PARANOIA xp

PARANOIA

//Service Pack One//

Original design by
DAN GELBER
GREG COSTIKYAN
ERIC GOLDBERG

Paranoia XP design by
ALLEN VARNEY

END CITIZEN LICENSE AGREEMENT FOR ALPHA COMPLEX USAGE

IMPORTANT! READ CAREFULLY!

BY READING, BROWSING, STANDING NEAR, POSSESSING, NOT POSSESSING, THINKING ABOUT OR NOT AGREEING WITH THIS AGREEMENT, YOU AGREE TO THE FOLLOWING TERMS COVERED BY AND NOT COVERED BY THIS AGREEMENT.

YOU RECOGNIZE THIS AGREEMENT IS FOR THE SAFETY AND PROTECTION OF ALL CITIZENS RESIDING IN ALPHA COMPLEX.

THIS DOCUMENT IS CLASSIFIED SECURITY CLEARANCE **ORANGE** AND APPLIES TO CITIZEN OF **ALL** CLEARANCES.

FAILURE TO COMPLY WITH THIS AGREEMENT IS TREASON PUNISHABLE BY SUMMARY EXECUTION.

1. License grant

Subject to the terms and conditions of this Agreement, THE COMPUTER grants THE CITIZEN (referred to as 'the clone' or 'you') a non-exclusive, revocable, limited license to (**a**) live in THE COMPLEX, (**b**) work in THE COMPLEX and (**c**) obey THE COMPUTER.

2. License conditions

You may not rent, sell, lease, sublicense, distribute, assign, copy, give, take, or in any way reassign in whole or in part THE COMPLEX, its EQUIPMENT or any other fixed or free-standing structure residing within without express orders from THE COMPUTER. You may not modify, reverse-engineer, disassemble or otherwise explore THE COMPLEX. You do **not** have the right to, and may not, **not** obey THE COMPUTER.

You understand THE COMPUTER, in its sole discretion, may modify or discontinue your right to access any of its services or use of THE COMPLEX at any time, and it or its agents may at any time demote, censure, medicate, brainscrub or terminate you.

You acknowledge and agree THE COMPUTER has no obligation to make available to you subsequent improvements or changes to THE COMPLEX.

3. Ownership

You acknowledge and agree THE COMPLEX is licensed for your use by THE COMPUTER. You acknowledge the COMPLEX, including all equipment, content, protocols, software, documentation and licenses provided to you by THE COMPUTER in conjunction with its services, are protected by THE COMPUTER's service firms, by Troubleshooters in service to THE COMPUTER and by the threat of summary execution.

4. Content and infringement

You understand that all contents of THE COMPLEX, including, without limitation, all equipment, articles, structures, furnishings, graphic or video messages and all information, text, software, music, sound, graphics or other materials ('Content') made available or accessible by THE COMPUTER or THE COMPUTER's service firms, whether publicly available or privately transmitted, remain the sole property of THE COMPUTER. You understand and agree that by using THE COMPLEX, you may be exposed to Content that may be offensive, objectionable or lethal to you. You agree to accept all risks associated with the use of any Content, including any reliance on the accuracy, effectiveness or condition of such Content. Under no circumstances will THE COMPUTER be liable for any Content, including, but not limited to, any errors or omissions in providing any Content, or for any loss or damage or any number of deaths you incur by use of any Content.

THE COMPUTER is not responsible for the appropriate or inappropriate use of any Content by Citizens of THE COMPLEX. Although THE COMPUTER makes every effort to provide a safe living and working environment, you recognize and accept you are exposed to various security issues. By accepting this Complex Agreement you indicate you understand, acknowledge and agree by living and working in the COMPLEX, you may be subject to various risks, including the exposure to radiation, Communists, mutants, traitors, nerve gas and poisonous or infected-with-flesh-eating-bacteria algae chips, and you accept all such risk as solely your risk and responsibility.

