the skill the character possesses is projectile weapons. Now look back at the bottom of the tree; find the largest skill number of those printed there (in this case, it's 5 for the slugthrower). Use this number when calculating the character's weapon skill number. (If using the quick-and-dirty method, this character's projectile weapons skill would be 15.)

• **Weapon Maintenance Skills:** These have been deleted. Just ignore them if they pop up on your sheet.

• **Self-Improvement Skills:** Ditto.

• **Survival, Wilderness Lore and Travel Skills:** These broke down into "identifying wild foods," "eating wild foods," "hunting, fishing and gathering," "trapping," "plant lore," "animal lore," "terrain lore," "weather lore," "tracking," "orienteeing," "navigation," "camping" and "mountain climbing." All of these skills have been merged into "survival." If a character has one or more of these skills, use the largest skill number to calculate the character's survival skill value.

• **Vehicle Maintenance:** These have been merged into the "vehicle operation and repair" skills. If a character has a vehicle maintenance skill, treat it as a vehicle operation and repair skill instead.

• **Robotic Operation and Maintenance, Robot Programming, and Major Robot Repairs:** These four skills were divided by robot type. If a character has any of these skills for a particular type of robot, treat him as having the operation and maintenance skill for that type of robot. If a character has more than one of these skills for the same robot type, when determining his new skill value for that robot's operation and maintenance skill, use the largest number printed on the tree. (For example, if a character was listed as having docbot operation (4), docbot maintenance (5), docbot programming (6), and docbot major repairs (4), the number you'd use to calculate the new skill number is "6", the highest one of the four.)

• **Engineering Skills:** Remember we said that character in the example had communications engineering? Well, oops — that skill doesn't exist any more. However, something like it does. "Communications engineering" becomes electronic engineering; "organic commodities" and "cyborging" become biosciences; "plastiforming" becomes chemical engineering; and "industrial" and "civil" become mechanical engineering.

Weapons

Still with us? Just a couple of steps more.

Each character sheet has a "weapons" section, which lists the weapons the character carries and some data about their use. Well, he still carries the same weapons, but some of the data is out of date.

• **To Hit:** the first edition used a percentage system to determine whether a firer hit his target. Now, it's all part of the skill system. Cross out the "to-hit" number, and write in the character's skill with the weapon (which you've calculated according to the procedure outlined under "skills" above).

• **Type:** No change, except all type "S" weapons are now type "E," and all "M" and "Ms" weapons are now type "I".

• **Range:** No change.

• **Reload:** No change, although this is now optional.

• **Malfn:** The malfunction rules are now optional, and work differently anyhow. Just ignore this section.

Also, it might be helpful to look up the weapon's damage rating, and write this on the sheet.

Mutant Powers

In the first edition, most mutant powers were much less powerful than the ones in the second edition. We merged a bunch of older powers into more powerful new ones (like

Telepathic Sense and Telepathic Projection become Telepathy), and we deleted some of the lamer ones. Some older adventures mention powers no longer included in the game. If you run across a reference to one of these, refer to this chart:

Old Power:	Use This Instead:
Advanced Hearing, Vision, Touch, Smell, or Taste:	Hypersenses
Chameleon	Polymorphism
Combat Mind	Energy Field
Empathic Healing	Regeneration
Luck	Machine Empathy
Machine Sense	Mechanical Intuition
Mental Block	see below
Suggestion	Charm
Superior Strength, Endurance, Manual Dexterity, Agility, Moxie, Chutzpah or Mechanical Aptitude:	see below
Telepathic Projection	Telepathy
Telepathic Sense	Telepathy
Trance Teleport	Teleport

Mental Block: Instead of using the normal mutant power rules, a special rule applies to this character: because he is "blind" to mental powers, he is immune to the effects of Telepathy, Mental Blast, Suggestion, Empathy or Deep Probe.

Superior Attributes: There's no direct equivalent in the second edition. These were lame "powers" that just increased one of your attributes a bit. We suggest you roll on the Mutant Power Table for a new power, to give the character a power worth having.

Secret Societies

Okay, one very last step.

Three "secret societies" existed in the 1st edition that have been junked in the second: "Spy for Another Alpha Complex," "Spy for a Service Group" and "Programs Group." All three were pretty lame. When a character with one of these societies pops up, either make him an Internal Security agent, or have the player roll on the Secret Society Table, as you wish.

By the way, some of the later adventures use characters who are members of secret societies described in *Acute Paranoia*. Such societies include Earth Mothers, Femme Fatale, and Trekkies.

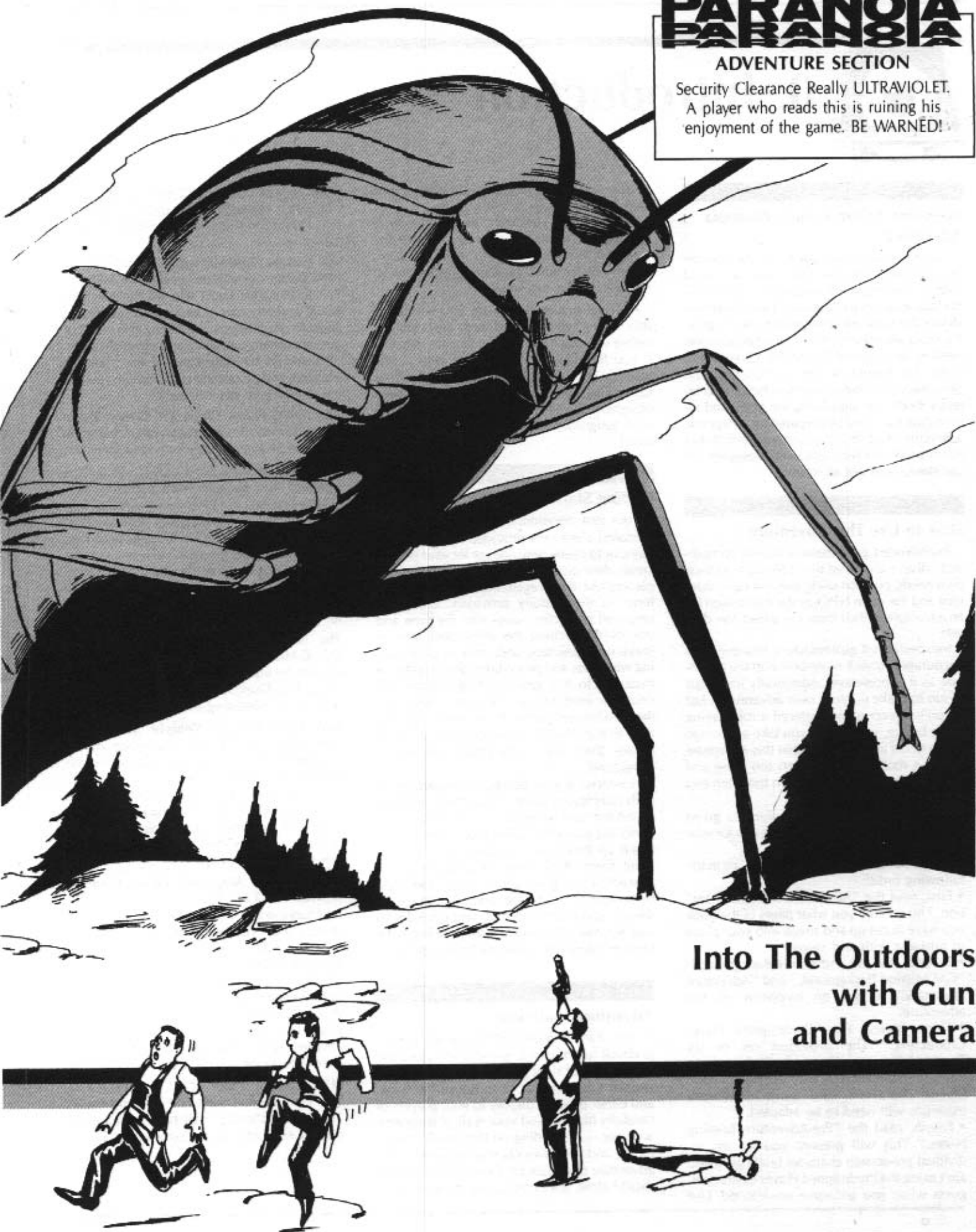
So there you are.



PARANOIA

ADVENTURE SECTION

Security Clearance Really ULTRAVIOLET.
A player who reads this is ruining his
enjoyment of the game. BE WARNED!



Into The Outdoors
with Gun
and Camera



0. Introduction

Welcome to the Sample *Paranoia* Adventure!

This adventure is included with the rules for three primary reasons. One, you can use it with a minimum of preparation when introducing others to *Paranoia*. Two, it demonstrates the tone and atmosphere of a typical *Paranoia* adventure, indicating what elements need to be prepared before the adventure in order to ensure a smooth-running and perversely charming game session. It also offers a model for organizing the notes and information that must be prepared for a *Paranoia* adventure. And finally, designing these things keeps us World Famous Game Designers off the streets and out of trouble.

How to Use This Adventure

Experienced gamemasters should immediately distort and twist this adventure to their own needs, perhaps using only the basic story idea and the main NPCs as the foundation for an adventure of their own. Go ahead. We dare you.

Inexperienced gamemasters, however, are encouraged to stick more-or-less to the adventure as it is presented. Admittedly it's heaps of fun to make up your own adventures, but if you've never gamemastered a roleplaying game before, we suggest you take advantage of the detail and structure that this adventure offers. A rookie GM who gets too loose and too free-wheeling too soon can too often end up in awkward situations.

Translation: Run the adventure as given here or you're a dead man. Thank you for your cooperation.

Read through the adventure materials in the following order:

- First, read the "Adventure Materials" section. This will tell you what pages of the book you have to cut up and sneak into your place of business with and xerox.
- Second, read the "Adventure Background," "GM Mission Background," and "Adventure Summary" to get an overview of the adventure.
- Third, review the "Predesigned Player Characters." The provided set of six Troubleshooters may be used with this adventure. Alternatively, you may use home-made player characters, but some adventure materials will need to be adapted.
- Fourth, read the "Pre-Adventure Briefing Notes." This will prepare you for the individual pre-session character briefings. If you ain't using the Predesigned Player Characters, guess what: you got some work to do. Use

what you see as a model, and prepare your own Pre-Adventure Briefing Notes.

- Finally, read through the "Adventure Episodes." The more familiar you are with that stuff, the less you'll have to refer to it later, and the easier you'll be able to improvise on impulse during the session.

After the first read-through, you will probably want to go back and study each section before you use it in an adventure session. Or, if you feel like it, just wing it after a first reading. Improvise. This is kind of risky for a rookie GM, but don't kid yourself — we game designers don't study adventures like homework assignments. This is supposed to be fun, right?

Getting Started

Your first decision is whether to use the prepared characters provided for the adventures, or to create new ones or let your players create new ones. We suggest that neophyte gamers use the pregenerated characters we have so thoughtfully provided. Using the prepared characters saves you the time and trouble of teaching the uninitiated how to make up characters, and, instead of struggling with rules and procedures, they can be introduced to the game through action and drama — more fun for everyone. Then, after they are hooked on the game, they'll take the time to read the Player Section carefully and create their own characters for future adventures.

However, if your players are experienced with roleplaying games, and if they prefer to spend the time necessary to read and understand the character generation rules and to make up their own characters, don't disappoint them. And if you want to make up characters to give them, fine, too. Just remember to study the prepared character sheets, adventure materials, and episodes so you, Mr. Maverick Gamemaster, will know the types of information you will have to prepare.

Adventure Materials

"Into the Outdoors with Gun and Camera" is chock full of props, gamemaster aids, and other assorted sight gags which we earnestly suggest you xerox or chop out of the book, and either proudly display to your players or carefully hide behind your wall of ignorance and fear — depending on the prop's intended use and your own cheerful perversity. The adventure materials are described in painful detail below. (Incidentally, the serial numbers

listed for each prop don't mean anything — but watch your players study them intently and attempt to discover some deep, hidden meaning.)

The Into the Outdoors with Gun and Camera NPC Roster (Serial Number IOGC.GMPROP.NPCS.0.2): This sheet lists all the NPCs in IOGC in their order of appearance, providing capsule descriptions and listing their mutant powers, armor, weapons, and important skills. This should be ripped out of the book (or xeroxed) and propped in a spot where you can see it and your players can't.

The IOGC Player Character Sheets: These sheets describe the six pregenerated characters we have so thoughtfully provided for you.

The IOGC Mission Alert (IOGC.MA.0.7): A standard (though somewhat narrower than average) call-to-arms for loyal Troubleshooters. This particular message issues from the PCs' personal wrist com units. Cut the prop out, xerox it a lot, and give each player a copy at the beginning of the adventure. (Persons lacking access to a xerox machine can just plop the one copy in the middle of the table and let their players fight over it.)

The IOGC Standard Equipment Manifest (IOGC.HO.SE.IB.2.3): The Troubleshooters receive the equipment manifest when they arrive at PLC Outfitting in Episode 2. They will find many interesting things listed upon it.

The Multi-Terrain Vehicle Side View (IOGC.MTV.SV.3.4): An illustration of the Troubleshooters' new wheels, a combination submarine and ground vehicle. Dump the illo in front of the players when their characters reach the R&D Vehicle Testing Facilities (see page 120). Doubtless the Troubleshooters will be eager to serve The Computer by riding in this exciting deathtrap.

MTV Interior Map and Cargo Counters (IOGC.MTV.3.8): This is an actual game mechanic with actual game functions. (Like wow, dude. What an unusual thing to find in a *Paranoia* adventure.) Chop the interior out and cut up all of the cargo counters. When the characters attempt to load their equipment onto the MTV, drop the stuff in the middle of the table. Explain the stacking rules (found on pages 121-122) to the players and cheerfully enquire as to how they are going to fit everything in the vehicle. (No coaching, now!)

MTV Control Panel (IOGC.MTV.SCP.4.3): This one displays the MTV's control panel. The Troubleshooters will have to manually operate MTV after its autopilot suffers a small



nervous breakdown some time on page 122; this prop should be plopped down in front of the players as MTV is nosing uncontrollably towards a watery doom.

Map of the Outdoors (IOGC.MAP.7): After an interesting, fun-filled ocean voyage, the Troubleshooters' experimental vehicle once again suffers a small mental dysfunction, and they find themselves spending the night in Outdoors Sector. The map portrays the area where MTV breaks down: show it to the players and let them indicate the defensive precautions their characters are taking. Then, when the inevitable unprovoked attacks occur, you can point out on the map exactly where the hoards of screaming savages/mutant cockroaches from hell/alien death gods are coming from.

Adventure Background

A group of brand new Red clearance Troubleshooters are summoned for their first routine mission. The mission itself is modest but intriguing — an expedition into the Outdoors, a region of rumor and mystery, to investigate evidence of Communist activity.

To assure a safe and successful initiation into the service, The Computer assigns the neophyte Troubleshooters an experienced, veteran mission leader to show them the ropes. In addition, The Computer has provided generously from the Outfitting warehouses of PLC and the cutting-edge technology of R&D. With such bountiful resources, and the

guidance of a loyal and mission-wise veteran, this assignment is certain to be safe and enjoyable for all concerned.

And that's the truth. Honest. What's everybody so nervous about?

Perhaps as the raw recruits wait nervously for their initial briefing, they are studying one another surreptitiously, ever alert for signs of treason or disloyalty. Which one is the Internal Security plant? Which ones belong to the illegal secret societies spoken of in hushed whispers? Might one amongst them be a treasonous unregistered mutant? Could one be planning even now to sabotage the mission and frustrate the benevolent designs of The Computer?

Perhaps as they worry, they also dream. "Will this be my opportunity to seek a promotion? Might I serve The Computer well enough to come to its special attention? Perhaps a credit bonus or a commendation may come to me for my valor and loyalty?"

And awaiting them is the unknown. The Outdoors. Why has this area been rated for Ultraviolet clearance? Why is a group of Red Troubleshooters being sent there? Will this really be a simple, routine mission? The Computer wouldn't feed us a pile of bum data? Would it? Stay alert! Trust no one! Keep your laser handy! Watch the closing doors...

GM Mission Background

Catch 22

Armed Forces spybots make routine high-altitude overflights of the region surrounding Alpha Complex to obtain important intelligence vital to Complex security.

by the players themselves. The classified/treasonous information (secret society objectives, mutant power descriptions, and special information from the secret society) can be prepared in sloppy note form (or improvised) by the gamemaster, then verbally imparted to the player during the pre-adventure private conferences.

Maps are usually scribbled artlessly by the gamemaster as part of his preparation, and then casually copied onto scrap paper when the players are entitled to such information during the adventure.



In short, don't expect to do all this work in preparing for your own adventures. You ought to have these kinds of information in mind as you prepare an adventure, but you don't have to be nearly so elaborate in presenting it to the players.

However, knowledge of the Outdoors is classified Ultraviolet. Since Ultraviolet citizens are way too important to waste their time studying routine high-altitude photographs, they assign lower-level citizens to do so.

Naturally, it is treason for citizens of less than Ultraviolet clearance to examine photographs of the Outdoors.

Imagine what these citizens' life expectancy is.

There's no one currently alive in Armed Forces who can interpret the intelligence photos.

A Piece of the Action

HPD & MC routinely receives copies of the overflight photos for filing. Of course, since the information is classified, there is no indication of the origin or purpose of the photos. However, the photos are pretty colorful, and they attracted the eyes of a couple of clerks with too much time on their hands who decided to study them. One thing led to another, and finally a high-status HPD & MC fellow recognized the photos for what they were.

Seeing a chance for a real inter-service group coup, HPD & MC top management put some of their best people on studying and interpreting these maps. With a little help from an Armed Forces intelligence officer who was convinced to cooperate (now recovering from a series of accidents and an unfavorable coroner's report), the HPD & MC boys found somethings interesting.

The somethings interesting appear to be the size of football stadiums and they scoot around a lot. On land. Over all sorts of terrain. Rather quickly.

From other sources, HPD & MC learned that a recent Armed Forces mission group had disappeared without a trace in the area where these giant somethings were photographed. Inferring a massive mobile military platform, HPD & MC dubbed the mysterious somethings "giant land juggernauts."

HPD & MC would like to provide a full report on this potential menace to The Computer before Armed Forces does. This means outfitting an expedition to the Outdoors.

Unfortunately, the Armed Forces are the only service group with access to vehicles suitable for such a mission. Therefore, HPD & MC had to bribe R&D to design a vehicle from scratch, and in secret, to avoid tipping their hand to the Armed Forces. R&D agreed, on the condition that they would share in the glory, and that the mission would also be used to test some special designs that they had been unable to foist off on any other mission group. Various other service groups and secret societies with axes to grind threw in with HPD & MC along the way.

The final mission group personnel represents a patchwork of uneasy alliances and secret pacts among many interest groups. The personnel themselves, of course, are expendable, just in case something goes wrong and HPD & MC and the other groups need to disavow any knowledge of the operation.

GM Tip: Adventure Materials

Don't get the idea that you should prepare such elaborate props for your players whenever you run a Paranoia adventure. More power to you if you have the time to do so, but it certainly ain't necessary.

Normally a casual and lazy GM reads aloud or improvises something like "The Mission Alert" to kick off an adventure session. We gave you an actual handout to keep the players busy while you get yourself organized for the pre-adventure briefing (and because it seemed like the decent thing to do), but you shouldn't feel constrained to go to all that trouble — after all, we get paid for it.

- 1) PCs go to R&D (get killed)
- 2) PCs go to Outfitting - need crazed scrubot & Mithril gun
- 4) (Laser IS)
- 3) Tac-A-Duke bubblehead??!

Most of the player character sheets — die-rolls, adjustments, skills, thumbnail character sketches, etc. — can be filled in



Somebody's Got to Take the Fall

Grund-G, an HPD & MC guard unit non-com with valuable contacts in the Armed Forces, was picked to head the mission. Because of his dubious political reliability, it was decided that Grund-G be kept in the dark about the real objectives of the mission; instead, he was told that this is just a little survey mission to update files on the region; if the party can also figure out what happened to the missing mission group and salvage their equipment, all the better.