5. Your obligations

You represent and warrant you are neither a Communist, a mutant nor a traitor, and are obliged to report these to THE COMPUTER for registration or termination. If you uncover any information in connection with the use of any unregistered mutant powers, traitorous activity or Communist ideologies, you agree to report this information, including the location of the body or bodies, directly and immediately to THE COMPUTER. If THE COMPUTER has reasonable grounds to suspect such information is inaccurate, not current or not complete, THE COMPUTER may demote, censure, medicate, brainscrub or terminate you and also pursue other appropriate remedies. THE COMPUTER shall use the information you provide in furtherance of your subsequent termination as an unregistered mutant, a traitor or a Communist.

You agree not to use the COMPLEX or any Content or services provided by Computer to conduct any secret society meetings or activities or to solicit the performance of any such meeting or activity.

6. Disclaimer of warranty

YOUR USE OF THE COMPLEX AND ANY CONTENT AVAILABLE THROUGH ITS SERVICE FIRMS IS AT YOUR SOLE RISK. THE COMPUTER PROVIDES THE COMPLEX AND ITS CONTENT ON AN 'AS IS' AND 'AS AVAILABLE' BASIS WITHOUT WARRANTY OF ANY KIND, EITHER EXPRESS, IMPLIED OR STATUTORY, INCLUDING WITHOUT LIMITATION ANY IMPLIED WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY, FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE, TITLE, CUSTOM, TRADE, QUIET ENJOYMENT, ACCURACY OR TERMINATION.

The above exclusions may not apply in sectors that do not allow the exclusion of certain implied warranties. Should you locate such a sector, you agree to report it at once to THE COMPUTER for immediate correction.

7. Termination

You may be terminated.

8. Limitation of liability

YOU EXPRESSLY ACKNOWLEDGE AND AGREE IN NO EVENT IS THE COMPUTER LIABLE FOR ANY DIRECT, INDIRECT, INCIDENTAL, SPECIAL, PUNITIVE, CONSEQUENTIAL OR EXEMPLARY DAMAGES OR OTHER RELIEF ARISING OUT OF, OR RELATED TO, YOUR USE OR INABILITY TO USE ANY OR ALL OF THE COMPLEX'S CONTENTS OR THE COMPUTER'S SERVICES INCLUDING, WITHOUT LIMITATION, LOST CLONES, LOST LIVES OR LOST LUGGAGE.

9. Arbitration

Any claim or controversy arising out of or related to this Agreement, or the products or services THE COMPUTER provides or distributes, shall be settled by individual binding in an appropriate confession booth or Internal Security interrogation room so all parties may discover why you believe THE COMPUTER is wrong.

10. Successor agreements

The terms of this Agreement may change from time to time. Check with THE COMPUTER regularly to determine if material changes have been made. THE COMPUTER will prominently post changes at the Central Processing Unit's Central Compnode, Security Clearance ULTRAVIOLET, at least 15 minutes prior to the effective date of the change.

11. General

This Agreement, as modified from time to time as described above, and including THE COMPUTER's Privacy Policy, Terms of Service and any other policies incorporated by reference, sets forth the entire understanding and agreement between the parties, excluding the use of Bouncy Bubble Beverage which is covered under its own agreements, 'Bouncy Bubble Beverage By-Laws' numbered 1 through 4.
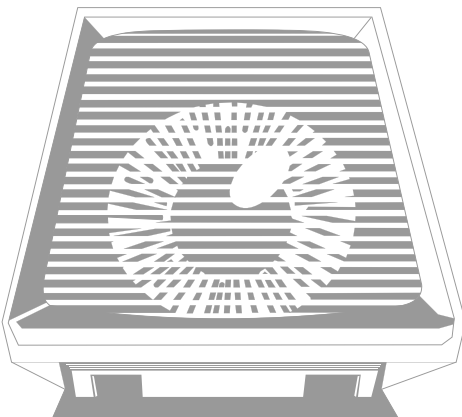
WELCOME, CITIZEN, TO ALPHA COMPLEX.