Grund-G, a veteran Troubleshooter and survivor of numerous inter-service power plays, suspects that all is not kosher with the mission; he has a few surprises of his own up his sleeve.

Adventure Summary

Episode One: The Briefing

The Troubleshooters, eagerly looking forward to serving their friend The Computer and Alpha Complex, attempt to discover the location of their briefing room. The survivors (if any) and the clone replacements of the others meet their briefing officers, receive additional instructions, meet Grund-G, their new team leader, and get to ask any questions they may have about the mission. A spirited firefight probably ensues, as loyal Troubleshooters roast any traitors who ask for information not available at their security clearance.

Episode Two: Outfitting at PLC

Grund-G ushers the survivors (if any) and clone replacements off to PLC Outfitting to receive mission equipment. On the way, Grund-G reinforces his authority over and contempt for the Troubleshooters and picks a second in command. While picking up three Infrared drones assigned to the mission, Grund-G slips away for a few minutes to contact his secret society. Prudent Troubleshooters do the same.

At PLC, the mission group receives lots of interesting and useful equipment in perfect operating condition. Grund-G encourages one of the PCs to sign for this equipment. Grund-G divides the equipment up, and the survivors proceed to R&D where they will volunteer to test experimental equipment.

Episode Three: A Visit to Research and Design

After a fun ride in an experimental autoshuttle, the mission group reaches PDQ Sector R&D labs. Eager to serve The Computer, gain large credit bonuses, and avoid reassignment to freefall impact simulation testing, some Troubleshooters agree to test experimental equipment on their mission. Boom. Like it or not, they all agree to test the new Sensurround Team Communications System and Loyalty Officer Control Module. Screeeeee-hippp-whizz-crackle-pop...Boom.



Each Paranoia gamemaster has his own methods for keeping players in line.

Enjoying another ride in the experimental autoshuttle, the mission group is introduced to the Multi-Terrain Vehicle (MTV), and Lucky, the MTV's autopilot. The team, the Infrareads, and all the equipment is loaded onto the MTV; the huge, barred doors rumble open; and MTV trundles into the Outdoors.

Episode Four: Voyage to See What's on the Bottom

The team experiences the thrill of undersea travel in an old leaky subbot with an autopilot suffering from intermittent senile dementia.

Episode Five: To the Shores of Tripoli

MTV reaches land. Grund-G, deciding that the mission is a bust, runs off into the bush and snipes at the Troubleshooters. The Troubleshooters choose a new mission leader. Survivors attempt to continue the mission.

Episode Six: Saturday Night Fever

Lucky the autopilot spazzes out. The Troubleshooters chase the MTV until it gets stuck in a tree. Having no other way to get home, they try to fix it.

Episode Seven: Tenting Tonight on the Old Tent Ground

The Troubleshooters spend the night Outdoors. Nothing much happens except that Grund-G sneaks up and attempts to kill all of them and steal the MTV. He probably doesn't succeed.

Episodes Eight, Nine, and Ten: More Fun

Screaming hordes of spear-waving savages descend on the Troubleshooters. The Troubleshooters laser them into submission, bribe them to leave them alone, convince them that they are gods, or just get killed and eaten.

Questioning the natives reveals that there are new gods, "walking mountains," wandering the countryside; the natives suggest that the Troubleshooters go and visit the gods and leave them alone. The walking mountains put in an appearance.

The mountains are revealed as giant mutant cockroaches searching the country looking for culture. They ask the Troubleshooters to bring them Renoir and Proust. Troubleshooters who claim never to have heard of any such thing are killed a little.

Surviving Troubleshooters probably agree to go back to Alpha Complex and get some Renoir and Proust. They return to Alpha Complex and are mostly killed during the debriefing. Maybe a couple earn big commendations. Several make conflicting accusations of treason against other Troubleshooters and are killed. Others end up owing millions of credits for lost/damaged mission equipment and are demoted and reassigned to plankton farming/low-yield biological substance testing combines until their debts are paid off.

The End.

Clone Replacement in the Wilderness

A bit of a problem, actually. When a Troubleshooter's clone dies in Alpha Complex, HPD & MC officials simply send for the next-numbered clone in the clone family. The



clone hurriedly dons his new Red-level jumpsuit, receives an abbreviated mission briefing and situation report and rushes to join the mission in progress. Replacement time: from twenty minutes to an hour, max.

What happens if the clone dies while the team is Outdoors? Obviously, HPD & MC cannot simply send the clone off after the mission team: the team could be many miles away, across uncharted oceans and vast tracts of dangerous wilderness. Fortunately the boys in R&D have come up with a brilliant solution.

Introducing the 1000mm Outdoor Clone Insertion System

At PDQ PLC Outfitting, each Troubleshooter venturing into the Outdoors is issued a portable life-monitoring ultrasonic beeper: a transistor radio-sized device implanted just behind the clone's right ear. When a clone dies in the Outdoors, the beeper sends a signal back to PDQ HPD & MC. The clone's replacement is quickly hustled off to PDQ R&D, where he is tightly screwed into a metal cylinder about two meters long and one meter in diameter, and instructed to try not to breathe too much. The clone is subjected to two or three minutes of banging around in the dark; then everything is still for a moment; then there is a large "boom". The clone enjoys a second of five-gravity acceleration straight up, followed by thirty seconds of freefall, followed by about one-tenth of a second of impact. The other Troubleshooters release the clone, and the mission proceeds.

The clone-replacement capsules will land within 10-20 meters of the late clone's ultrasonic beeper and will not bury itself more than 10 meters into the ground. The capsules do indeed probably float, so clones who die while under water in the MTV will be replaced. (There is only a small chance that a capsule will actually hit and sink the MTV...say, 1 in 20?)

Naturally, the replacement clone is perfectly safe in the cylinder. There isn't even a 10% chance of suffering a wound in liftoff or landing, and there certainly isn't a 5% chance of suffocation before other dedicated Troubleshooters dig the clone out.

Players who discover a way to turn the clone replacement system into a major offensive weapon deserve a pat on the head followed by immediate termination.

Pre-Adventure Briefing Notes

Below we assume you are using the pre-designed player characters. If you aren't, the first thing you have to do is to help the players create their characters. Note that if you let the players create their own characters, you can't anticipate ahead of time what secret societies they'll belong to. Therefore you can't prepare the secret society briefings ahead of time. You'll either have to improvise, or prepare briefings for each of the 19 established secret societies.

To Start the Adventure, Follow these Four Easy Steps:

1. Hand out the Pregenerated Character Sheets:

To begin the session, hand each player a pre-designed character sheet. Let them quickly look over the stats and personality notes, then start the individual pre-briefings. Don't give them a long time to study their characters; they can do that later during the private conferences.

2. Hand out the Mission Alerts:

Hand each player a copy of the IOGC mission alert (prop IOGC.MA.0.7), explaining that a printout of the alert has just emerged from each Troubleshooter's wrist com unit. Each PC presumably pulls out his Teela O'Malley Magnifier and Loyalty Whistle and studies the mini-document, which, under extreme magnification, looks like the sheet you have given them.

The mission alert's instructions are reproduced below for your GMing convenience.

MISSION ALERT! MISSION ALERT! MISSION ALERT! MISSION ALERT! MISSION ALERT!

Greetings, Citizen. Your services are required. Report to briefing room IOGC. Refer to appended map.



Your Mission: an expedition to OUTDOORS sector.

Your Mission Objectives:

1. Make a reconnaissance patrol along a designated route.
2. Search for evidence of Communist activity.
3. Return and make a full report.

Generic Rumors

These are to be distributed among the characters during the pre-adventure individual briefings. Give 'em out at random or pick and choose. Give each character two or more rumors. Give one character all of them and another none. Give everybody the same rumor. Go wild.

1. Sectors HOT and WET experienced serious power failures over the last four days.
2. The increasing frequency of Power Service traitors unmasked during episodes of the popular Teela O'Malley video serials suggests that HPD & MC is building public opinion against Power, and that a purge of Power may occur in the near future.
3. A surprising number of Power Service Troubleshooters have been unavailable for service in the last weekcycle.
4. CPU Troubleshooters have been assigned to all missions this weekcycle past. Recent lapses in the filing of proper forms during missions is the rumored explanation.

Bring your full kit. Don't forget your mittens, it's cold Outside.

A team leader awaits you at the Briefing Room. Your team leader is an exemplary Troubleshooter and above reproach. You are in good hands.

This mission is our little secret. Don't tell anyone. You're just going for a little walk. Got it?

Thanks once again for your cooperation.

Your Friend,
The Computer

3. Hold A Private Conference with Each Player:

Before play begins, take each player aside for a private conference. (Other players should take this opportunity to review their character sheets, plot against one another, or thumb through the *Times Literary Supplement*.)

Here's what you want to accomplish in these individual briefings:

- Make sure the player understands his secret society, secret society information, and mutant power. (Of course, the term "understands" is used advisedly here; nobody is supposed to understand anything more than vaguely and inaccurately in *Paranoia*. Ignorance. Fear. Remember!)
- Distribute rumors. Some rumors are of significance for the adventure. The rest are strictly for atmosphere. Players project deep significance onto all rumors when you go to great trouble to explain them individually and in private. Prime the players with heaps of irrelevant trivia, and, in spite of logic and plot, that trivia will fester in their imaginations, hatching all sorts of red herrings, false assumptions, and fictive bugaboos. You'll find some suggested rumors tastefully boxed on this and the following page.

4. There is no Step Four.

We were just kidding about step four. Proceed directly to Episode One. Sorry.

5. R&D has once again been removed from scheduled development projects to work on a secret crash project for Armed Forces. R&D suspects that the evidence justifying this reallocation of resources has been fabricated.

6. Rumors indicate that Internal Security is under pressure to provide a scapegoat for recent embarrassments to the Armed Forces in Sectors MOO and OOF. Current suspects include the staffs of R&D and HPD & MC from Sectors STN and IGG.

7. A High Programmer is said to have died in peculiar circumstances while attending a sick friend in the PDQ Medical Center. Med specialists of Sector PDQ are sought for questioning.

8. HPD & Mind Control has been heavily infiltrated by Commies and is in the process of being carefully investigated by Int-Sec and CPU agents.



Specific Rumors

Sow seeds of distrust among the individual characters. Give each player the appropriate tasty tidbit below. Make the players paranoid. It is great fun to watch everyone giving each other the fishy after they come back from the individual briefings.

PC #1 is warned that Green mission leader is a traitor. He is also told to keep an eye on PC #5 — PSION has evidence available on request that this citizen has an unregistered and dangerous mutant power that they would like to study.

PC #2 is told by Tech Services to keep an eye on PC #1. HPD & MC claims no record of such an agent.

PC #3 is told by Free Enterprise that PCs #1, #5, and #6 are IntSec plants.

PC #4 is told by R&D that HPD & MC wants no report of this mission to return to the Armed Forces. It's possible that the HPD members of the party have orders to kill everybody to prevent this.

PC #5 is told by CPU that this mission is being set up to embarrass CPU and that he is likely to be set up as the pigeon/scapegoat if anything goes wrong. Watch your back, and avoid taking any responsibility.

PC #6 is told by HPD & MC to keep a close watch for improper form filing procedures by other Troubleshooters. CPU is bearing down hard on HPD; HPD is trying to keep its nose clean until things settle down.

Once you've completed the individual briefings, you're ready to proceed to step four.



Episode One: The Briefing

Episode Summary

The Troubleshooters go to their briefing room and receive mission instructions.

Eh? Pardon me? You say it sounds simple? You must be new around here.

Getting There

The Troubleshooters have their instructions: Report to Briefing Room IOGC. They even have a map. What could be easier?

Well, here's the problem. The map is about the size of an average fingernail — way too tiny to read. Obviously, the Troubleshooters must enlarge the map so they can read it, or divine the location of Briefing Room IOGC in some other way. Here are a couple of things they could try:

Get a Magnifying Glass: These are available through the black market (at 30 credits each) or they can be requisitioned at PLC Outfitting and Supply. To get one through PLC, the Troubleshooter simply fills out an equipment request form, hands it in to the Yellow PLC clerk, and waits for the inevitable "I'm sorry. That isn't available at your security clearance. At your service," which will be delivered with a supercilious smirk accompanied by an open palm (a universally-understood gesture meaning roughly, "Gimme").

If they accuse the clerk of treason — well, he's Yellow clearance; they're Red. Who do you think everybody's going to believe? Right.

If they attempt to slip him less than 25 credits, the clerk thanks them effusively. He tells them that he will get right on it, if the

gentleclones will be so kind as to wait just a moment. The clerk strides purposefully through a door marked "Office" and goes off to lunch. He returns three hours later and claims to never have heard of the PCs.

If the PCs cough up 25 credits or more, the clerk issues them a temporary equipment usage permit and lets them look through a microscope.

Enlarged, the map is revealed as meaningless scribble.

Ask The Computer for the Location of the Briefing Room: "At your service...What is your security clearance?...I'm sorry, that information is not available at your security clearance...Perhaps you would care to explain why your request for classified information isn't part of an insidious Commie plot, Citizen?"

At that point, one of two things happens: 1, one or more of the other PCs screams "treason" at the top of his voice and the episode degenerates into a messy free-for-all; or 2, the other Troubleshooters permit the citizen to explain to The Computer why he isn't a traitor.

If the PCs choose the free-for-all routine, let the combat go on for as long as it is interesting and then send in a couple of dozen IntSec Troopers. They capture the survivors, subject them to fairly rigorous interrogation and brain-softening, and eventually dump the remains in the hallway outside the IOGC briefing room.

If the PCs allow the Troubleshooter to speak, the player must make an easy bootlicking or spurious logic skill roll (or you can roleplay it out) to convince Our Pal that he isn't a Commie traitor. If he's successful, The Computer

gives him the necessary instructions; if he fails, The Computer assigns him a treason point or two and the entire team is arrested, interrogated, brain-softened, and dumped, as above.

Request the Briefing Room's Location From Secret Society or Service Group Contacts:

This can either be noted as a simple expenditure of an IOU, or played out as an exciting, thrill-a-minute roleplaying extravaganza where secret passwords, bribes, and tense intimidation skill rolls lead to clandestine meetings with shady NPCs in dark, smelly, unused-looking hallways. Whichever you choose, the PC should eventually learn the way to the briefing room.

Of course, explaining to his ever-vigilantly-looking-for-Communists-to-exterminate fellow Troubleshooters exactly how he learned this classified information *could* be a tad dicey...

Gming Note: See what's going on here? The PCs' need to find out where their briefing room is. No one will tell them. Why not?

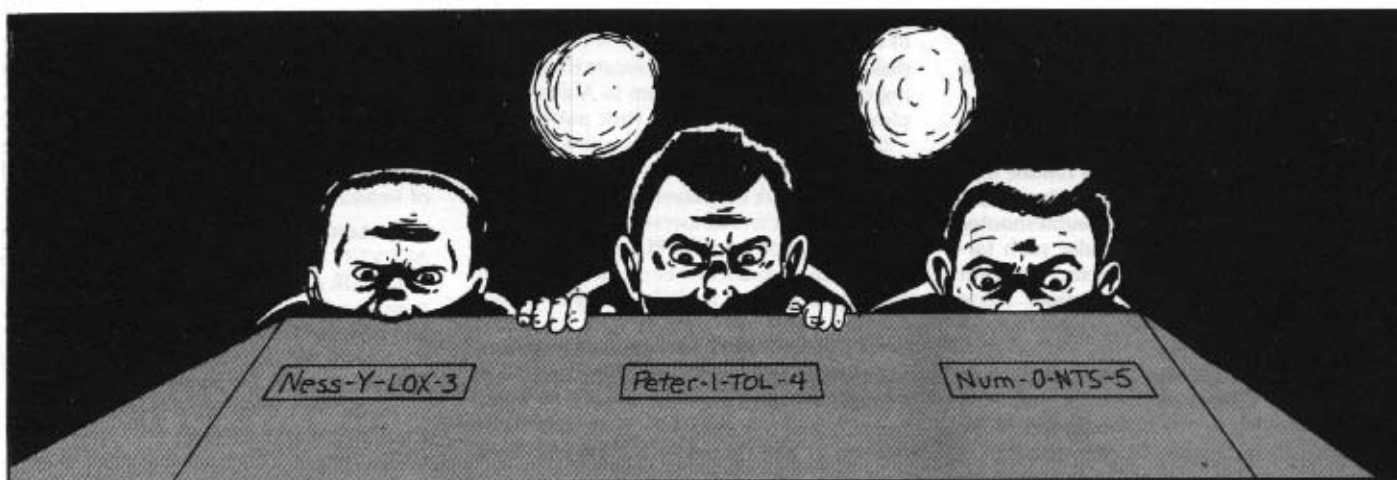
Because.

Understand?

This is referred to in the vernacular as a "hose job." It is a common feature of well-designed *Paranoia* adventures, and one that the players will eventually develop a healthy skepticism about.

The Briefing Room

Eventually the mission personnel reach the hallway outside the briefing room. Two Indigo HPD & MC guards stand ramrod-straight at attention in front of the door. They look like



The briefing personnel.

Flash Gordon-style Hollywood high-tech guards, in gold lamé tights and garish, revealing jumpsuits, and their weapons are exotic and implausible-looking. (Don't worry, GM. The weapons work just fine. The boys in Costume just dressed some normal laser pistols up with glue-on doo-dads for show.) The guards briefly interrupt their rigid vigil, inform the PCs that they are to wait here in the hall until summoned, then go back to their statue imitations.

The players can introduce themselves in character or not, as they wish. Don't let it go on for more than a couple of minutes before...

A buzzer sounds in the hall and bright lights flash around the door to the briefing room. The guards solemnly line the PCs up (randomly assign the PCs a single file order). The guards repeatedly stress that everyone must remain in this order (no reason, GM, just making the PCs nervous). The guards then roughly usher the PCs into the briefing room.

The briefing room is wide and shallow. A long, high bench (like a British courtroom) runs from one side of the room to the other. The PCs are expected to stand before this bench and look up to their superiors.

In the room are four more identically-dressed Indigo HPD & MC guards with even-more-ridiculous-looking experimental weapons (still plenty deadly, GM). Two guards stand at the door where the PCs enter, and two stand at a side door (presumably meant for the briefing personnel). A fifth Violet HPD & MC guard — evidently the guard unit leader — stands with his back to the bench and gestures impatiently for the PCs to line up along a Red line in a long recessed pit with floor drains in front of the bench.

Sitting at the bench above the PCs are four shadowy figures.

Peter-I's Presentation of the Mission

Read aloud:

One of the shadowy figures above speaks:
"Welcome, Citizens. I know you are all

The Briefing Personnel

These non-player characters are important in setting the tone at the beginning of the adventure and in bringing the adventure to a close at the debriefing session. The most important NPC, Grund-G, will be the group leader, accompanying the group on the mission, serving as the GM's mouthpiece during the beginning of the adventure, and turning into an antagonist before the end. Grund-G's character is described in more detail in another sidebar in Episode 2.

The Briefing Chief: Peter-I-TOL-4

Peter-I wears the insignia of the HPD & MC service group. He explains the mission and answers a very few questions. (See below for Peter-I's initial presentation to the PCs.) Most of the time his tone indicates that the PCs are not significant enough to take seriously, and this procedure is an annoying imposition on his already-busy schedule.

Peter-I is a stereotypical top-level bureaucrat — consumed with his own importance and casually offended that he must deal with common laborers of insignificant status. He is pleasant and well-spoken, even when directing a PC's execution for careless, treasonous words that barely hint at his doubts of the preparation and wisdom of The Computer and its appointed administrators.

The NPC Mission Leader: Grund-G-GUY-3

Grund-G sits to Peter-I's left. He says nothing when he is introduced. He only answers direct questions, and responds in monosyllables unless required to elaborate by other higher-status briefing officers.

The IntSec Representative: Ness-Y-LOX-3

Ness-Y is initially a silent but ominous presence who makes a lot of notes as Peter-I outlines the mission. Once Peter-I is finished, Ness-Y starts grilling the Troubleshooters on their loyalties, using trick questions and baiting techniques. He

seems to know a lot about everyone's background. His technique is to ask the same question of all six characters in turn, encouraging each character to try to outdo the other in fawning and sycophantic behavior. Some typical questions:

- What is your duty to The Computer?
- What resources do you need that The Computer has not provided? (The PCs must walk a thin line between being brave and self-assured enough to ask for what they need, and cautious enough to avoid implying that The Computer may have forgotten something important.)
- What should you do if you discover treason? (Hesitation or uncertainty is interpreted as a sign of weak loyalty.)
- Suppose you should discover evidence that I, Ness-Y, am a traitor? (Again, the PCs should answer without hesitation, but feigned incapacity to imagine a loyal citizen like Ness-Y as a traitor is a nice touch.)

The R&D Specialist: Dr. Num-O-NTS-5

Dr. Num-O is just a glorified file clerk. He doesn't really know what's going on; R&D sent him to the briefing not because he might be useful, but because they wanted to get him out of their hair for a while, and somebody had to be sent. He tries to sound important and wise, but he has nothing but strikingly dumb ideas.

Your Pal: The Computer

The Big C is also an important NPC, since it is always listening in and may interrupt the briefing at any time with pertinent comments. Peter-I is the only NPC who might speak to The Computer and expect an immediate, direct response, but any question may be relayed to The Computer through the terminals at each NPC's position on the bench. When The Computer responds, it does so through loudspeakers in the ceiling of the briefing room, with the effect that the Voice of God is heard as from on high.



eager to serve The Computer and Alpha Complex. I am pleased to offer you such an opportunity.

"The Computer understands that you are all raw, inexperienced Troubleshooters. In its wisdom, it has selected for you a routine mission of considerable importance. Further, it has selected an experienced Troubleshooter as your leader and guide. Under such fortunate circumstances, we are sure you will successfully complete the mission. (Long pause. Look each PC in the eye with cheerful but unmistakable menace.)

"This mission will take you to...what sector, Citizen? (Direct the question suddenly without warning to one of the players. If the answer isn't instantaneous, the question is sharply directed to another player, and so on, until Peter-I gets a satisfactory answer. Unsatisfactory answers provoke a flurry of note-scribbling by Ness-Y, the IntSec representative. Develop a shotgun, aggressive delivery for this and other questions; make the PCs stammer and twitch with fear as they try to prove their worthiness and loyalty to their superiors.)

"And what do you know of Outdoors Sector, Citizen (insert PC name)?"

(Since the existence of the Outdoors is classified information, Troubleshooters should only know the name from the mission alert. Some PCs may justify more extensive knowledge because of their training [i.e., some Armed Forces Troubleshooters have had training in hostile environments], but the safe route is to play dumb.)

"And the mission objectives are....Well, perhaps you recall the objectives from the mission alert, Citizen (insert PC name)?"

(Again, aggressively challenge players at random until a satisfactory answer is given.)

"Hmm...I see.

"Here are a few more details on the objectives of your assignment.

"First, concerning certain equipment assigned to your mission. A vehicle of revolutionary design is being issued to your mission group for testing. R&D staffers have assured us that it will prove invaluable for your special transportation needs. Also, a remarkable new Team Communications System has been made available for this mission. I'm sure you will take great care that this valuable equipment comes to no harm in the course of the mission. Research and Design will brief you on these items when you report there for routine assignment of experimental equipment.

"Second, there is some inventory unaccounted for after a previous mission to the Outdoors region. PLC staffers will provide you with a list of the missing items when you visit the warehouse for outfitting. You will of course make a reasonable effort to locate these items and return them to PLC if you discover them during your patrol."

(Note that PLC knows nothing about any list.)

"Third, there are several Troubleshooters unaccounted for after a previous mission to the Outdoors region. You will be provided with descriptions and identity codes for each

of these Troubleshooters. You will of course make a reasonable effort to locate these missing citizens and return them to Alpha Complex during the course of your patrol."

(Note that PLC also knows nothing about missing Troubleshooters. This is an opportunity for you to jerk the players around for hours, as their characters desperately attempt to get this information from the PLC clerks, who are completely ignorant of them. You can also nail them at debriefing for failure to pick up the lists.)

"Fourth, you will each prepare a report on the current state of affairs in the Outdoors Region. Missions are sent there only infrequently, and any change in status will be of interest to The Computer and its high-level analysts.

"Before proceeding with the mission, report to the PDQ sector PLC warehouse for outfitting. Appropriate documents will be provided. Then report to R&D to pick up experimental vehicle, communications system, and other devices R&D wishes tested.

"Finally, you are assigned three Infrared laborers to assist you on this mission. These laborers are directly responsible to your leader Grund-G, but I'm certain they will be happy to assist all of you in achieving your objectives.

"We confidently await your return and your mission reports. Serve The Computer, and you will be rewarded.

"If you have any questions, citizens Ness-Y and Dr. Num-O will be pleased to assist you. They may also have a few comments or questions for you. I trust you will give them your full cooperation. Thank you."

Peter-I sits down, and looks at Ness-Y, who will continue with his own probing questions — see Ness-Y's description in the NPC sidebar.

How to Handle PC Questions

Assuming they survive Ness-Y's grilling, the PCs may ask for more details about the mission and its objectives, but "that information is not available at this time." No details are made available concerning the missing inventory and citizens ("no doubt that information will be provided at PLC Outfitting"), but the inference of a failed mission raises Peter-I and Ness-Y's hackles; the subject is clearly not to be discussed. Peter-I patiently repeats that this is just a routine mission, very safe, very well-outfitted, and headed by a very capable and experienced group leader.

Dr. Num-O will answer any questions about the experimental equipment the Troubleshooters wish to ask; after several long minutes of listening to incomprehensible pseudo-scientific gibberish it will become clear that he has absolutely no idea what he's talking about. Indeed, he has no idea what the mission is about, what day it is, or what planet he is on. But he is eager to help.

The PCs must discover what kinds of questions they can ask without causing suspicion of treason by trial and error. The art of weaseling out information without earning suspicion of treasonous curiosity or doubt of The Com-

puter's wisdom is a delicate one. Executing a few clones in the process of revealing the subtleties of this art is standard procedure, GM. If they're clever, they'll get some practice in using the bootlicking skill to wheedle little bits of information without falling afoul of treason.

Important Note: HIGHER SECURITY TYPES ARE VERY SENSITIVE ABOUT CHALLENGES TO THEIR AUTHORITY OR VERACITY. This is an excellent opportunity to kill the first PC and activate a clone replacement. It will set the tone of fear and ignorance right away and will serve notice on everyone that PC death is a common and casual occurrence. The event might go like this:

GM as Peter-I: You mprons are sure to bollix this mission but good.

PC Tois-R-USS-1: Excuse me, but doesn't your statement imply doubt as to The Computer's wisdom in assigning us to this mission?

Peter-I (Innocently): Surely you must have misremembered my comments.

Tois-R-USS-1: Perhaps we might review the security surveillance tapes to clarify this unfortunate dispute.

Peter-I (Thoughtful, then cheerful and cooperative): An excellent suggestion, citizen. But there is no reason to waste the time of these other citizens while we perform this tedious chore. The rest of you are dismissed. Tois-R-USS-1 and I will review the tapes ourselves.

GM as Narrator: You other PCs are hustled out and sent back to your quarters, leaving Peter-I and Tois-R-USS-1 to review the tapes. Time passes. Soon you receive another summons to the briefing room. Another Red Troubleshooter is there waiting for you. He looks quite familiar.

Peter-I: The slanderous, treasonous lies of Tois-R-USS-1 have been amply demonstrated by a review of the surveillance tapes, and I am pleased to inform you that this traitor has been reassigned. (Significant pause.) However, I congratulate the group on its good fortune in having Tois-R-USS-2 — a Troubleshooter with unquestionable loyalties — join them on this mission.

Closing the Briefing

Don't let the PCs talk themselves to death, even if they seem to be enjoying it. Peter-I quickly tires of the jabber and wants to get back to work. When Peter-I gets up to leave, everyone should understand that they're dismissed. Persistence is rewarded with patient tolerance, a request for a private conference, and a swift offstage execution.

When the briefing is over, Peter-I's final act is to hand Grund-G a pile of documents and direct him to take command of his mission group. Grund-G sighs morosely, then rises from the bench, slouches over to take the PCs in tow, and heads for the PLC warehouse, shuffling documents and grumbling inaudibly.



Episode Two: Outfitting at PLC

Episode Summary

Grund-G establishes his authority over and contempt for the tinhorns. PCs get accustomed to casual abuse. Grund-G slips off to check in with secret society contacts. Sharp PCs follow his lead. PCs are outfitted and have an opportunity to request additional equipment. PLC personnel snidely remind PCs of fines for loss or damage of assigned equipment.

NPC Mission Leader: Grund-G-GUY-2

See the IOGC Major NPC Chart for Grund-G's attributes, skills, possessions, motivation and information. Following is a basic outline of this charming character; the Major NPC Chart goes into real detail.

Grund-G is ruthless, devious, obnoxious, dangerous, and contemptuous of the Troubleshooters. He suspects that this mission is doomed to failure and is looking for a way to avoid blame for the disaster. The Troubleshooters look like easy marks.

Grund-G Introduces Himself

Before Grund-G goes to PLC or picks up the three Infrared laborers, he drags the PCs aside in a vacant corridor and impresses on them his contempt and disappointment at being saddled with them.

Read aloud:

"Okay. Listen up, jerks, and listen up good. I've been around a long time, and I ain't gonna let no wet-behind-the-ears jerks get me killed. I'll drill the first one of you that steps out of line.

"Now, I'm in charge here. Follow orders or I'll roast you. If something happens to me, and it don't kill me, but you cut and run without rescuing me, you can be sure I'll survive. And I'll come looking for you.

"Not one of you here is smart or fast enough to double-cross me. Don't try it.

"Now, I need a volunteer. (Pause and wait for a volunteer. The first person to speak up is designated the second-in-command.) Okay, you. I want to talk to you in private."

Grund-G takes the volunteer aside privately and tells him that he is the designated group leader if anything happens to Grund-G. He tells the second-in-command the secret mission code ("sudden death overtime") and he gives him some friendly advice: "I got my eye on ya, so don't try anything funny."

He then orders his second-in-command not to reveal his second-in-command status or the

secret mission code name to anyone, or he'll personally poke the volunteer's eyeballs out. After this pleasant speech, Grund-G grows sly and conspiratorial and suggests that the second-in-command pick out the weediest, most obnoxious member of the party to be used as a scapegoat if things go wrong. "Drill him if he looks cross-eyed at you. We'll set him up as a traitor, a perfect excuse for mission failure, and maybe an excuse to go home instead of wandering around waiting to get killed in the Outdoors."

Once the group has been abused and the second-in-command chosen, the group proceeds to pick up the Infrared laborers and visit PLC&C for equipment.

Clandestine Stuff

Grund-G marches for a long time along a series of corridors, then enters an office door marked "HPD & MC Temporaries," telling the PCs that he'll be back in a minute. The PCs are left all alone in the corridor.

All alone.

Impulsive or experienced Troubleshooters whip up excuses to bug out for a few minutes and check in with secret society or other clandestine information networks. Unenterprising or inexperienced Troubleshooters wait patiently like dogs for their master to return. Other Troubleshooters probably get into a casual conversation or shootout.

In fifteen minutes Grund-G emerges with three Infrared citizens in tow.

The Infrared Drones

These guys are described in detail on the IOGC Major NPC Chart.

Lubi-GSV-2: A big dull lug. Conan the Dim.

Paul-GSV-1: Tiny little shrimp. Whiney voice. Drags his feet and fumbles and fidgets. Seems to fall asleep if left alone for more than a few minutes.

Mani-GSV-3: Average guy. Blends into surroundings. Seems thoughtful and attentive. (A dead giveaway — no Infrareds are thoughtful and attentive — actually an Internal Security plant. Will play no part in the adventure's action, but is a further distracting focus for properly paranoid PCs. If he survives, he can serve as a reliable witness in the briefing, when he will reveal himself.)

Throughout the rest of the adventure, treat the three Infrared laborers as if they were Grund-G's robot slaves. They do whatever he tells them. If he tells them to follow another group member's orders, they do so. They bring

no enthusiasm or ingenuity to any task. They are vaguely aware of the danger they are in, and they would gladly run away if they could avoid being executed for treason. If things get violent, they cower behind Grund-G or run away anyway.

The Internal Security plant will act just like the other two Infrareds as long as they remain with the group. However, if the Infrareds run away, he pretends to join them, but circles back and trails the party to observe. He will not interfere in any case. His job is to observe and survive to report.

A Visit to Production, Logistics, and Commissary

Here the group is assigned the necessary equipment for the mission. Regular gear is available as usual from the PLC clerks. Special gear is obtained later from R&D.

PLC Personnel

PLC personnel have all the charm of surly, irritable postal employees in an un-airconditioned room in the middle of a heat wave. They always take about thirty seconds to respond to a direct question; during this period they stare blankly at the questioner as cows gaze uncomprehendingly on passing trains. When they do respond, it is often to ask that the question be repeated. They would be grumpy if they had the will or energy. There are about 20 of 'em.

Five Red-level guards lounge around looking bored.

Equipment and Materials Provided

Meg-O-FUN-2, a standard PLC warehouse clerk, supervises the assignment of equipment. The PCs are given a list of the equipment and weapons assigned to the group (complete with model and serial numbers).

Grund-G is given the Equipment List and told to sign for the items listed.

Grund-G does not sign the list, but turns, casually points his autorifle at the PCs, and orders them all to sign the list. PCs who balk are asked to stand aside for a moment while Grund-G uses a nearby comlink to register charges of treason and insubordination. If a PC goes for his laser, Grund-G, the PLC staff, the automatic security laser batteries, and, presumably, all loyal Troubleshooters open up on the uncooperative citizen.

Once the equipment list is signed, the equipment is brought out on handtrucks by jackobots. The jackobots are a little careless,



The Equipment List

Following is a description of the dangerous and frightening equipment the PCs are assigned.

You will note that the PLC officer, Meg-O, has carelessly left evidence that she has treasonously assigned the PCs lots of junk in the equipment list. If confronted with the evidence, she will agree to delete everything below the treasonous statement from the list. If she is shot down in cold blood, her successor will do so (and the executing PC gets a commendation).

Two Laser Pistols: Standard guns.

Three Laser Rifles: One of these guns has a small piece of chewing gum wedged in the firing contacts. The gun will not fire until a successful weapons repair roll is made.

Eighteen Violet Laser Barrels: Standard violet laser barrels. Cowardly Troubleshooters will probably want to exchange these for Red barrels; Grund-G could care less.

Cone Rifle: Nothing special here.

32 Assorted Cone Rifle Shells: The shells aren't marked. Of course.

Any time a shell is fired, roll a die:

1-2: Solid slug	11-12: HE
3-4: AP	13-14: HEAT
5-6: Napalm	15-16: Flare
7-8: Tacnuke	17-18: Vomit gas
9-10: Dirt gas	19-20: Hallucinogenic

144 Smile-Up Pills: Standard tranquilizers to help Troubleshooters deal with the stress of a dangerous mission Outdoors.

1-Meter Sinclair Molecule Chain: An exceedingly useful and dangerous piece of equipment, the Sinclair molecule chain is a strand of single molecules held together by dubious electromagnetic forces. The incredibly thin chain will cut through literally any substance known. The chain is held in suspension in a magnetic bottle; when the bottle is turned off, the chain slices through the bottle, then through anything below the bottle, winding up eventually at the Earth's core. The effects on any Troubleshooters' toes or MTV's nuclear reactors which happen to be in the way are left up to the GM's twisted imagination.

7 Com 1 Units: Standard.

84 Tubes Concentrated Algae Bits: Food. Sorta. Each tube is enough for one meal for one clone. Unless it's contaminated. Or drugged.

2 Cases [classified] Repellent: Bug spray. If a mutant Commie cockroach is induced to eat the entire two cases, the bug will cough, begin to choke, then die. Leaving one very unhappy and lonesome roach. (One case will just make a roach nauseous.)

2 Pair Binoculars with Infrared Filters: Standard.

1 Carton [classified] Antidote: If any Troubleshooter is bitten by an Australian viper bat, this'll cure him. Otherwise — it don't do nothing.

6 Sonic Grenades: Standard.

25 Liters Water and 10 1-liter canteens:

One of the canteens has been contaminated with a small quantity of dried Australian viper bat poison, which causes massive convulsions followed by death within an hour. Now where are the Troubleshooters going to come up with viper bat antidote?

10 Backpacks: Substandard.

10 Pairs Thermal Gloves: Standard. Pretty pointless as the weather will be okay Outside.

1 Multicorder I: With recorder program.

1 Docbot Model V: Described in the Major NPC Chart.

1 Jackobot Model 360: Described in the Major NPC Chart.

3 Red Insulated jumpsuits: Heavy-duty thermal clothing. Note that there are only three suits. Just watch the clones fight over who gets to wear them. Grund-G will not condescend to wear Red clothing.

50 Meters Rope: Standard stuff; holds about two Troubleshooters worth of weight.

50 Meters Twine: Standard. Holds maybe 25 kgs weight.

The Rest of the Stuff: Useless or highly dangerous junk the PLC gang is trying to foist off on the PCs. If they actually take any of it, the GM is encouraged to improvise a suitable punishment — er, result.

zooming in, slamming to a stop, and dumping the crates of gear with graceful, fluid motions. The crates topple over with multiple crashes. Some split open and spill their contents across the floor.

Anyone want to protest? The bots continue their reckless deliveries while sarcastically apologetic PLC techs hand out complicated complaint forms. The PCs fill them out, hand them to the PLC techs, who grin, wad them up, tuck them in their coveralls, and wander off indifferently. Contacting The Computer is a waste of time; the PCs are directed to fill out complaint forms. The PLC staffers grin cooperatively. (Note that the casual handling of the equipment doesn't actually damage any of it — unless you want it to. Personally, we suggest letting the neutronium's antigrav casing malfunction a little. Snicker.)

Grund-G tells the Troubleshooters to divide up the equipment as they see fit. If too many of them die in the process, he appoints the most obnoxious PC as equipment officer and lets him/her divide it up.

The PCs may make written requisitions for any additional equipment they want. Though each PC is given automatic approval of requests for anything that can be found in a normal sporting goods store, the PLC personnel smugly hint how bad it would be to have a record of being greedy or careless with The Computer's scarce resources. They pointedly

mention fines for damage or loss of equipment. All but the most sensible requests are refused, and a great show is made of filing the refused requisitions.

All requests for exotic armor are denied. "What a waste! You're not going into combat! This is just a routine expedition. Look. It says so here," pointing to the equipment list. PLC staffers are particularly amused by requests for tac nuke cone rifle ammo, power combat suits, and such. "My, my. Our Red-level rookies doubt The Computer's judgment. Surely such items would have been provided if they were needed. Right, boys?" (PLC staffers grin and nod in agreement.)

After the rest of the equipment is distributed, the mission's two bots are rolled out. The bots are noticeably unenthusiastic about joining the team.



The Bots

The group is assigned two robots: one, a Docbot Model V (standard issue for most missions), and the other, a Jackobot Model 360 with an assortment of Tech Services 10 mem cartridges and, apparently by accident, three Teela O'Malley videos. Grund-G is assigned as the sole operator of the docbot, but he entrusts the operation of the jackobot to any suitably-qualified PC volunteer. (See Major NPC Chart.)

After the PCs meet the bots, they receive their clone replacement beepers (see pages 110-111). Courteous PLC staffers make sure each clone's beeper is properly screwed into his skull.

Once the PCs have obtained all their gear from PLC, there is quite a pile of stuff on the floor. The PCs must carry anything assigned to them. Attempts to offload burdens on Infrareads or bots are futile; the NPCs and NPBs look imploringly to Grund-G, who sharply orders the PCs to leave the Infrareads and bots alone. Once the PCs have shouldered their own burdens, lots of stuff is still lying on the floor. Grund-G divides the stuff at random among the PCs, Infrareads, and bots. Grund-G then gathers the overloaded mission group and leads them on to Research and Design.



Episode Three: A Visit to Research and Design

Episode Summary

The PCs play with marvelous and dangerous toys. They learn to be cautious in accepting gifts from mad scientists.