WELCOME TO YEAR 214 OF THE COMPUTER.

WELCOME TO...

PARA

//Service Pack One//

by **ALLEN VARNEY**

**DAN GELBER
GREG COSTIKYAN
ERIC GOLDBERG**

KEN ROLSTON

**AARON ALLSTON
PAUL BALDOWSKI
BETH FISCHI
DAN CURTIS JOHNSON
and PARANOIA-LIVE.NET**
Additional text

JIM HOLLOWAY
Cover and illustrations

NOIA ™

XP

Based on material published in previous editions of *PARANOIA*: the first edition (published in 1984 by West End Games) and the second edition (published in 1987 by West End Games). None of this material is 'open game content'
this version, *PARANOIA* XP, as well.

Note on pronoun usage: The Computer suggests any citizen concerned about this game's usage of 'he' for the generic third-person pronoun, instead of 'he or she,' should attend to more important matters, such as serving The Computer with fervent loyalty.

PARANOIA XP — Service Pack 1

ALLEN VARNEY
Principal writer & designer/Chief scapegoat
(**www.allenvarney.com**)

DAN GELBER
GREG COSTIKYAN
ERIC GOLDBERG
Original system design & development

KEN ROLSTON
1st/2nd edition development/Tone Czar

PAUL MURPHY
1st/2nd edition editing/Lost in mists of time

AARON ALLSTON
PAUL BALDOWSKI
BETH FISCHI
Additional material/Co-conspirators

DAN CURTIS JOHNSON
'Mister Bubbles' writer/Training officer

GREG COSTIKYAN
Project supervisor/Shadowy eminence

IAN BELCHER
Mongoose line editor/Go-between

IAN BARSTOW
Mongoose studio manager/Sub-scapegoat

ALEXANDER FENNELL
Mongoose production director/Executioner

JIM HOLLOWAY
Cover and illustrations/Minister of Arts

STEVE GILBERT
KEN ROLSTON
ERICK WUJCIK
Wrote some older stuff we rehashed

ALLEN VARNEY
Layout & editing/Tweak tweak tweak

ANDY 'JAZZER' FITZPATRICK
Coolest Clone in the Complex
(mastermind of **www.Paranoia-Live.net**)

CHAZ ESTELL
Combat simulator

SAUL RESNIKOFF
Service Pack index/Damage control

CHLORPROMAZINE, CLOZAPINE, THIORIDAZINE
Got us through the day

THE COMPUTER
Our shining example

ZAK ARNTSON
BYRON BARRY
RON BEDISON
STEVEN DASHEIFF
JASON DURRAL
ALON ELKIN
JÖRG ELLERMANN
ROB FARQUHAR
ZEKE FRASER
ADAM HAASE
SCOTT JONES
HUMZA KAZMI
JOHN KENYON
VILLE LAHDE
KARL LOW
JOSHUA MARQUART
ERIC MINTON
JOSH MORETTO
RICHARD NEALE
TOM PIERCE
MICHAEL PURGAR
R. ERIC REUSS
PATRICK SHAUGHNESSY
GLENN SNAPP
JARED A. SORENSEN
JOHN SPANN
DAVID STARR
ALLAN STOJANOVIC
PHILIP STORRY
JEFF VANDENBERG
MATT VENZKE
WESLEY WILLIAMS
RICHARD WINTERS
ZIV WITIES
Valuable service to The Computer