The Autoshuttle

The R&D center for PDQ Sector is located in an isolated facility some distance from the residential and industrial centers. It is accessible only through a 10 km transit tunnel serviced by an autoshuttle.

The autoshuttle is a massively-shielded room set up on magnetic induction coils. The interior of the autoshuttle is a six-by-nine-meter room with benches around all four walls and one large, massively-shielded door. Despite its solidly-built appearance, the walls, ceiling, and floor are dented and crumpled as though the autoshuttle had been battered around by a playful kitten the size of an aircraft carrier. Grund-G enters first and sits on a bench to the right. Ask the PCs what they want to do, and take special note of where they stand or sit in the autoshuttle.

When the door closes behind the last team member, the autoshuttle accelerates instantaneously to a sizable fraction of the speed of light. Anyone standing or seated with his back to the wall where Grund-G sits is sitting pretty. (The veteran knows about this autoshuttle from experience.)

Everyone and everything else makes a $\times \frac{1}{2}$ agility roll or falls over and slides along the floor, sharply fetching up against the wall Grund-G is sitting against. Grund-G calmly lifts his feet to let tumbling victims slam into the bench beneath him. Victims of the sudden acceleration and falling down take damage on column 1 of the Vehicular Accidents and Falling from Great Heights table.

Then Grund-G stands up, walks over to the opposite wall and sits down on a bench. What do the PCs do? Whatever they do, they had better do it quickly. The autoshuttle is about to decelerate in the same gentle fashion as it accelerated, and Grund-G is in the right spot.

SCREECH! WHAM! The autoshuttle stops abruptly. Anyone not leaning against the proper wall makes another $\times \frac{1}{2}$ agility roll or falls over, slides along the floor, and fetches up against the wall. Victims take damage again as above.

The door opens. Grund-G directs the Infra-reds to drag stunned or injured citizens and damaged bots out onto the exit platform. Grund-G consults a wall diagram, then herds

the quick and the lumpy along down a corridor.

Grund-G immediately has to detour around the ruins of what might have been a research and testing complex. Workers are sifting through the rubble and dozerbots are knocking down remnants of standing walls. Puny R&D guards (R&D guards are notoriously unimposing) give Grund-G directions for the detour. If questioned, the guards casually mention a little trouble with the wiring.

After a long walk down a maze of corridors (Remember all that gear they're carrying? Anybody getting tired? How about a few strength rolls?), the group arrives at a large set of doors marked with hastily-scribbled signs — "R&D: Temporary Quarters". Inside there are numerous doors down long corridors. At each door a Blue or Green R&D guard stands with weapon at the ready.

Grund-G leads the PCs to a large green door and hands the Green guard a document permitting the Red PCs to enter. The guard studies the document, checks each character's tongue tattoo, then ushers the group through the door into a large room with a green security graphic running along each wall. The room is filled with strange devices and assorted testing equipment.

The R&D Staff

As befits their lofty reputations, the R&D staff is an exotic collection of geniuses, mad scientists, fakers, and political hangers-on. In addition to the numerous assorted Orange, Yellow, and Green-coated staff members and technicians who amble about aimlessly, there are a number of more unconventional characters — computer hackers, technology junkies, nudniks, and so on — of varying clearances. Each citizen below Green clearance has a large green form in a clear plastic pouch dangling from a cord around his neck.

The following NPCs play important parts in this episode:

Schnect-B: This is a genius who spouts treason like a fountain, yet who has obtained so many commendations for brilliant designs that he is above execution. An R&D High Programmer is his patron and vouches for his loyalty. Every time Schnect-B opens his mouth, he says something that would cause most people to be executed on the spot. The PCs may have some trouble accepting this until they catch on to how casually Schnect's colleagues accept Schnect's behavior.

Distributing the Goodies

Samson-G is in charge of assigning experimental weapons for testing. He gives a spiel about duty to The Computer and the importance of testing out experimental equipment on worthless Red-Jewel Troubleshooters. He mentions the prospect of substantial bonuses for detailed operational reports and serious fines and possible execution for damage or loss of valuable equipment.

Two experimental systems — the Multi-Mode All-Terrain Vehicle and the Loyalty Officer Control Module and Sensory Enhancement Package — have already been assigned to the mission and will be presented to the group later. First Samson-G has to present and distribute a variety of other devices that R&D would like field tested.

Technically the PCs are not obligated to accept any of these other devices, but loyal citizens are always eager to cooperate with R&D in vital testing programs. Samson-G puts polite but unmistakable pressure on uncooperative citizens.

Samson-G: "Surely you wouldn't hesitate to offer your service to The Computer and Alpha Complex by accepting this simple

Stanley-B: He is the archetypal mad scientist. He has no talent or common sense, and his ideas are either terrible or pathetically silly. However, he has complete freedom of the lab because he has political connections high up in the Pro Tech secret society. Even if this man is friendly toward you, you are in serious danger if you accept one of his creations for field testing.

Samson-G: Samson-G is at best a third-rate scientist and engineer, but through political connections he has managed to become the head administrator of this branch of Research and Design. He is always outwardly very calm, but inside he is extremely repressed — terrified of the geniuses and political plants around him, and desperately aware of his intellectual inferiority. One day the pressure will just be too great, and he'll blow his sanity check; in the meantime, he is just hanging on, putting up a good front.

Samson-G has two CPU Blue bodyguards, a suggestion of the power of his political connections. The PCs may erroneously infer that he is a very important and skillful scientist and engineer from the quality of his bodyguards.



and perfectly-safe device for testing?" (Gazing up pointedly at the security monitors)

Grund-G the veteran blandly ignores this kind of pressure, but the PCs ought to be easily intimidated.

Below is a list of the strategies Samson-G uses in distributing the semi-optional items. As each item is distributed, the PCs may wish to test the item or ask questions about its use. The designers and technicians will make a great show of being eager to cooperate, but if anything doesn't work properly, they will be quick to blame it on the carelessness of the PCs or to make clever excuses about how sophisticated and delicate experimental equipment is. At the same time the technicians will make certain that the PCs sign for each item they accept.

To make them properly nervous, make each player actually sign an Information/Equipment/Weapon Receipt Form scrap acknowledging acceptance of responsibility for the experimental item received. Then, each time you emphasize the penalties for loss or damage of experimental equipment, wave these pieces of paper in the air meaningfully.

Strategies for Distributing Items

Tactic 1: Samson-G reads a serial number aloud and asks for a volunteer. (Test of faith, loyalty, and stupidity.)

Tactic 2: Samson-G speaks to each PC in turn and asks what they think they will need for this mission. (Be alert for any implied criticism of The Computer's planning.) Samson-G grills them — gives them a hard time about precious resources and the dedication and labor of R&D. After each PC has stated his desires, Samson-G asks the PC to pick a number from 1-12. The PC is then assigned that item.

Tactic 3: Any really entertaining item not selected this way should be assigned at random. Don't omit the rocket boots.

Note: When each item is handed out, the designer steps forward and explains how wonderful the item is. If the PC tests the item on the spot and it doesn't work, the designer will of course blame the PC for damaging the item. PCs may wish they had accepted the items in silence and tested them later out of sight of the designer.

High Tech Toys to Select From

The name of the designer is in parentheses next to the item. The PCs may learn that some designers are more reliable than others, and use this information to steer clear of dangerous or useless items.

1. Personal Anti-Grav Unit: Serial — PDQ-R&D-124-56 (Stanley-B): This simply doesn't work, and never will. If the PCs try to test it, the technicians (afraid to offend the research head) will continue fooling with it, swearing that it was just working a minute ago. If the unit is dismantled and inspected by an independent, highly-skilled technician, it would be excellent evidence that Stanley-B is a phony, and therefore a traitor.

2. Remote Control Surveillance Drone: PDQ-R&D-15-934 (Schnect-B): This is a mobile, intelligent vid and sound camera which transmits to any standard multicorder. It moves at walk speed on lighter-than-air support and is driven by two small propeller motors; the drone can be operated with a control joystick or by simple verbal commands. The drone is limited to line-of-sight for joystick control and shouting distance for verbal control. It is semi-smart, about like a puppy, and equally in need of training. It works fine when lab techs demonstrate it, but get it in the field, and look out — sort of a cheerful mini-dirigible with Cuisinart attachments.

3. Waldo/Mechano Exoskeleton: PDQ-R&D-34-5 (Schnect-B): This permits manipulation of heavy loads and high-speed movement — equivalent to 30 Strength and 2x normal movement. Malfunctions at GM discretion — ideally, after PC has been suckered into believing it really works. (Suggestions: accidentally crushes what it manipulates; throttle gets stuck; after stress, limbs get locked in position; develops a nervous twitch.) PCs will get a few hints of bugs as it is demonstrated, but in general it seems to work fine. Heh, heh.

4. Power Armor: PDQ-R&D-34-98 (designer unknown: salvaged from abandoned Old Reckoning armed forces base): This is absolutely effective; the only problem is that it weighs one ton and occasionally falls through the flooring of the complex. It is also incredibly slow and poorly maneuverable. It is a little balky in first gear, as PCs will note in test runs; in the field, it will sometimes refuse to move forward unless coaxed. (Roll 1-8 to start in first gear. Other problems: the armor can slow only by one gear per turn; it is unstable in third gear.)

Performance:

1st gear	Stroll (roll 1-8 to start)
2nd gear	Walk
3rd gear	Run (1-10 for steering error)

The armor provides ALL4 protection.

The power armor has a built-in blaster that fires along arm; the blaster firing button is concealed inside a finger of one glove. As you might well expect, the firing button gets stuck in the firing position the third time it is used. It cannot be turned off without the user removing the suit and somebody making a x½ mechanical engineering skill roll. (It takes 1 to 20 rounds (roll to determine how many) to get into or out of the suit, during which time the blaster will continue to fire merrily.)

The suit's power pack is defective, and will run down when the GM wants some laughs as the PCs figure out how they are going to carry this one-ton valuable piece of experimental equipment back to Alpha Complex.

5. Poison Spray: PDQ-R&D-75-90 (Stanley-B): This is essentially a spray can full of poison. The PCs will not be permitted to test it indoors; the techs assure the PCs that it works fine. The can actually is under too high a pressure and has too tight a nozzle. It makes an incredibly fine spray which covers everything; it is very

sticky, and won't rub or wash off. It is 100% to hit everything in a 50-foot radius. The poison is a nerve toxin which makes victims flop around like Raggedy Ann dolls (x½ endurance roll to survive).

6. Portable Power Drill/Jack Hammer: PDQ-R&D-23-64 (designer unknown: salvaged): This works perfectly; however, the battery pack weighs 15 kilos and will break down after the second use.

7. Metal Detector PDQ-R&D-303-45 (Stanley-B): This works marvelously. Since metal is everywhere, it registers all the time. The techs can't understand why the PCs find it useless.

8. MSH/ACTH 4-10: PDQ-R&D/B-9-26 (bio lab): This is a memory retention drug. It gives a character the equivalent of total recall. It works — most of the time. However, in crises situations there is 4 in 20 chance of the character suffering barrages of totally irrelevant information. If affected, the PC vividly recalls the details of his experiences during the half-hour after he takes the drug. Over and over. For two hours.

If pressed, the technicians will admit that the drug has not been tested.



The rocket boots in action.

9. Rocket Boots: PDQ-R&D-82-81 (Stanley-B): This is the mad scientist's favorite project; the PCs will be relentlessly browbeaten into testing these deathtraps. The boots have twelve individual rockets on each foot, each independently controlled by switches on the control belt. If used anywhere with a ceiling lower than 20 feet, the user will crash into the ceiling before gaining control. (See column one on Vehicular Accidents Etc. Table for damage effects.) The character must make a



same, slings the instrument array under an arm, and leads them out of the room.

When everyone is back in the hall, Samson-G asks, "Which of you is the loyalty officer?" Whomever is so blessed is assigned the Loyalty Officer Control Module.

Using the Sensurround Team Communication System

Com Units: Each helmet is equipped with a built-in com I unit. The units are pre-set to allow each Troubleshooter to speak with and hear all others. If he wishes, a Troubleshooter can use the privacy mode and communicate just with one or more Troubleshooters and not the entire mission team. To do so, the Troubleshooter flips a handy tongue toggle, switching his helmet to privacy mode. Then he presses a button which causes a beep to sound in another Troubleshooter's helmet, signalling the first Troubleshooter's desire for a private conference. The second Troubleshooter can accept the call, or ignore it (possibly to avoid charges of conspiracy). Note that the loyalty officer, and, of course, The Computer, can monitor or break in on a private conference at will.

Beverage Dispensers: Pressing another tongue toggle will cause a stream of cool, refreshing Bouncy Bubble Beverage to pour into the Troubleshooter's mouth. These switches hardly ever get stuck in the "on" position. Honest.

Loyalty Officer Control Module: The loyalty officer can control and monitor private conferences between Troubleshooters and isolate disloyal Troubleshooters from all communication. The loyalty officer also controls the sound amplification system, which can cut sound by up to 95%, or amplify sound up to 10 times normal levels.

The system's default values are set for total team communication and normal external noise levels. Whenever the loyalty officer attempts to mess with those, he must make a mechanical roll; if he succeeds, everything's jake. If he fails...well, what do you think should happen?

Whatever it is, he can make just one attempt per round to fix it.

Then Grund-G politely but firmly forbids anyone to put the helmets on until the mission is under way. Samson-G looks disappointed, but after supervising the signing of the proper documents, he shakes everyone's hand, wishes them luck, and tells them,

"You'll pick up your experimental transport vehicle at the motor pool. The techs there will brief you on its operation. Be sure to test all those devices, now, and fill out the operational report forms. I'm sure you'll have no trouble at all." (Samson-G checks his watch.) "Well, I've got to get back to the lab. Serve The Computer, friends, and your service will be rewarded."

Grund-G grunts, consults his documents, checks the motor pool coordinates by wristcom, then orders the PCs to move out. Retrace your steps through the R&D facilities and repeat the autoshuttle gag with any subtle variations that suit your fancy. For instance:

- Power fluctuations cause the autoshuttle to whip back and forth violently just as Grund-G is making his way across to the opposite bench. Everybody makes lots of agility rolls. Grund-G passes all of his. (You roll the dice behind the screen, GM. Reinforce Grund-G's super-competent, unflappable image.) **Note:** This is called, "Twisting Fate to Enhance the Dramatic Flow of a Story." It is also called "Cheating."

- The autoshuttle interior lights go out in mid-transit. The shuttle grinds to a halt. Pitch dark. Power outage. Communications are blocked in the tunnel by unspecified environmental factors.

Wait a few seconds. When the PCs stand up and try to do something, the lights go back on and the autoshuttle rockets off again. Agility rolls, anyone? And maybe the returning lights interrupt someone in a treasonous act?

- As above, but the autoshuttle doesn't restart. Grund-G finally grumbles, then orders a random PC to open the door. Of course the door won't open, so Grund-G orders him to blow it open. (Still in the dark, unless someone remembered his flashlight.)

The PC complies or is executed for insubordination. Once the door is blasted open, the party can just squeeze out the door and onto the floor of the autoshuttle tunnel. Which is covered with the magnetic induction grid. Can you say, "ZZZZzzzzittttt — Aieeee"? I thought you could.

The safest thing to do is stay in the autoshuttle until help comes. That's what Grund-G does. So he stays put and guards the equipment. Rank hath its privileges.

Grund-G orders the PCs to walk down the tunnel and get help or find an emergency exit. They cooperate. Wouldn't you?

So turn the power off and on a couple times as the PCs make their way down the tunnel. Fry a couple of Troubleshooters on the induction grid. Send the autoshuttle zooming up behind them like a locomotive.

Clever PCs will sever the power cables leading to the magnetic grid and autoshuttle. Even cleverer PCs will make this damage look like an accident.

The Multi-Terrain Vehicle and the Pre-Oops Environment Suits

When HPD & MC decided to scoop Armed Forces on the discovery of the land juggernauts, they realized that they'd need an appropriate vehicle for the mission. Armed Forces controls most of the vehicles appropriate for Outdoors travel, so HPD asked R&D to design one — a vehicle which could manage densely-forested and mountainous terrain as well as cruise large bodies of water on or underneath the surface. R&D had an

unreasonably short time schedule and could only manage to wheedle a tiny budget from CPU for the project.

The result is the Multi-Terrain Vehicle, or "MTV." The basic element is a U-bot Model 416 that Vehicle Services pulled out of mothballs. The U-bot Model 416 was obsolete two centuries ago. It is not exactly in good shape today, but it is theoretically capable of operating underwater and on the surface. To add the overland travel capabilities HPD & MC requested, R&D grafted on a powerful Mini-Mega Compact Nuke Plant and an under-chassis with six five-meter insectoid legs. The result looks something like an enormous beetle.

This little honey is going to provide lots of fun and excitement all the way to the mission objective.

R&D recommended that HPD & MC should obtain environment suits for the mission group just in case there was any problem with the Multi-Terrain Vehicle. "Oh, no, no, no... there's no danger — just a precaution, you understand." However, afraid to tip their hand to Armed Forces, HPD & Mind Control tried to obscure the intent of their requisition by asking PLC for space suits instead of normal environment suits, figuring that they could probably be used interchangeably.

Production, Logistics and Commissary were eager to cooperate, but they said, "All our space suits are either in for maintenance" (wink-wink), "not up to current safety standards" (wink-wink-wink-wink), "or on assignment" (being displayed as decorative items in High Programmers' residences). "Oh, wait a minute! Now that I think about it, we do have some never-used space suits that should do just fine." Having no other choice, HPD & Mind Control accepted. And why were the suits never used? The Troubleshooters will find out soon enough.

R&D Vehicle Test Facilities

Grund-G consults documents, requests an autobus by com unit, loads the PCs, and off they go. Time passes. The autobus is quickly out of familiar territory for the PCs (Red clearance tunnels, but remote from areas where the PCs have any business to be). More time passes. Eventually the autobus arrives, and the PCs debark in a hangar with a sign, "PDQ SECTOR R&D VEHICLE TEST FACILITIES."

PDQ Sector R&D Vehicle Test Facilities is kind of a cross between a multi-level parking garage, a space shuttle launchpad, a submarine drydock, and a demolition derby ring. Vehicles of all sizes, shapes, and degrees of improbability lie dormant in dusty alcoves, or trundle purposefully across the stadium-sized main room. The smell of gasoline, methane and alcohol fills the air; guys of various clearances from R&D and Tech: Vehicle Services Division wander about, busily checking things off on clipboards or rolling wildly around on the ground attempting to put out the flames. From the walls, guards and com-bots watch the proceedings with interest.



After a few moments, two Green-level R&D guards stop the party, check Grund-G's documents and everyone's tongue tattoo, then lead the party across to a room against the opposite wall. The journey is made exciting by an aircraft-carrier-sized towbot rumbling imperiously across the room, completely oblivious to the smaller, squishier creatures in its way. Perhaps it would be a good idea to make an agility roll at this point, hmmm?

In the room the PCs see a number of desks — all empty but one, where a Red Tech staffer sits studying some manuals. When the party reaches the desk, Apprentice-In-Training-Traffic-Dispatcher Zim-R-MEM-6 starts, jumps to attention all official-like, politely asks to examine Grund-G's documents, then leads the party down a corridor. The two Green R&D guards bring up the rear.

Zim-R shows them to the bay where the Multi-Terrain Vehicle (hence "MTV") is parked. The bay has a high ceiling and large pressure doors leading to an airlock which permits access to the ocean beyond. The MTV itself is 7 meters long, and the personnel compartment is about as spacious as the interior of a sub-compact station wagon.

Drop the side-view illustration, labeled "IOGC.MTV.SV.3.4" in front of the players. Wait until the gasps of awe subside.

The MTV was designed for four passengers. With Grund-G, six Troubleshooters, three In-fra-reds, two bots, and gear, things are going to be crowded.

But not quite crowded enough to suit us, so it's time to put on the environment suits. Zim-R points to a stack of old, battered, dusty cartons piled on a skid next to the MTV. "Here's the space suits R&D sent for you guys."

Space suits.

Grund-G doesn't bat an eye; he has been told about the space-suits-as-environment-suits routine, but he doesn't share this information with the PCs.

Do any of the PCs want to protest? Do any of the PCs think a mistake has been made? Zim-R insists that this is just what the PCs are supposed to get, and shows them the requisition. Grund-G looks unimpressed. Should anyone pester The Computer about a matter so trivial, The Computer switches the complainant to a Blue Complaint Tech in CPU, who chews the individual out and tells him to handle the issue with his mission leader and to stop bothering busy servants of The Computer with minor details.

Opportunity Knocks

Zim-R asks, "Okay. Who's gonna sign for all this?"

Grund-G points to a PC at random. Zim-R presents a clipboard and some forms for signature.

Does anybody read them? Zim-R has just handed the PC the wrong clipboard. The forms are detailed requests for float decorations for the Patriotic Fervor Festival. Hand the reading PC a note to this effect and see what he says. If he's real clever, he'll say nothing and sign

the forms. Thereafter, any fines for damage or loss of the MTV or environment suits goes on Zim-R's tab. This is one swell deal.

Impulsive, earnest, and conscientious citizens immediately point out the error to Zim-R. Zim-R gasps, looks around in a frenzy, and grabs the correct clipboard and offers it for signature in a trembling hand, then effusively thanks the PC — making it perfectly obvious to all what a wonderful opportunity has been missed. This impulsive, earnest, and conscientious citizen is a dead man. Grund-G will never forgive him. Guess who is the designated scapegoat henceforth?

The Space Suits

Once the forms are taken care of, Grund-G observes, "These suits have been issued to us, so we're going to use them. Any questions? No? Then let's suit up."

When the crates are opened the suits are covered with dust, and the PCs can find no manuals. Zim-R's response to questions about the suits is "I'm sorry. That information is not available at this time." The information is not available because no manual has been discovered and the suits have not been used in the past century.

The suits are ancient, cumbersome hardsuits with air recirculation and powerful heating/cooling systems. The controls for these systems are located on the chest of the suits. The suits have a hefty negative buoyancy. (That means they sink real good.)

The charge in the batteries for the recirculation and heating/cooling systems is quite low after years of storage, but they will be good for about one hour of operation if nothing else goes wrong. (Fat chance.) Unfortunately the gauges only indicate the strength of the battery charge, not how long the power is good for, so the PCs will have to keep an eye on the gauges and pay close attention to warning lights. An amber light flashes in the helmet faceplate when there are fifteen minutes of normal operation left, and a red light flashes when there are five minutes left.

During the course of the adventure you may want these old suits to malfunction for the entertainment of the PCs. Some suggestions:

- The heating/cooling system, set normally at default for human body temperature, suddenly kicks on at full power. A sensor has shorted out, reading the suit temperature as too hot or too cold, and the suit tries to adjust. Bake or freeze your player at your option, and remind him that the heating/cooling system is using the battery charge at a frightening rate. Any PC with electronic engineering skills can disable the heating/cooling system, but the repair cannot be made in the confines of MTV.
- The recirculation system doesn't scrub the carbon dioxide properly and the PC starts getting drowsy. The PC has five minutes to get out of the suit and into breathable air or he slips into unconsciousness. The fault is cracked insulation on a sensor wire, and the suit

can be repaired automatically by anyone with electronic skills. Other PCs make a mechanical roll with a -5 penalty to make the repair.

Too bad there's no manual explaining the process of donning these environment suits. Make secret mechanical rolls. Anyone who fails has put the suit on improperly. Make a note. Maybe the suit will just leak. Or maybe the seals are jammed and it will have to be cut off. Or maybe the oxygen line is fouled up. Suit yourself.

Grund-G makes sure everybody is wearing his R&D com gear under the environment suit's big plastic bubble. It fits. Sort of. Isn't too badly broken. Probably still works fine. Probably. Of course, Grund-G isn't wearing his R&D com gear. Anybody want to bring it up with him?

All Aboard

The MTV is resting on its belly with the six legs retracted into streamlined skirts along the undercarriage. Zim-R steps over to the MTV and says, "She looks like a real sweet machine. The preliminary test trials of the vehicle were very encouraging. The test data is not, alas, available at your security clearance, but you can be sure that all systems are completely operational and genuinely reliable."

If the PCs inquire about an operations manual for the MTV, Zim-R explains that he has no access to the manual because he is a Red level citizen, but that he has been assured that the autopilot is perfectly reliable, and if there is any problem with the autopilot, the PCs need only contact The Computer and it will take over operation of the MTV. If questioned, The Computer will soothingly confirm the reliability of the autopilot and assure the PCs, "You will be in no danger. Can you doubt The Computer? The Computer is your Friend. Stop bothering me. Don't you have a mission to complete or something? Thank you for your cooperation."

Zim-R introduces the PCs to the MTV's autopilot, which introduces itself as "Lucky." Lucky's voice should have the tone and clarity of early arcade game computer voices (suggesting the ancient design of the craft) and should have the verbal mannerisms of a cheerful senior citizen on the edge of senile dementia. Lucky is ever cooperative, but he often misinterprets commands, garbling and jumbling the words and occasionally wandering off into irrelevant readouts of unrelated technical data. Slamming a hand on the control panels is enough to bring him back.

Time to Load Up

Okay. Time to load the MTV. We've thoughtfully provided a scale diagram of the MTV crew and storage compartment and scale counters for the PCs, NPCs, bots, and the cartons of PLC and R&D gear.

Note that all this stuff does not fit into the MTV without some stacking. Military gamers



are familiar with rules limiting counter stacking. Here are the stacking rules:

- No more than three cartons or three Infrareds may be stacked together.
- No more than two PCs, NPCs, or bots may be stacked together.
- A carton may be stacked with no more than one PC, NPC, or bot.
- No more than one PC may sit in the operator's seat.
- Grund-G does not want to be stacked, and what he says goes.

Cut out the crew and storage compartment diagram and counters and place them before the players and let them arrange the occupants and gear. Grund-G makes only one command — that the operator's seat is occupied by the

Troubleshooter with the best vehicle skills. Otherwise folks can fight it out for the window seats. If the PCs on their own initiative decide to abandon any gear or Infrareds, Grund-G ignores it. He'll charge them with insubordination after the adventure.

When everybody and everything is stowed aboard, Lucky chirps, "Attention, travelers. Hands and feet inside, please. I'm about to close the canopy." The canopy closes with no more than a few crunches from cartons and yelps from the Infrareds and bots. When closed, there ought to be just about enough room inside to permit drawing weapons and other sneaky stuff.

Lucky says, "Where to, mates?" Grund-G hands a mem cartridge up toward the operator

and says, "Slap that into the navigation slot." There are only six slots the cartridge might fit into; PCs can ask Lucky or use trial and error methods. When the cartridge is properly seated, Lucky says, "Hang on, boys. Up, Simba." (Lucky is an old autopilot.)

Zim-R waves cheerfully as Lucky raises the MTV up on its six legs and staggers toward the pressure doors. The doors open to admit the MTV, then close behind.

The MTV is in a large, cylindrical tube. Ahead of them is another pressure door. It's real dark and quiet for a moment, then there is hiss of air, and water begins pouring into the space. When the chamber is filled with water, the outer pressure doors open and the MTV is ready to go.



Episode Four: Voyage to See What's On the Bottom

Episode Summary

The mission group goes for a ride in a submarine. Something goes wrong. Maybe nobody drowns.

That First Step is a Lulu

Suddenly huge bug-eye lenses forward provide a pair of illuminated cones in the darkness before the MTV. Lucky chirps, "All ahead one-quarter! Ding, ding!" and the MTV vibrates, shudders, then eases forward, noses over, and gently plows into the floor of the chamber. This all happens so suddenly that no one can even grab the wheel before it whacks the bottom.

Everything inside the MTV shifts forward. Let the PCs make strength rolls to remain in their seats. If the roll is failed, one of the following Interesting Things happens:

- Faceplate on suit smacks a hard surface and cracks. Just a little.
- Victim lands on top of an experimental device, activating it accidentally.
- Something sharp pokes through the space suit. Just a scratch. And a three-inch rip in the suit.

- A bot trods on the hand. Check column 3 for damage.

- The two bots topple forward. The docbot bounces off the experimental com system control module — helmet speakers go to full volume. The jackobot yowls and crashes into the dashboard, accidentally firing a burst from the torpedoes.

Silence reigns for a moment. Lucky utters "Oops" in a little whisper.

Zim-R comes on the MTV com unit: "Base to MTV! Come in! Status report!" Helmet speakers amplify this. Make endurance roll or

suffer temporary deafness for a while. Prompt PCs on roleplaying deafness: the standard PC response to any statement, request, or (note well) Computer order, should be "Huh?"

Computer: Are you now or have you ever been a member of the Communist party?

PC: Beg pardon?

Computer: Have you anything to say before we declare open season on you and your clonemates?

PC: Huh?

An unruffled Lucky responds cheerfully to Zim-R's urgent query. "Say, no problem here. Everything nominal. Just a little trouble adjusting to the mass of the land travel module. No problem. No sirree."

Lucky slowly adjusts to an even keel. Grund-G orders, "Okay, everybody stow the gear and back in your seats. And hang on this time." The MTV proceeds from the test station chamber down a long subterranean tunnel. Everything goes smoothly this time except there is a faint sound of trickling water somewhere forward of the control panel. If questioned, Lucky confidently assures the PCs that it is nothing more than the normal sound of water rushing along the hull. Indeed there is no sign of water in the cockpit, and the MTV continues merrily on its way.

Another Routine Emergency

After twenty minutes of slow cruising, the MTV emerges from the tunnel and slips into the open ocean. Sunlight filters down through 20 feet of blue water. Stands of kelp wave to and fro in the wash of the vessel.

Lucky dives to a depth of 25 meters and proceeds toward the mainland at about four knots. A small radio buoy is released to keep in contact with the complex and The Computer.

Encourage players to respond to the unique experience of being underwater in a vehicle with a transparent canopy. Describe the ocean floor, the kelp, the fishes, the sun filtering through the water, the whole Jacques Cousteau bit. This will keep their minds off the continuing sound of trickling water.

In the beginning Lucky keeps up a chatty travelogue narrative, but somewhere in the third hour he suddenly stops in mid-sentence and remains silent. When the PCs ask what is the matter, there is a long pause, then Lucky comes on and says, "Gee, fellows, I think we have a little gkkkkkkkkfdzprbzil. Hissssssss. SqueeeeeeeeeEEEEEEEEELLLL! (pop)."

At this point the MTV lists slightly to port and begins to sail in lazy circles, descending gradually toward the ocean floor. Lucky's responses to the PCs' questions continues to be punctuated by hissing and whistling and long silences, with occasional fragments of understandable speech.

What's wrong? Well, that forward leak isn't very big, but big enough to get water into Lucky's autopilot and brain circuits. Right now the autopilot is completely useless and Lucky's brain is suffering from intermittent short circuits. When the PCs contact The Computer and ask for guidance, The Computer cheerfully tells the PCs to shift to manual and guide the U-bot to its destination.

Of course the PCs have no idea where they're going. Grund-G has a rough idea, but he got the information through irregular channels; he won't reveal that knowledge except in desperate circumstances. The information is on the navigation cartridge, but only the autopilot can access it, and the autopilot is bonkers.

When the PCs ask what their destination is, The Computer responds, "I'm sorry, that information is not available at your security



clearance." The Computer will, however, give the PCs compass headings to follow; The Computer has a radio fix on the craft and can guide it to its destination this way.

If the PCs can figure out the controls and stop the slow spiral toward the ocean floor.

When the PCs ask for directions in mastering the manual controls, The Computer says, "Certainly. I will connect you with the Vehicle Test Facilities. I'm sure they will be able to help you."

Shortly Zim-R comes on the radio. He politely reminds the PCs that he does not have a manual describing the operation of this experimental vehicle, but that he's happy to help the PCs in whatever way he can. If the PCs ask to speak to someone more experienced, or someone that knows something about the MTV, Zim-R says that he will look for someone immediately.

This is a futile gesture, since no one knows anything about the MTV, but it gets Zim-R off the hook for a bit. Zim-R will eventually get in touch with an Indigo Vehicle Services expert who suggests trying to get a copy of the manual for the old U-bot 416 from The Computer. The Computer indicates that the manual is not in data files, but a copy is surely in the document files. From here the request goes to HPD & Mind Control where file clerks pass the request around for a while and express confidence in their ability to locate these ancient files in less than a fortnight.

Staging This Little Disaster

In the meantime the U-bot is slowly spiraling toward the ocean floor. The PCs are going to have to try to figure out the controls on their own. Grund-G may make common sense suggestions...

PC: Now what?

Grund-G: Push a button or something.

PC: Which one?

Grund-G: Who knows? What difference does it make?

The jackobot puts in its two-credits-worth: "Whack it one with your boot — that'll fix it."

With this sort of helpful advice, the PCs must figure out how to operate the MTV by trial and error. To help you visualize the problem for your players, we have set up a control panel loosely based on a typical car dashboard. (Get the pullout "MTV Control Panel, ref //OGC.SCP.4.3//" from Fold-Out E.) Dump it in the middle of the table and encourage your players to mess with it.

Here's the key to the control panel diagram. Don't show it to your players.

Key to MTV Control Panel

1. Gauge with Needle Indicator: This shows the charge remaining in the main batteries. It currently reads "Full." It will read "Full" forever. The MTV now runs on a Mini-Mega Nuke Plant — a completely reliable system that only breaks down when you want it to.

2. Gauge with Needle Indicator: CO₂ indicator. After six hours of sealed operation, the CO₂ indicator suddenly leaps to the red

zone — five minutes to asphyxiation. To replenish the oxygen, replace the air by opening the canopy or flushing with reserve air (see item 22).

3. Gauge with Needle Indicator: Pressure gauge. Broken. Already in red zone. Looks real ominous.

4. Foot Pedal: This controls the anchor. Push once, the anchor drops. Push again, the anchor is raised. But don't be so technical with your players:

Earl: I push pedal 4.

GM: Sounds like something big fell off.

5. Foot Pedal: Emergency Crash Dive! Canopy armor closes, blows ballast, bow down at sharp angle, engines full ahead. To abort the crash dive, pull # 24 back, pulling the bow up, then shut off engines. During the crash dive a warning klaxon sounds. Keep yelling "Ahoogah, ahoogah" real loud.

6. Foot Pedal: Fires torpedo. Not a good thing to do if MTV is buried head-first in mud. If fired on land, the torpedo spits out about 2 meters and falls to the ground. Boom. (15P damage to all within 5 meters of explosion; there are four torpedoes.)

7. Foot Pedal: Roll dice. Look concerned. scribble a little note, then tell them it's stuck. No matter what they try it stays stuck. It has no effect on the MTV's operation, however — R&D never installed some experimental system, I guess.

8. Steering Wheel: Turns MTV left and right.

9. Knob: If they are underwater, warning flashes on display screen: "WARNING! DO NOT OPEN CANOPY UNLESS PERSONAL BREATHING APPARATUS IS OPERATIONAL!" They'll have three seconds to push the knob back in or the canopy opens, even if underwater. Once canopy opening sequence is completed, canopy can be closed by pulling knob back out.

10. Knob: When pulled out until it clicks, the canopy glass opens if they are on the surface. (To open canopy underwater, see #9.) Push back in to close canopy.

11. Knob: Pull out to close the armored canopy, push in to open. When the armored canopy is closed, PCs must rely on display screen and sensors.

12. Knob: When this is pulled, it comes off. This disengages the autopilot. In panicky situation, make dexterity roll $\times \frac{1}{2}$ to stick it back in. Push knob back in to give control back to Lucky.

13. Plastic Bubble: Warning light. This starts flashing when there's trouble.

14. Plastic Bubble: Another warning light. This starts flashing when there's double trouble.

15. Button: When pushed in, the forward guns fire. Press again to disengage firing. (P12 damage; -3 on vehicle armed weapons skill roll to hit.) If the armored canopy is up, the PCs won't see what's happening, though they'll hear a "budda-budda-budda" sound. Magazines hold lots and lots of rounds, but

who knows whether anyone remembered to load them? Thus, the guns work when you want them to (when PCs fire them accidentally) and run out of ammo when they might actually be useful.

16. Glove Compartment: Service and inspection access to Lucky's brain. Pretty damp in here because of the leak, but Lucky'll be okay once he gets out of the water and dries out.

17. Slide Control: For propellers: left to middle to right — reverse to neutral to forward. For overland travel, sequence is reversed. (Must be a wire mixed up.)

18. Slide Control: Five positions, from left to right: Emergency Full, Full, Two/Thirds, One/Third, Stop. Tends to get stuck on Emergency Full. Of course.

19. Slide Control: Cabin lights. Three positions from left to right: Full Normal Light, Lights Off, Full Red Night Lights.

20. Switch: Starts in middle position; spring returns it to middle position when released. Push up, blows ballast and causes MTV to surface. Push down, takes on ballast and MTV sinks. When Lucky snaps out, ballast is full. **Note:** MTV cannot rise on overland legs while ballast is full.

21. Switch: Warning flashes on display screen: "WARNING: SELF-DESTRUCT SEQUENCE IS NOW IN PROGRESS. TO DISENGAGE SELF-DESTRUCT, FOLLOW STANDARD PROCEDURES. THANK YOU." Brief silence. Then over loud speakers, "SIXTY...FIFTY-NINE...FIFTY-EIGHT..." This switch does NOT disengage the self-destruct sequence. See button 23.

22. Small Panel with Three Buttons: Each of these buttons is linked to an air-replenisher canister. Whenever one is pushed, the canister replaces the air in the crew compartment. **Note:** Each canister can only be used once. (See #2 for further information.)

23. Button: Press once; interrupts self-destruct system. Press again; sequence resumes where it left off. Flip switch 21 while sequence is interrupted to set timer back to sixty.

24. Lever: Controls diving planes. Push forward to dive, pull back to rise. When in overland mode, push forward to squat and poke nose up, pull back to press nose into ground.

25. Display Screen: All maps, sensor data, messages from The Computer, and other telecommunications data appear here.

26. Navigation Cartridge Slot: Here's where you stick the navigation cartridge. For a real giggle, stick a Teela video in here and see what happens.

27. Auxilliary Cartridge Slots: Lucky can access skill cartridges placed in these slots. Do any of the PCs have illicit cartridges?

28. Compass: Headings for manual operation. Somebody may have to explain the concept of "north" to these city slickers.



29. Overland Autopilot Control: Crudely bolted to dash; lots of exposed wiring and general sense of hasty and haphazard installation. Switch on left: switches controls from water to overland travel mode. Switch on right: engages overland mode autopilot. Slide Control: five positions left to right: Stop, Stroll, Walk, Run, Sprint.

30. Overland Manual Control: Providing this is purely a formal gesture on R&D's part. Learning how to simultaneously control six legs with these controls is roughly equivalent to learning to play the piano with your toes.

There are six joysticks which move in three dimensions; each knob represents the relative positions of each leg's "foot": in the up position, the foot is fully retracted; in the down position the foot is fully extended. The operator can watch the display screen for an animated representation of the legs' movement from a variety of angles against a simplified background derived from sensor readings.

Clever players may use the manual system to learn neat things like kick with front and hind legs. If it sounds like fun, it works. If it sounds boring, legs come off and the MTV dives into the turf.

How the MTV Works

Uh, well, uh...technology! Yeah, that's it! It operates by high-technology! Yeah. You know: diving planes, propellers, stabilizers, microchips, gyroscopes, etc., etc. That stuff.

Please don't be impatient with us if we don't intimately explain the technical details of

operating submarines with six large spider legs attached to the bottom. We are assuming that you have watched a few WWII submarine movies; that's where we learned all the underwater stuff. (And as for the on-land operation of the MTV, well, frankly, our research for that bit involved watching the way the legs moved in *Giant Bugs Invade* and *Eat the Earth* monster movies.)

Here is a typical example of how this episode might be handled:

GM: Okay, fellows, the sub is slowly circling toward the ocean floor. Do you want me to tell you what happens when you plow into the muck at four knots, or would you like to play around with the controls?

Doug: Computer, do you have any suggestions?

Computer: At your service. It is estimated that if you strike the sea bottom at your current speed there is a 45% chance that your craft will split open. This is projected as having a negative effect on your chances of completing the mission.

Nick: That's swell. How about telling us how to disable the autopilot?

Zim-R: The autopilot is turned off by removing a cylinder from the control panel. Is there anything like that on your panel?

Doug: Yeah, there are a couple of knobs that could be pulled out. Let me try a few. (Pulls one of them. "WARNING! DO NOT OPEN CANOPY UNLESS PERSONAL BREATHING APPARATUS IS OPERATIONAL!") Oops! That's not it.

Ken: Here, let's try this one. (Pulls another. Sub stops dead in the water. No sound from the engines.) Aha! Got it.

Doug: Okay, now we need engine and steering.

Nick: Well, with my training in vehicle services, what seems to be the engine control?

GM: (Makes a die roll.) Hmm. What you're probably looking for is two controls close together, one for engine speed and the other for propeller direction.

Ken: Huh?

Doug: Forward and reverse, dodo. (Tries typical automobile pattern — accelerator and gear shift. Torpedo fires and diving planes go up and down suggestively.) Nope. How 'bout this?

And so on, as the PCs experiment with controls and observe the results. If they get frustrated, you can give them hints through The Computer, Zim-R, or occasional flashes of lucidity from Lucky. Treat Lucky as if he has had a severe stroke. He has lost a lot of major functions, but much of his memory is intact, if he could only access it.

Sooner or later the PCs will trigger the crash dive sequence. Depending on the PCs' reaction speed and your perversity, they may get the ship under control or they may bury the bow in the ocean floor. Keep yelling, "Ahoogah, ahoogah!" in their ears to help them concentrate. They'll love it.

Once the PCs have the controls figured out, The Computer can help them navigate to their destination. A graphic appears on the on the display screen with a blinking dot that represents the MTV and a blinking arrow pointing toward the destination. The PCs can then steer the MTV as in a video game. From time to time chase their blip around with another one that looks like a ball with a mouth that opens and shuts. Of course it's just a display screen malfunction...isn't it?



Episode Five: To the Shores of Tripoli

Episode Summary

The MTV reaches land. Grund-G abandons the mission. Maybe some PCs have regrettable accidents. The mission continues with a new leader.

Land Ho!

In the hour it takes for the MTV to reach land, Lucky's brain dries out and he timidly offers to resume autopilot control of the craft. Grund-G assents, and the MTV is once again on autopilot.

As the MTV draws close to land, the vast panorama of Post-Oops America unfolds. The flooding that followed the asteroid and melting of the ice caps has transformed the coastline. The coastal plains and central lowlands of the

North American continent are underwater; in higher elevations the ruins of civilization have been engulfed by vegetation in the manner of Angkor Wat.

The region where the PCs land is mostly a wilderness, with a few enclaves of primitive civilization. (Don't expect all *Paranoia* Outdoor adventure settings to be like this. The fantasy world is a big place, especially when presented by game designers with casual attitudes towards logic and internal consistency in campaign settings.)

When the water beneath the MTV is too shallow to continue, Lucky extends the legs, strides out of the water, and makes his way up a slope into a dense forest. When in overland mode, the crew compartment rides at the height of a building's second story, so the PCs get a nice view.

Grund-G Steps Out for Some Air

Lucky charges forward into the forest for about fifteen minutes when Grund-G speaks:

"Lucky, stop here." Lucky stops. (Want to bounce some heads off the dash? Go ahead.)

"Lower the crew compartment to the ground and open the canopy." Lucky complies.

"Everyone stay here. I'll be right back."

And Grund-G hops out of the MTV and pushes off into the deep underbrush. He is wearing his full kit and carrying a laser rifle and hand tangle. He is not wearing his R&D com unit or a space suit. (He's also disabled his clone replacement beeper, but the PCs don't know it.)



Anybody curious about where he's going? If anyone asks him any question, he acts like he doesn't hear them. Funny.

Anybody try to interfere? Grund-G orders the rest of the mission group to execute the interfering traitor, joins in the fun with his laser rifle, repeats, "Stay put," and marches off into the forest.

Grund-G isn't going to return. Expecting the PCs to carry on the mission, Grund-G plans to follow the MTV, observe what happens, and wait for an opportunity to pick off the Troubleshooters so he can return to the Complex with a woeful tale of Commie ambush. Or the Troubleshooters may well take themselves out of the play, leaving Grund-G with a good excuse for requesting a recall. Or failing that, Grund-G will slip off and join his Sierra Club buddies in the Great Outdoors. The last place Grund-G wants to be is in the MTV with all those trigger-happy, disaster-prone Red-level Troubleshooters and their charming R&D devices.

A minute passes. Five minutes pass. Fifteen minutes pass. Even more minutes pass. What do the PCs do?

Contact The Computer and Request Instructions: The Computer asks to speak to the acting mission leader. If there isn't one, The Computer appoints one. The Computer says, "Go look for Grund-G. If you can't find him within a half an hour, continue the mission without him."

Someone (or Thing — Jackobot, Right?) Goes Looking for Grund-G: If an NPC or bot, he goes off into the woods. Suddenly contact with the NPC is lost. Maybe the PCs hear sounds of laserfire. The NPC doesn't return. Scratch one NPC. Score one for Grund-G.

If a PC (or PCs) go looking, take the involved players off into the next room and run a quick abstracted combat sequence. If the PCs are still in space suits, they get a -5 penalty for most movement and combat rolls, and they can be heard coming a mile away — Grund-G gets surprise.

Here's how things might go:

(The GM decides that Grund-G goes straight away from the MTV, then circles back and finds a secure, concealed spot to ambush his pursuers from.)

GM: Okay. There are horrible green and brown things towering over you. The floor outside the MTV is piled with all sorts of unrecognizable debris in all colors. You can't see a security clearance marker anywhere, though the ceiling seems to be blue. Boy, is the ceiling high here. Grund-G went off into the wall of green-and-brown things. You want to follow?

Greg: Of course. Some misfortune may have befallen our leader. It would be treason not to go to his aid.

Paul: Hmm. I like that. That's my line, too.

GM: Okay. You step away from the MTV. In seconds you can no longer see the vehicle. There are big brown-and-green things

everywhere. The trash on the floor makes going slow and the footing uncertain. You guys doing anything clever and cautious?

Greg: I'm looking around everywhere. Any sign of Grund-G?

GM: Nope.

Paul: I stop, take off my helmet and com unit and listen real carefully. Do I hear anyone else moving in this trash?

GM (rolls die, pretends to study it): Well, you're not sure. Something or somethings seem to be moving around all over the place — above you, too. (GM rolls die secretly once — Grund-G hits with his laser rifle — then again — a kill result on the damage table.) Greg-R topples over with a squawk. His right side is smoldering — looks like a laser rifle burn. Greg, your guy is dead. Got any last remarks?

Greg: Ouch.

Paul: I turn and fire at any promising target to the right.

GM: Okay. (What did Grund-G do? GM figures he dodges for a defensive bonus.) Something green moved about ten meters to your right. It was dodging — -4 penalty to your attack, and your space suit gives you a -5 penalty to hit...

Paul (whines): Ahhhh???

GM: Come on. You're gripping that laser rifle with a pair of metallic potholders (rolls die — a miss). The laser beam hits a brown thing. It explodes a bit and bursts into flame. The green thing moves away and disappears in the trash and brown stuff. Now what?

Paul: Hmm. Time to check back with the MTV. I wave some laser fire over the brown things in that direction...

GM: Ahah. Nice. Lots of sudden fire and smoke. (Curses! Foiled again.)

Paul: ...and I head back to the MTV. Was that green thing by any chance our erstwhile team leader?

GM: Hard to tell. Hmm. Above you you hear the unmistakable whistle of an incoming clone insertion round (Greg's replacement clone)...

Paul: Aieee! I dive for cover in the densest patch of tall green things I can find!

GM: Why so frightened, Citizen? You're at least 50 meters from Greg's late character. Surely you realize there is only an infinitesimally-small chance of the shell hitting you? Here, I'll roll for it now. (Rolls dice in secret. Looks surprised.) Well! Isn't that just the darnedest thing!

Paul: I'm a dead man.

PCs may also elect to go after Grund-G in the MTV. When he hears the MTV coming, he takes off — the PCs will never find him in this forest, but he'll be able to hear them a mile away. The PCs can of course fire the MTV's guns and torpedoes and stuff — trees fall, birds squawk, small woodland critters fall by the millions — good show.

The Show Must Go On

The mission must go on without Grund-G. If the PCs don't quickly come to that conclusion, you can prompt them with Lucky ("Tough luck for the Green guy, but we got to push on. Okay, who's in charge now?") or the Jackobot ("Please relax, masters, this is a common occurrence. I have been programmed with the deepest confidence in your ability to complete this mission.")

To further clarify the situation, Peter-I contacts the PCs for a mission update and to announce new mission objectives. He first asks to speak with Grund-G; when informed that Grund-G is not available, he asks to speak to the acting mission leader.

"There has been a change in your objectives. Your patrol will still follow the route originally designated; however, your primary mission now is to be on the lookout for mobile military platforms believed to be operating in the area. Nothing is known about their means of locomotion, armament, or origin. The platforms are believed to be capable of great speeds and are thought to be approximately 200 meters in length.

"If one of these platforms is sighted, or if evidence of the presence of these platforms is discovered, investigate immediately and identify it. Make a full report as soon as possible. Get multicorder footage of it. Contact it and determine if it is one of Ours or one of Theirs.

"This objective is of the highest priority. Serve well, and you will be rewarded. I promise you.

"If there are no further questions, carry on, and good luck."

Assuming the PCs are sensible, they will follow orders and continue the mission. Time to go to the Saturday Night Fever episode. However, the PCs may decide to do Something Else. If they do Something Else, they die as follows:

If the PCs Order the MTV or Bots to do Anything Other than Follow the Navigation Cartridge and Mission Objectives: The bots remind the PCs that they are programmed to refuse treasonous orders. Big mistake. The autopilot and bot brains can testify against their masters if the mission returns to Alpha Complex.

If the PCs Disable the Jackobot and Autopilot and Head Back to Alpha Complex: the MTV crashes almost immediately and the PCs are stranded. (See next paragraph.)

If the PCs Leave the MTV and Wander Around on their Own: They wander around until Grund-G or natives or Giant Radioactive Mutant Cockroaches or starvation gets them. When the Inevitable occurs, go to "If No One Makes It Back To Alpha Complex..." page 134 for the memorial service.



Episode Six: Saturday Night Fever

Episode Summary

There's another little problem with the MTV autopilot. Nothing serious. Really.

Editor's Note: Following is a long, intricate sequence of events in which the MTV suffers another nervous breakdown and gets stuck in a tree. That's all that happens. All the rest of it is chrome, so, if you want to, just say, "MTV jerks suddenly, then bounds straight up into a tree. It's broke." Then go on to the next episode.

However, if you've got the time and the inclination, put your characters through this heavily-choreographed nightmare. Go ahead. They'll thank you for it. Really.

I'd Rather Be Dancing

Note: Unless ordered otherwise, Lucky keeps the canopy closed while moving overland. If the PCs order Lucky to leave the canopy open, see below to learn how this affects the following episode.

If the Canopy is Open...

If the PCs happen to have the canopy open when the MTV topples over, the contents of the crew compartment should be scattered generously over a wide area.

To stay inside the compartment when the MTV starts flopping around, a PC needs to make a strength roll at a -5 penalty each round.

If there's no one in the crew compartment to shut Lucky off, the MTV dances around for quite a while and the PCs have to chase it quite a ways before it gets stuck in the trees.

Lucky continues inland through the forest. The elevation gradually increases, and finally the MTV emerges from the forest before a low but nasty-looking cliff. The ground before the cliff is an open area covered with boulders and gravel. Lucky heads directly for the cliff and tries to walk up the steep incline. The MTV makes it about five feet up the slope, overbalances, and topples over.

(If asked on the way to the cliff, Lucky will admit that he has no idea whether he can climb the cliff — the question never occurred to him — but he confidently asserts that The Computer would never send him this way unless it were sure he could do the job. If ordered to, he earnestly tries to stop in time — and loses his footing in the loose rock, or trips, or overbalances...and topples over.)

Everybody rolls against agility or rolls for damage on column 2 of the Falling From Great Heights Table. The two bots slam into the bulkheads and click and whistle discouragingly (your excuse for a future malfunction). Lucky is real quiet. The MTV is lying on its side at the foot of the cliff. The canopy is cracked in a couple of places, some cartons have broken open, but the damage doesn't appear to be serious.

After a few seconds, Lucky says, "Not quite as easy as it looks. Let's give it another try." (Or, if it fell over while trying to stop, Lucky says, "Excuse me, masters. Hang on while I stand up.")

Maybe you'll let a quick-thinking player yank the autopilot shutoff before Lucky makes a move. I wouldn't. You'll miss all the fun.

Lucky's overland module controls were damaged in the fall. (You need some kind of excuse to have the MTV go haywire. You're welcome.) The following sequence describes what happens when Lucky tries to stand up. Each event takes about a combat round.

The Heavily-Choreographed Spazz-Out Sequence

Event 1: All six legs convulsively snap to full extension with a spine-wrenching jolt.

Event 2: The three legs nearest the ground abruptly retract, while the three uppermost legs scrabble for traction in the broken rock.

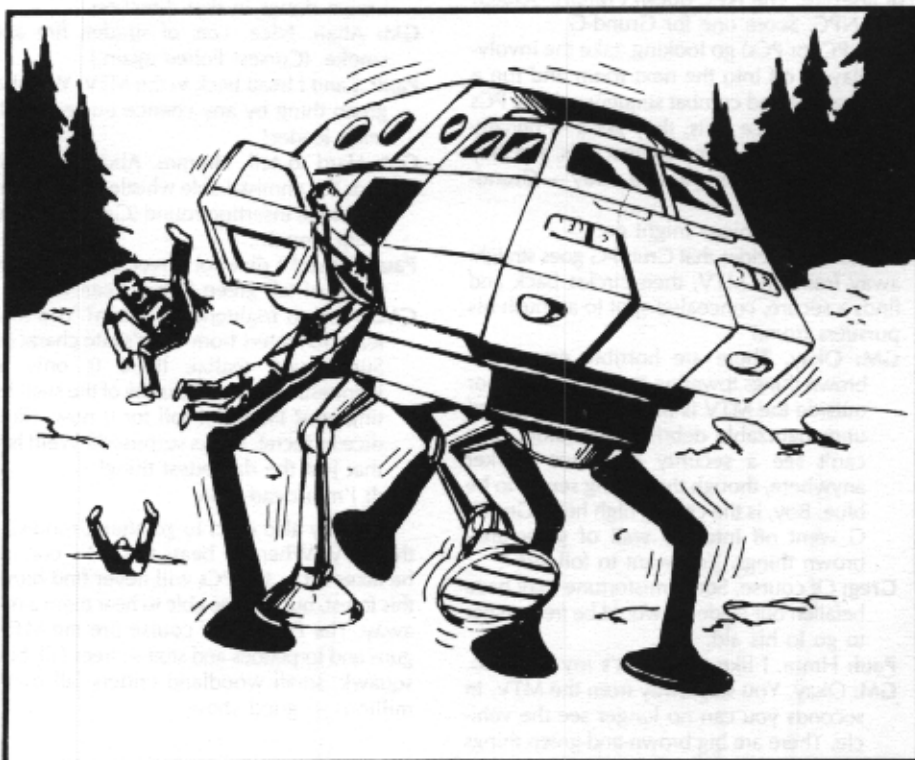
At this point, ask the players if they want to do something at the end of each event. Typical actions include:

- Opening the canopy to permit escape (Lucky complies immediately — see box)
- Yelling at Lucky to shut down (Lucky ignores this; he's busy having a seizure)
- Firing a weapon into the dashboard (no effect, except maybe to exaggerate the seizure)
- Yanking the autopilot cutoff knob out (Lucky shuts down, and the fun's over)
- Switching to manual operation (Lucky shuts down, and the fun's over)

Please don't make it easy to shut Lucky off. This is way too much fun to let the PCs spoil it by swift and perceptive action. (And note that you want Lucky to end up stuck in a tree.)

Any action or skill roll while in the bucking crew compartment deserves a healthy -5 to -10 penalty. (Also, if the canopy is open, remember that a strength roll at -5 is necessary to avoid being tossed out of the MTV.)

Event 3: The uppermost legs get traction, retract, and yank the MTV over onto its belly.



"Oh, what a feelin', dancin' on the ceiling..."



Event 4: Nothing Happens. Just for this brief instant. But describe it as though everything were just fine, now that the MTV is rightside up, and imply that the adventure will continue normally in just a moment. This sets the relaxing players up for the Big Surprise of Event 5.

Event 5: All six legs extend convulsively, propelling the MTV 5 meters into the air.

Event 6: The MTV crashes stiff-legged to the ground. Metal sags and twists throughout the crew compartment. PCs take damage on column 2 of the Falling from Great Heights Table. The canopy opens (see box).

Events 7-12: The MTV foxtrots, hops, seesaws, whirls in circles, performs dive rolls and somersaults, then bounds off into the forest at sprint speed.

Events 13-19: The MTV slams into trees, barrel-rolls into a ravine, running-broad-jumps a stream, falls on its side and pedals around like Curly of the Three Stooges, scrambles to its feet, gathers itself, then leaps high into the trees.

Event 20: The MTV lodges about three meters above the ground in a clump of sturdy conifers. The legs scramble for traction futilely, spraying tree limbs, dust, and small shrubs around like a dog digging a hole.

The legs continue scrabbling until someone shuts the autopilot off. If the MTV has reached its lodging place without occupants, some

intrepid soul will have to climb up into the crew compartment to shut off the autopilot. Given the limited experience most Alphans have in climbing trees, lots of strength and agility rolls may be appropriate, with falling damage as a reward for failure.

Developing and Improvising this Episode

Incidentally, this is a pretty modest version of what might happen with a MTV autopilot on the blink. It might even be more fun to dump the PCs out and have them chase the MTV for a couple of miles. Or the MTV might behave like a naughty pup, teasing, waiting for the PCs to approach, then springing off at a sprint. And there are zillions of maneuvers from gymnastics, track and field, ballroom dancing, ballet, and slapstick comedy that we haven't used.

Make sure the PCs have plenty of things to do, by the way. This is an entertaining comic piece, but this episode also presents some difficult problem-solving challenges. Most of the challenges are pretty straightforward — hang on during the stunts and shut down the autopilot. However, if you dump all the PCs out of the MTV before they can shut it down, the problems get more entertaining — keeping up with the machine, bringing it down,

then disabling the autopilot. This is a good episode for improvisation and individual flourishes for each GM.

Picking Up the Pieces

Once the autopilot is disabled, bots and Infrareds appear. The bots are battered and dented, but otherwise intact. The Infrareds also look a little worse for the wear. Some PCs may have been knocked senseless during the fracas, and may need medical attention.

Once everyone is gathered at the scene and medically attended to, damage to the MTV should be assessed. The jackobot pokes his transport repair mem cartridge in and looks the MTV over. It reports that the vehicle is not seriously damaged, but that the autopilot will need troubleshooting and possible reprogramming before the MTV can be moved again. The procedure could take between 10 and 20 hours at least, and more if the main programming module is damaged.

This means the PCs will have to camp here tonight. Which, believe it or not, is the real narrative purpose of turning the MTV into a whirling dervish. This sets up the PCs for a midnight visit by Grund-G, and a dawn attack by the local savages. Smooth, huh?



Episode Seven: Tenting Tonight on the Old Tent Grounds

Episode Summary

The PCs prepare their camp. Grund-G stops by to see if they're still alive and to alter that situation if necessary.

Setting the Night Watch and Defenses

This episode is a venerable standard for roleplaying adventures. The PCs get an opportunity to set up their camp, arrange their defenses, and divide their forces into sleeping and waking shifts. Once the PCs have made their preparations, the GM rolls the dice to decide when the bad guys attack, then sweeps down on the PCs like wolves on the fold.

For your gaming convenience, we have included a map of the area surrounding the disabled MTV. Take the map out, plop it in the middle of the table, and let the PCs study it intently. Show them the key, but tell them

not to worry about the strange things indicated at the top: "What? Oh those? Uh, they're nothing. No really." No doubt your players will be reassured.

The Map

The map portrays a wooded hill (where MTV gets stuck), surrounded by a lightly-forested plain. Two rivers flow nearby.

The Hexagonal Pattern Covering the Map: The map is covered with hexes (hereafter called *hexes*) to regulate movement, and because it was the only kind of paper we had available. Each hex is 5 meters across. Or so.

Contour Lines: These tell you where the ground gets higher or lower. Each represents a height change of about 2 meters.

The Tall Green Things: Trees. Good to hide behind. Subtract 5 from the chance to hit anybody in a hex with trees in it. MTV is stuck up the one with the "X" on it.

The Short Green Things: Bushes. Also good to hide behind. Subtract 3 from the chance to hit anybody in a hex with bushes in it.

Running Water: Running water. Good to drown in. The water is 3 meters deep and flows rapidly off the map in some particular direction.

Ruins/Prison Camp/Volcano/Huge Hole: Hard to say exactly what this is; it depends on you. See Episode 7.5, below.

Gaming Stuff

Real wargames have real complicated movement, sighting, and firing rules. Yawn. *Paranoia* has the world-famous Dramatic Tactical Combat system. Yay. Here's how it works:

Movement

Here are some guidelines on movement. Please ignore them if you find them personally offensive or if they violate any of your religious taboos.

Clear Hexes (Those not Containing Trees, Bushes or Water): In one round, a character can move through one clear hex at walk speed; up to 4 hexes at run speed; up to 8 hexes at sprint speed.

Tree and Bush Hexes: Characters walk through tree and bush hexes without penalty. Characters cannot sprint through tree or bush hexes and must make a -2 agility roll to run through 'em. (If they fail they fall down.)

Hexes with Contour Lines: Once again, may be walked through normally. Characters must make an unmodified agility roll to run or sprint through hexes with contour lines.

Water: Can't be walked through. Characters who pass a -2 survival roll may move one hex per round in water hexes. In addition to drowning, characters who fail their roll get swept downstream by the current three hexes per turn.

Sighting

Line of sight rules are extremely difficult and complicated. Typically, wargame designers write countless boring paragraphs and provide hundreds of examples of play describing what to do when units try to spot and shoot at each other, going into excruciating detail on the effects of blocking terrain, elevation, weather, smoke, etc. Then gamers spend hours peering at the map, arguing violently and laying straightedges or rubber bands across it, knocking over stacks of Panzer divisions in the process. Then, after all that work, the player rolls a "1" and misses anyway. This is No Fun. So we've kind of simplified it.

Here are the *Paranoia* sighting rules:

- Somebody can't fire at somebody else if there's something big in the way. (Like a tree or hill or something.) Apply substantial penalties to fire combat if there isn't anything in the way but they can't see each other. (Like if it's dark or if the firer has a bag over his head.)

Combat

Use normal *Paranoia* combat rules. Or not. (We hear that *Imperium Romanum II's* combat rules work quite well. Let us know how it turns out.)

Now, Here's My Plan

After they have studied the terrain, let the players describe how their characters are setting up. Use tiny buttons or little pieces of paper or that lint that grows in your pocket or even pencil marks to indicate positions of MTV, bots, NPCs, and PCs.

Players should also mark positions of any illumination in the area. Note that the jackobot needs full cabin lights to work on the MTV autopilot; these lights illuminate an area about 10 meters in diameter around MTV.

Remind the players that their characters know nothing about the wilderness. Worse yet, the PCs have no idea what night is. In Alpha Complex, each sector has an eight-hour period of nightcycle after a sixteen-hour daycycle, but during nightcycle, lights are only dimmed, even in sleeping quarters, and normal light continues in most corridors and duty chambers. The idea of a complete and all-encompassing darkness is beyond their experience.



A late night snack.

Fire is never used for illumination in Alpha Complex; the idea would not likely occur to Alphan citizens unless they were trained in hostile environments.

If any PC has hostile environments training, he can effectively organize the overnight camp's defenses about as well as a Tenderfoot Boy Scout. None of the NPCs or bots have any knowledge of such matters.

In general, don't be too fussy in objecting to out-of-character defense preparations. Instead, encourage the players to enjoy the thought-exercise of pretending to know nothing about the outdoors and nighttime. Players may seem to be worried that by roleplaying this ignorance they may reduce their characters' chance for survival. Remind them that they are doomed anyway, and there's nothing they can do about it. That always gets them into the proper *Paranoia* roleplaying spirit.

The First Wave

After a few hours of relative peace (assuming that they haven't spent the time shooting each other into teeny-tiny bits), the PCs receive a visitor. Their old mission leader, Grund-G, after tracking the MTV to the scene of its dramatic malfunction, has arrived. He plans to pick off the rest of mission group during the evening.

A canny woodsman, Grund-G shoots at them from the safety of the darkness.

The poor PCs are sitting ducks; by rights, Grund-G probably should be able to finish the party off with little risk to himself.

However, that makes a pretty discouraging and anticlimactic ending to the adventure. And we can't have that, can we?

Let's look at the hidden resources of the PCs:

R&D Goodies: Here are some neat improvisational resources. Note the remote control

surveillance drone, the power armor, the poison spray, and the plasma generator. Even better, note the metal detector — useless in Alpha Complex, but out here in the woods it's a real useful way to locate Grund-G. And what about those rocket boots, huh?

Mutant Powers: Several mutant powers — for example, telepathy, hypersenses, polymorphism, and x-ray vision — offer some improvisational resources to the ingenious player.

The Eternally Unpredictable Ingenuity of Players: Players always seem to be able to see transparent flaws in the antagonist's invulnerability that the GM never recognizes.

A Sympathetic GM: This is a wonderful resource, and relatively rare in *Paranoia*. In this case the GM can't stand finishing off the PCs before they meet the Giant Radioactive Mutant Cockroaches, so he's rooting for some survivors.

Grund-G's Tactics

Here are some guidelines/suggestions/ constraints on Grund-G's tactics and objectives. Take what you like, plan some tactics on your own, and freely improvise in character as Grund-G when the action starts.

Objectives in Priority Order

1. Survive.
2. Eliminate rest of party in such a way that treason is not suspected, permitting safe return to Alpha Complex.
3. If party proves more durable or dangerous than anticipated, abandon the mission, forget Alpha Complex, and join the Sierra Club enclave in the hills.

Standard Tactics

1. No frontal assaults.
2. Attack isolated individuals on the perimeter; exploit wilderness skills to approach unseen, attack, and withdraw before other forces can converge.



3. Avoid damaging the MTV — it may be the only transport back.

4. If light and line-of-sight permit, use long-range sniper tactics.

5. Withdraw immediately after initiating conflict. Return and strike another target later.

Anticipating Player Tactics

Players are likely to take one of the following approaches to this episode:

1. Cheerful Roleplaying of Outdoor Nitwits with Minimal Concern for Personal Survival: In this case, play Grund-G as careless and over-confident. Maybe he ignores the "withdraw immediately" tactic and gets himself pinned down. Certainly he doesn't consider the use of R&D goodies or mutant powers. He also gives up easily if the PCs get off a few shots at him.

2. Semi-Cheerful Roleplaying Mixed with Sensible Defensive Precautions: In this case Grund-G sticks to his objectives and tactics. He still doesn't consider the R&D stuff or mutant powers. He is persistent, even after PCs display a little ingenuity and tactical acumen, but if wounded, he quits.

3. Absolutely Cheerless Commitment to Survival: In this case, your players are looking for a good tactical fight; give it to them. Grund-G is still initially careless about R&D and mutant powers, but the first time they are used against him, he considers and catalogs the PCs' potential resources and tries to neutralize them. Hard-core tactical players will probably try to anticipate Grund-G's tactics and objectives, and devise plans to confound them. Finally, Grund-G fights to the death. (It's only fair to give the players the satisfaction of a kill if they commit themselves wholeheartedly to the fight.)

Though the PCs' objectives are primarily defensive (to protect the MTV and themselves), don't forget that they can also go on the offensive. They may decide to go hunting for Grund-G if they perceive him as a threat,

or they may decide to pursue him after he attacks. This should discourage Grund-G, who expects a bunch of sissie Red wimps. As long as it is not absurdly careless or vulnerable to counterattack, a spirited PC offense should be enough to make Grund-G want to go join his Sierra Club buddies. If the PCs are really persistent, they probably need a final confrontation to satisfy them.

The PCs are not necessarily going to prepare against an attack by Grund-G. In fact, it may not even occur to them that Grund-G is after them. On the other hand, they may be concerned about other menaces — namely, horrible mutant monsters and bloodthirsty Commies. Don't discourage such active paranoid imaginations. A few broad hints might even stimulate such fantasies:

GM: Well, now. You're all going to stay up in the MTV in the trees. I'm sure you'll be safe up there. I mean, not many things are tall enough to reach in and suck a few of you out. I wouldn't think so, anyway.

or

GM: Well, you got Grund-G. He's dead, sure enough. Now you've got nothing to worry about. Certainly nothing else out here to threaten you. Nosirree. Everybody can just go right to sleep, I guess. No need to keep a watch anymore.

Of course, no matter what happens tonight, the savages attack in the morning.

Episode 7.5: The Weird Things on the Edge of the Map

OK, GM: time for another burst of improvisational brilliance. What do you think those odd shapes in the corner of the map represent? Frankly, we've got no idea, but here are some quick and dirty ideas for your consideration:

The Ruins/Prison Camp: The remains of a Sierra Club enclave after a short but enthusiastic low-level, high-intensity bombing run by a flight of Vulture Warriors. Not much

left here except for some destroyed thatched huts, primitive cooking and hunting utensils, and ten or twelve well-gnawed Sierra Club corpses. The Troubleshooters will find evidence that these folk were escapees from Alpha Complex — Teela O'Malley mood rings, a couple of old lasers and used laser barrels, jumpsuits, etc.

Near the ruins live six huge, ravenous, slobbering wolves. These guys will attempt to sneak up on Our Heroes and chomp them.

Six wolves:

Skills: Stealth (15), Bite (12), column 7 1 damage.

Movement: Sprint (+5 attack bonus for charging on their first Bite attack).

Armor: Just like leather.

Morale: They will give up after three or more of them get wounded.

The Volcano/Huge hole: Several years ago a wandering black hole bored straight through the Earth here, creating a huge tunnel leading directly to China. As the Troubleshooters approach the pit, they will hear strange chanting coming from below.

Within minutes, millions of short Orientals wearing brown uniforms and caps with red stars on them will come boiling out like ants from a disturbed anthill. The people are jumping up and down quite enthusiastically and carrying pitchforks, rifles, and banners of Chairman Mao.

The dreaded Commie invasion has begun at last!

For a while the Troubleshooters can mow the invaders down like so much wheat, but there are millions of the little guys and eventually the Troubleshooters will run out of ammo. Their best bet is to call for assistance, resulting in a couple of thousand Vulture flyers armed with nuclear warheads arriving shortly and plugging the hole up quite dramatically. The Troubleshooters will be heroes. Dead heroes, of course, seeing as how they are standing within spitting distance of Ground Zero. Oh well, things are tough all over.



Episode Eight: A Visit from the Local Primitives

Episode Summary

The natives are restless. After a lot of spear-chucking and standard savage behavior, the PCs have a nice chat with tribesmen.

In spite of their outlandish dialect, the natives communicate fairly well. They tell of new gods, "Walking Mountains," recently appeared in these parts. "Just what we were looking for," say the PCs.

Zulu Dawn

In case you don't know the reference, *Zulu* is a neat '60's adventure film based on an 1879 massacre of a British mission by zillions of garishly painted and enthusiastic Zulus (a native African tribe). There are some great battle scenes as hordes of savages come yowling down the hillside, waving their spears and shields, bent on slaughtering the proper,

heroic, and doomed civilized folk. This is exactly the atmosphere we wish to capture here, with appropriate adjustments for period and setting.

The GM may use one of several approaches in presenting this episode:

1. High Tech Orc Bake: The savages charge willy-nilly into the teeth of the PCs' technological superiority. One PC in power armor could probably take on the whole tribe. If you want, the jackobot fixes the MTV in time for



the PCs to use it like a war elephant. This approach is neither subtle nor particularly humanistic, but in keeping with roleplaying traditions encouraging indiscriminate slaughter of hostile primitives.

The episode resolves with lots of dead savages, a few captives to reveal the existence of the gods, and surviving savages withdrawing into the wilderness.

2. Shrewd Native Menace: The savages attack cautiously, wary of high tech weaponry and devices, and skillfully exploit their familiarity with the terrain and wilderness combat. Stealthy natives appear mysteriously in shrubs and treetops, toss their spears, and disappear before weapons can be brought to bear. No frontal assaults. Standard guerrilla tactics. A series of minor skirmishes provides the action.

The episode resolves with a few captives who reveal the existence of the gods, while other savages abandon hostilities, or communication may be established with the natives, evolving into one of the following approaches.

3. Anthropology and Diplomacy: Savages attack as in the second approach, but hesitantly establish communication if PCs refrain from indiscriminate slaughter. There may be some combat action, but the main feature of the adventure is the PCs identifying the natives as not-Commies and not-monsters, then establishing contact with the cautious and distrustful natives.

The episode resolves with natives revealing existence of the gods.

4. Friendly Natives: Natives do not attack. Natives mistake the MTV for a young god and try to worship it. PCs get to play gods and exploit this confusion to gain native cooperation and information about the existence of the real gods. Or they can butcher a few helpless natives, whereupon the episode reverts to approach 1 or 2.

In each of the approaches, the one common element is that the savages must somehow communicate the existence of the gods to the PCs. This sets up the climactic confrontation with the Giant Radioactive Mutant Cockroaches, who are like gods to the poor savages.

Knowing the Black Disk Clan

The Black Disk Clan is a tribe of hunter-gatherers who make their home in the forests and clearings of the coastal region. They are descendants of a group of criminals and deadbeats who survived the Big Oops and organized as raiders. The group was quite prosperous for several decades, but in later years the pickings were mighty slim for raiders, so the group gradually evolved into a hunting-and-gathering nomadic subsistence.

The tribe takes its name from the pierced black disks each clan member wears on a strip of rawhide around the neck. Some high-status members wear ten or twenty disks, and have hundreds more in their personal stashes, but no member wears fewer than one. These black disks are phonograph records scavenged from

Pre-Oops ruins. In the early decades, the Black Disk raiders specialized in electronic and hi-fi gear, and gained additional wealth by providing special entertainment (films, videos, rock and roll concerts) for survivors of the catastrophe. For years no power has been available for any of these electronic entertainments, but the tribe maintains a battered remnant of its gear and continues to collect films, tapes, and records whenever they come across them.

Black Disk tribesmen dress in leather and fur get-ups popular in Hollywood caveman movies. In addition to the phono records around the neck, they wear other odd bits of metal, plastic, and glass from the Golden Age — kitchen utensils, tin cans, transistors, printed circuits, door knobs, toilet fixtures, etc. — presenting quite a colorful appearance to an observer.

The savages speak in Hollywood Indian ("Me heap hungry. Me gottum wampum. You gottum grub?") liberally salted with slang from the 1960's, '70's, and '80's ("real cool cat," "hot dog," "groovy," "cosmic," "totally rad," "to the max," "tubular, man"). Linguistically, such a dialect is pretty implausible, but for tone and atmosphere it's perfect, showing that the tribesmen have reverted to savagery (the Hollywood Indian bit), though they've retained odd and disarticulated fragments of the disappeared civilized culture (the period slang).

It's also possible to improvise this garbled pidgin English pretty easily, permitting you to stay in character during dialogues. (By contrast, making up a plausible future dialect like Burgess does in *Clockwork Orange*, is 'way too much work and impossible to improvise without lots of study.)

Here's a sample dialogue:

Greg: I jam a knife up next to the Commie's throat and order him to reveal the names of his fellow-travelers.

GM: Me no know what mean, 'fellow-travelers'. You bozos heap cuckoo. Me Black Disk clan. What clan you groovy cats from?

Greg: Hmm. Us from Big Computer clan. You know of Commie clan?

GM: Huh. Me think me hear legends of Commies. They across Big Water, many moons journey. They hippie ape-smut, me hear. You dig?

The Gods Must Be Crazy

The Black Disk clan is currently undergoing a spiritual crisis. Recently a bunch of gods walked in from the east and started politely suggesting that the savages start worshiping them pronto, or there were going to be a few less savages.

The pantheon of the Black Disk clan — the Twisted Sisters, the Dead Kennedys, T-Rex, Oingo Boingo, AC/DC, U2, and so forth — supposedly dwell on the remote plane of MTV. These gods used to commune regularly with their worshippers through the sacred Hi-Fis, Video Decks, and Compact Disk Players, but since the Fall, the gods hardly ever visit their followers.

The new gods, being here in the flesh, so to speak, and promising immediate and direct retribution in the form of trampling if they are not worshipped, leave the Black Disk clan little choice in the matter, but traditionalists say the old gods will be angry and will destroy the Black Disk clan for their treason. Most realists have signed on with the new gods for the duration, but dissenters' voices are regularly heard prophesying doom to the new heretics.

Clansmen Stats

	Unarmed		Weapon		Damage Bonus			
Chief's Son	17		17		+1			
War Band								
Leader	15		15		+1			
Clansman	12		12		-			
	STR	END	AGL	DEX	MOX	CTZ	MEC	POW
Chief's Son	17	17	17	17	17	17	3	10
War Band								
Leader	15	15	15	15	15	15	3	10
Clansman	12	12	12	12	12	12	3	10
Priest	9	9	9	9	9	9	3	17

All clansmen carry throwing spear (17 damage, 20 meter [four hex] range), club, and shield (equivalent to 12 armor).

Black Disk Clan Mutant Powers

Clansmen have latent mutant powers which they are encouraged to suppress. Mutant powers are taboo among the clansmen, except for the priests of MTV: their mutant powers are regarded as gifts of the gods. The priests have the following mutant powers which they are forbidden to use more than once per day each:

Cure: Removes wounded status or reduces incapacitated status to wounded.

Detect Evil: reveals presence of living creatures other than Black Disk clan members; range 15 m.; instantaneously gives impression of range and direction from priest.

Light: causes a dim light to glow on an item for 1 hour.

Sanctify Gadget: causes any electronic device within 5 meters to glow dimly for a minute (used for blessing and detecting holy electronic devices).

Just like in Alpha Complex, mutant powers are taboo. PCs displaying such powers or devices that suggest such powers are evil witches, fit to be stoned, burned, or tossed into ponds with bags of rocks — unless they can pass themselves off as priests of MTV.

GMing Tip: Why do the Priests Have Such Lame Mutant Powers?

Note that we have cleverly assigned the priests mutant powers which are basically useless. Why? Well, even the most competent GM is gonna find that orchestrating a confrontation between six crazed Troublemakers and a hundred-odd savages quite a load; if a bunch of the savages can levitate or shoot lightning bolts or shrink to the size of an ant, everything would get out of hand. But if you feel you can deal with it, take your best shot. Give all the savages useful mutant powers. We dare you.



Motivation Among the Black Disk Clansmen

The violent paroxysms of the MTV following the autopilot malfunction were observed by a Black Disk clan scout. The clan chief sent a party of 100 clan warriors to investigate the sick god and see if it and its servitors might be slain (or, if you are using the "Friendly Natives" approach, to contact the god and offer worship).

Primary clansmen motivations are very simple. Black Disk clansmen follow their chief's orders or they die. The party is broken up into ten war bands, each with a leader, one of whom is the overall leader — the chief's son. Everybody does what his leader tells him or he dies.

Clansmen are also motivated by pride. Each wants to be the bravest and most deadly warrior in the party, because valor in battle is respected and generously rewarded by the clan chief.

These two elements, fear of authority and pride, are the main motivators of clansmen in combat. When they charge into combat, it is because they fear certain death if they disobey. When they charge into certain death, it is because they know they'll die if they disobey, and there's always a chance they'll survive and

become rich heroes with lots of concubines and stacks of old phono records.

Clansmen also keep coming after they've been wounded. It's considered acceptable to stop crawling toward your enemy when you're unconscious or without power of locomotion, but any other shirking from combat is considered cowardly. A substantial portion of tribesmen are not above feigning incapacitating injuries, but they must have at least an ugly wound to show as corroborating evidence. (Note: you want the PCs to get captives; incapacitated warriors are the best bet.)

Only a warrior who has participated in a kill may loot a body. This provides an economic incentive to martial prowess. Warriors distracted by the lure of loot are easy marks for alert PCs.

After the martial virtues, intelligence, diplomacy, and greed are somewhat prized, though thought to be rather unmanly. Like most roleplayers, the Black Disk clansman usually prefers to shoot first and ask questions later. Therefore thoughtful, diplomatic, or greedy clansmen are likely to try to communicate with the PCs only after the obligatory hostilities have been observed. Greed is especially a keen motivator if the PCs offer to reward the clansmen with high-tech weapons and toys.

Piety has been in the past a virtue of dubious practicality. Each war band has a priest who is not expected to fight, and who is not strictly under the authority of the band leader or chief's son. These priests traditionally are supposed to advise the band leaders and chief's son about the will of the gods — if anyone expresses an interest.

However, since the arrival of real gods that threaten to squash sinners and unbelievers, piety has gained a new currency. If you like, one or two of the war band leaders may be exceptionally pious, and exceptionally susceptible to the God Gambit. Once on a roll with this theme, these leaders and priests raise a big ruckus, and the chief's son, a sensible and ambitious fellow, will risk his father's wrath to avoid offending the MTV god.

Traditionalists will be particularly impressed by any display of audio or video recording. Remember, this is the medium of the old gods.

Whether captives or impromptu diplomats, clansmen are willing informants — they'll chatter freely on any topic. This is so everyone can have lots of fun with your pidgin English dialog, and so you can easily slip in the transition elements for the next episode — the presence of the Giant Radioactive Mutant Cockroaches.



Episode Nine: Giant Radioactive Mutant Cockroaches

Episode Summary

The PCs run into intelligent cockroaches the size of ocean liners. The cockroaches would like some culture, please, and make it snappy. Wise PCs make it snappy.

The Walking Mountains: Black Disk Clan's New Gods

Here's what the Black Disk clansmen have to say about their new gods. They're real eager to tell the PCs, whether anyone is interested in listening or not.

"Two, maybe three moons ago, Walking Mountains come from rising sun. Great glistening black jobbers, eyes like ponds, legs like trees. Heap like little god (points at MTV). Much bigger.

"Walking Mountains visit Black Disk clan. Do hully-gully through camp. Many clansmen stomped, teepees trashed, many disks shattered. Really bitchin'.

"Walking Mountain speak in voice like thunder with forked tongue, say, 'Welcome to new age of peace and prosperity. Worship

your Masters and we will spare your miserable lives.' Black Disk clan heap cooperative. Whole lotta worship goin' on.

"Walking Mountains heap interested in clan's sacred objects. They say, 'Bring us culture stuff. We ever-so-interested in culture. Where's your Renoir and Proust?'

"We not know what Renoir and Proust are. They take all our sacred objects, say, 'Go, find more, bring them.'

"You got Renoir and Proust? You got plenty sacred objects, sure nuff. (points at high tech gadgetry) We take you visit Walking Mountains. They really cool. Have swinging time. You dig?"

The Socko Climax to This Whole Shebang: Or, The Troubleshooters Versus Giant Radioactive Mutant Cockroaches from the South Bronx

The Walking Mountains are, of course, the giant land juggernauts in the Armed Forces surveillance photographs. Just what the PCs are looking for.

The PCs encounter the Giant Cockroaches in one of the following ways:

1. The PCs go out looking for the land juggernauts as ordered by The Computer.
2. The PCs sit around for a while, and the Giant Cockroaches come visit them.
3. The PCs turn around and run for Alpha Complex, and the Giant Cockroaches pursue and intercept them.

It really doesn't matter how the PCs meet the Giant Cockroaches. Maybe the PCs deserve a commendation for tracking down the GRMCs if they go after them, and maybe they deserve to be executed if they turn and flee from the GRMCs, but one way or another, you want to wrap up the adventure with this encounter and send the PCs back to Alpha Complex.

You don't need any stats for the Giant Cockroaches. A direct nuke strike probably wouldn't even faze them. If the PCs are surly, they get stepped on. End of adventure.

Despite the awesome size and power of the Giant Cockroaches, this is really a very simple diplomatic episode. The PCs want to get away alive and return to Alpha Complex. The Giant Cockroaches are looking for culture. If



the PCs promise to go find some culture real quick and bring it back, the Giant Cockroaches will permit them to leave.

The Cockroaches loathe water, and will not pursue the PCs back to Alpha Complex, so once the PCs are in the water, they're safe. For this adventure anyway. I suppose The Computer might order the PCs to return to execute the GRMCs for treason, or to deliver some culture to them, but that's another story.

The Bridge

After the encounter with the Black Disk clan, the PCs have been informed of the existence of the New Gods. Do they report this to The Computer? If so, The Computer orders them to investigate. (If not, the New Gods come investigate the PCs.)

The jackobot finally repairs the MTV autopilot (if he hasn't previously). The jackobot has filled Lucky in on the events since the malfunction; Lucky is real apologetic, and promises never to go climbing cliffs again.

Some time passes. Let the players do whatever they want — chat with the clansmen, scramble off in pursuit of the Giant Cockroaches, flee for Alpha Complex, whatever. Nod your head and pretend that their survival depends on every detail of their actions. This transition period should last about five minutes, just so the GRMC episode doesn't start too abruptly after the encounter with the Black Disk clan.

When the players have relaxed a bit, it's time to spring the New Gods on them.

Staging the Encounter with the GRMCs

The first sign of the GRMCs' approach is the sound of thunderous footfalls and minor earth tremors. Next, two stadium-sized insects become visible, looming over the trees, rapidly approaching the MTV. Flight is futile. Attacks are patiently ignored.

In moments the Giant Cockroaches are looming over the MTV. A thunderous voice booms, "Excuse me. Have you got a minute?"

If the PCs stop, a dialog ensues. If they keep moving, a Giant Cockroach gently grips the MTV with one dextrous foot, picks it up and repeats the question while the other looks on. If there is no response, the cockroach begins pulling legs off while mildly explaining that resistance is futile.

If, for some reason, the PCs refuse to talk to the Giant Cockroaches, The Computer may order them to communicate, or you may get impatient and smash the MTV like a gnat. End of adventure.

Once a dialog has been initiated, the cockroaches make their demands clear:

"We hate to trouble you, but we're looking for Renoir and Proust. Have you seen them anywhere around here? We'd really like to speak with them."



Fearless but stupid Troubleshooter arrests Commie cockroach in the name of The Computer.

The Origins of the Giant Radioactive Mutant Cockroaches

The Giant Cockroaches are the descendants of experimental specimens from a laboratory at Fordham University, products of genetic engineering and a classical education. During the Great Cataclysm, the parent roaches and their newborn offspring escaped and made their way to an abandoned tenement in the South Bronx. The parent roaches became mortally ill, but before they died, they urged their offspring to go out and get a good education.

These giants have grown from those little baby roaches in the past two centuries. Growing larger and larger, they soon became too

large for city life and were forced to take to the countryside.

Deprived of their parents' advantages, these poor fellows have never learned to read, have never seen the Great Masters, have never listened to the Great Classics, have never enjoyed Grand Opera, have never tasted fine wines, and have no idea whether the salad course should be served before or after the soup course. In short, their education remains incomplete, and they are eager to amend this situation in consideration of the last wishes of their dear departed parents. Touching, huh?

So, for the last century these giant insects have been terrorizing the North American continent in search of culture.



So Where Are Red Troubleshooters Gonna Find Some Culture for These Poor Monsters?

Doubtless the PCs have little to offer the insects. Their educations are also, alas, incomplete by Continental standards. So what are they supposed to do?

• **Come clean and admit they haven't got any Proust at the moment:** The cockroaches are quite insistent. "Surely you have *something* cultural lying around. Please get it for us, or we'll be forced to smash you."

• **Pretend to have some Proust back at Alpha Complex, where they'd be happy to go get it real quick and bring it right back:** The giant cockroaches are remarkably trusting souls. (Perhaps you'd be pretty trusting if you were the size of an ocean liner.) They cheerfully let the PCs continue on their way as soon as the PCs swear to return with some culture to this spot within a specific number of days. They'll wait patiently for the PCs to return. If the PCs don't show up, the cockroaches will shake

their heads, mutter sadly about the perfidy of humans, and head off elsewhere in search of culture.

• **Threaten the giant cockroaches with the wrath of Alpha Complex if its loyal citizens are not released immediately:** It is hard to read expressions on giant cockroaches, but it doesn't appear that they are impressed.

• **Get The Computer on the radio and call in an airstrike:** The cockroaches are as invulnerable as typical giant monsters; they wait through the barrage and air strikes, then they repeat their requests for culture.

• **Try to pass off some trashy Alpha Complex popular entertainment (like Teela O'Malley videos) or other media products (like vid-corder tapes) as real culture:** Come on. These cockroaches may be from the South Bronx, but they know culture when they see it. Their parents went to Fordham. The cockroaches politely accept anything they're offered, but they don't release the PCs until they get promises to deliver real culture.

There are plenty of other responses to the giant cockroaches' requests, but unless they involve a promise to deliver some culture,

those intrepid Troubleshooters are dead citizens. There are some oddball things the players might do, like offer to join the cockroaches in their global search for a classical education, but you won't have to worry about those characters in your Alpha Complex campaign anymore. Maybe there's a way for the PCs to bushwhack a pair of stadium-sized cockroaches. Durned if I can think of any.

Transition to the Final Episode

After the PCs have promised the cockroaches a prompt delivery of culture, the cockroaches are effusively grateful, and they let the PCs continue on their way. The trip back to Alpha Complex may transpire without incident, unless you feel the PCs are pining for a few equipment malfunctions. An escort of HPD & MC guards is waiting at the R&D Test Facility when the MTV arrives. The PCs, bots, and any pertinent video or autopilot records are hustled directly back to the briefing room for debriefing.

If the PCs refuse to cooperate with the nice cockroaches, cut to the charming Alpha Complex memorial service in the next section.



Episode Ten: Wrapping Up the Adventure

Episode Summary

The adventure ends.

If Anyone Makes It Back Alive...

...the debriefing takes place in the same room where the group was originally briefed. All citizens and machine intelligences involved in the mission are present. Lucky is available for questioning via radio link. The same briefing officers are present at the bench — Peter-I and Ness-Y — but Dr. Num-O is replaced by another R&D representative. Meg-O-FUN-2 the PLC warehouse clerk and Samson-G-WIZ-4 the R&D supervisor are also seated at the briefing bench, each clutching a thick sheaf of forms. And, of course, don't forget The Computer.

The PCs stand in a line before the bench. Peter-I looks at his papers, then at the group.

"I see that Mission Leader Grund-G is not with us. Will the acting mission leader please make the mission report?"

The mission report consists of a brief summary of the mission objectives and an assessment of whether those objectives were achieved. If there is no official acting mission leader at this point, Peter-I picks a Troubleshooter at random and asks for the report. If the character

fumbles clumsily, Peter-I curtly prompts him with the mission objectives and asks specifically whether each objective was achieved. If the PCs forget, Peter-I reminds them that the mission objectives were amended several times since the mission alert (see the Briefing and the Overland episode).

Then Peter-I says:

"Are there any amendments or corrections to this report? Speak now, or be recorded as concurring with the report of the acting mission leader."

At this point, any Troubleshooter who disagrees with the report as given is expected to speak up. Failure to speak now is taken as acceptance of the report as accurate and

truthful; if the report is later proven to be in error or false, all Troubleshooters are held to be equally responsible for the faults.

First Peter-I cross-examines the party concerning the disappearance of Grund-G. If substantial concrete or circumstantial evidence is presented supporting a conclusion of Grund-G's treason, no reprimands are made, and proof of his execution deserves a commendation for the appropriate Troubleshooters. On the other hand, if no adequate account is made of Grund-G's disappearance, Peter-I charges the mission group with dereliction of duty — worth a reprimand and 50-100 credit fines apiece.

Then Peter-I reviews the mission objectives and achievements. He sternly admonishes the group for failure to find the missing mission group and their gear, but no official notice is taken if the main mission, identifying the giant land juggernauts, has been achieved. Peter-I asks a few questions to clarify the more incredible details of the report, raises his eyebrows a few times, then directs the Troubleshooters to make a formal report to The Computer as soon as the debriefing is completed. If the main objective is achieved, all personnel receive a commendation and a voucher for additional training (2 points) in any one skill.

Then Peter-I leans back and relaxes. Ness-Y leaps to his feet and harangues the PCs





about their failure to capture and interrogate (or execute) the entire Com-symp Black Disk clan. He sarcastically commends the party for its "wisdom" in avoiding a confrontation with the giant cockroaches — "Only dedicated Troubleshooters can be expected to have the moral courage to run away from danger like that." This is all for show, however. If a Black Disk clansman captive or companion is brought back to Alpha Complex, Ness-Y is briefly congratulatory — "Better than I expected..." and awards everyone a 50-credit bonus.

Next, Meg-O-FUN reads a list of assigned equipment, noting anything lost or damaged during the mission. Items may be missing for a number of reasons:

- abandoned at the test facility because the MTV was so crowded — somebody gets a fine and reprimand
- lost or damaged bots — big fines in order unless unavoidable in line of duty
- gear given or traded with the Black Disk clan or the giant cockroaches — Peter-I says HPD & MC will pay the fine if the loss of the items contributed to the success of the mission
- gear not recovered from PC or NPC casualties or MIAs (including Grund-G) — fines assessed (held pending investigation in Grund-G's case)

Then Samson-G stands up, reads the list of experimental devices assigned, and asks for test reports. Citizens who failed to test their devices receive reprimands and 25 credit fines. Citizens who lost or damaged devices also pay for replacement of the device (a pretty penny for the power suit and the plasma generator, for example). If devices were damaged or lost in achieving the mission, Peter-I may offer HPD & MC funds to cover the fine. Damage to the MTV and space suits is assessed and divided among the survivors — 100-500 credits each according to the seriousness of the damage. (Zim-R may get this tab if the wrong forms were signed.)

If at any point in the briefing any Troubleshooter challenges the report of another Troubleshooter, Ness-Y cross-examines both parties and asks for corroborating or conflicting testimony from the other PCs, NPCs, and bots. The Computer does instantaneous scans of all multicorder and transmission recording tapes and plays back pertinent sections for the briefing officers. (GM: Your memory is the multicorder record of the mission.) IntSec specialists may be summoned for immediate

truth-drug examinations and lie detector tests. Charges of treason are recorded and dealt with in a formal hearing after the debriefing is over.

Finally, Peter-I summarizes the mission report one last time, commends the PCs for good work, scolds them for poor work, and officially closes the debriefing. Then he opens the formal treason hearings, if any. Players may accuse one another, or The Computer may make accusations based on its review of the mission records and reports. Each accused has a chance to speak in his defense, or beg for mercy. If weapons are drawn and summary executions begin, a bullet-proof Flexiplast shield slams down in front of the bench, protecting the briefing officers, who watch the proceedings with interest, occasionally placing small wagers. After the smoke clears, Peter-I and The Computer make final judgments of treason charges and pronounce sentences.

When the briefing and treason hearings are finished, Peter-I dismisses the rest of the briefing officers, sends the bots, Infrareds, and other personnel from the room, asking only the PCs to remain. When only Peter-I and the PCs are in the room, Peter-I reaches behind the desk and flips a switch. The room fills with a weird hum. Peter-I explains that a cloaking device is now blanking all electronic transmissions inside this room. He personally thanks the PCs for identifying the land juggernauts, and explains the background of the mission — the discovery of the objects on the surveillance photos and the conspiracy of R&D and HPD & MC to embarrass Armed Forces.

"Now that you all know about this conspiracy," he explains, "you are all equally subject to execution for treason." (He grins.) "I'm certain you'll keep this matter to yourselves. I just wanted to thank you personally, to inform you that a 200 credit bonus will be credited to your accounts, courtesy of HPD & MC, to remind you that I've got something incriminating on each of you, and to let you know you can count on me for a favor in the future."

Peter-I then turns to leave, then stops, turns back:

"Say, who's your friend?"

"Peter-I" is the right response — Peter winks, waves, and leaves the room. "The Computer" is the wrong response — Peter sighs, shakes his head, mutters, "Rookies..." and leaves the room. The weird humming stops when Peter-I leaves.

If No One Makes It Back To Alpha Complex...

If the mission ends in disaster — if the players run through all the clones, or you get tired of the adventure and the PCs have a tragic accident — the following news note is carried on the Wakey-Wakey Show the following morning:

(camera focused on engraved plaque in foreground —
BROTHERHOOD OF PATRIOTIC MARTYRS;
voice over...)

"...and another noble sacrifice in the service of Computer and Complex..."

(depth of field shifts, revealing crouching figures in the background huddled around a monument, placing Teela O'Malley dolls against a wreath of colorful wires and printed circuits; voice over continues [for caps, shift voice to buzzing, mechanical tone])

"...bereaved clones gathered to honor the memory of DELETED FOR SECURITY REASONS — DELETED FOR SECURITY REASONS — DELETED FOR SECURITY REASONS — DELETED FOR SECURITY REASONS — and — DELETED FOR SECURITY REASONS, who lost their lives in a DELETED FOR SECURITY REASONS — DELETED FOR SECURITY REASONS yesterdaycycle..."

(camera zoom in on suffering clone face; just before face becomes recognizable, screen begins to blink in hypnotic interference pattern; voice over continues)

"Such tragedies are avoidable. Remember: Stay Alert..."

(frame freezes; shot click-zooms in on detail in background behind face — a Teela O'Malley doll has a raised arm, with a tiny laser in its hand)

"...Trust No One..."

(zoom back out to freeze-frame face distorted with pain and surprise)

"...Keep Your Laser Handy!"

(fade to black)



MORE FUN THAN YOU CAN STAND

YOU ARE IN
ERROR.
NO ONE IS
SCREAMING.
THANK YOU
FOR YOUR
COOPERATION.

SERVE THE COMPUTER THE COMPUTER IS YOUR FRIEND!

The Computer wants you to be happy. If you are not happy, you may be used as reactor shielding.

The Computer is crazy. The Computer is happy. The Computer will help you to become happy. This will drive you crazy.

Being a citizen of Alpha Complex is fun. The Computer says so, and The Computer is your friend.

Rooting out traitors will make you happy. The Computer tells you so. Can you doubt The Computer?

Being a Troubleshooter is fun. The Computer tells you so. Of course, The Computer is right.

Troubleshooters get shot at, stabbed, incinerated, stapled, mangled, poisoned, blown to bits, and occasionally accidentally executed. This is so much fun that many Troubleshooters go crazy. You will be working with many Troubleshooters. All of them carry lasers.

Aren't you glad you have a laser too? Won't this be fun?

There are many traitors in Alpha Complex. There are many happy citizens in Alpha Complex. Most of the happy citizens are crazy. It is hard to say which are more dangerous — traitors or happy citizens. Watch out for both of them.

The life of a Troubleshooter is full of surprises.

Stay alert! Trust no one! Keep your laser handy!

IMAGINE A WORLD DESIGNED BY KAFKA, STALIN, ORWELL, HUXLEY, SARTRE AND THE MARX BROTHERS...

Paranoia is a roleplaying game set in a darkly humorous future. In *Paranoia*, a well-meaning but deranged computer desperately protects the citizens of an underground warren from all sorts of real and imagined enemies.

You play one of The Computer's elite agents. Your job is to search out and destroy the enemies of The Computer. Your worst fear is that The Computer will discover that 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 backstab each other at every turn.

Is that fun?
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No fooling.

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Scads and scads of roleplaying tips for players and gamemasters.

A complete adventure: *Into the Outdoors With Gun and Camera*.

Note: You need a twenty-sided die to play *Paranoia*. Such things are available at fine book, game, and comic book stores throughout the universe.

For 2-6 players and gamemaster, ages 12 and up.



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