HARVEY BARKER, TANYA BERGEN, MARK BILLANIE, CHRIS BRAYDEN, ALICE CABRERA, DAN COPE, ANNE CROSS, MATT DALTON, DALLAS DEATLEY, DIETER EICHHORN, BEN ENGELSBERG, DANIEL FARBER, SARA FITZGERALD, SEAN FITZGERALD, TIM FITZMAURICE, CHRISTOPHER FLACK, JOSHUA FLACK, ERIC FRANKLIN, JACK GEBHART, MARK GEDAK, JAMIE GODFREY, ALEX GOLDEN, JEFF GROVES, DAVID HELMS, JAMES HERBERT, DANIEL HASLAM, MARK HOWE, GREG INGBER, PAUL JACOBS, SCOTT JOHNSON, MARK KINNEY, PATRICK KOSSMAN, ROB MacDOUGALL, JEFF McRORIE, TOPI MAKKONEN, MURRAY PERRY, DAN PRESTON, C.H. PRINCE, JEFF REBBECK,ROBERT RODGER, DANIEL SCOTHORNE, EVERETT SHELBY, DAVID SIEGLE, MARK SIZER, AMY SNAPP, FRANK SRONCE, JENNIFER SRONCE, PAUL TEVIS, MICHAEL TRENT, JOHN TRUSSELL, MARK WAKS, STEPHANIE WOOD, MICHAEL WULFF, MICHAEL J. YOUNG
Playtesters or Toothpaste Disaster High Programmers

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Now commencing *PARANOIA...*

SECURITY CLEARANCE
INFRARED—
CLEARED FOR ALL CITIZENS

May I be of assistance?

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

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

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

Not *PARANOIA*. In *PARANOIA* you don't know the rules. You don't know who your enemies are. You don't know how your equipment works. You're never sure why you're doing anything. One thing you do know: Everyone is out to get you.

Ignorance and fear; fear and ignorance. These are your watchwords.

Uhh... The back cover says something about a computer.

In *PARANOIA* you play a Troubleshooter in service to The Computer. Trust The Computer! The Computer is your friend! You are The Computer's trusted agent and protector of Alpha Complex, The Computer's underground city of the far future.

Why am I a Troubleshooter?

You turned in a friend for treason. The Computer had him executed for betraying Alpha Complex. The Computer rewarded you for your loyalty.

Now you root out all traitors and apprehend or execute them. You uncover corruption among The Computer's servants and turn them in to Internal Security. You find trouble, and you shoot it.

What's a 'traitor'?

A traitor is a malevolent human citizen who has betrayed his friend The Computer and seeks to destroy The Computer, Alpha Complex, humanity and life as we know it. You must unmask and destroy all traitors. Watch out! Traitors are everywhere!

Mutants are traitors. These genetic freaks have uncontrollable abilities they selfishly use for their own advancement, rather than to serve Alpha Complex. You must subdue or eliminate them.

Members of **secret societies** are traitors. In organizations unsanctioned by The Computer they conspire irresponsibly to undermine the good order of Alpha Complex. You must destroy them.

By the way... *you* are a mutant, *and* a member of a secret society. You are a traitor.

Wait, *I'm* a traitor?

That is correct. Your fellow Troubleshooters would be eager to unmask you as a traitor and execute you. You work with many Troubleshooters. They all carry powerful weapons.

Let me get this straight. My job is to hunt and kill traitors. I work with other people who have the same orders. They all want to kill me?

Not quite. They all want to kill *traitors*. They don't know you're a Commie mutant traitor. Yet.

If they find out?

They'll apprehend or kill you, as any right-thinking citizen would. Of course, if you convict them of treason *first*, The Computer will have them executed, and you may survive. Note, though, false accusations of treason are themselves treason.

So I want to prove they're traitors before they can prove I'm a traitor. If I don't, I die?

Precisely. Dead traitors cannot testify to their own innocence, or to your guilt. It is convenient to be the last Troubleshooter on your team left alive.

The good news is, Troubleshooters routinely get shot, stabbed, incinerated, mangled, poisoned, blown to bits, and occasionally stapled, so you have many opportunities to ensure your teammates meet their just end.

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

...Are you *sure* this will be fun?

Certainly, citizen! Fun is mandatory. The Computer says so, and The Computer is your friend. Do you doubt The Computer? Doubting The Computer is treason.

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

Excellent! You're getting the idea. As a sign of its trust, The Computer promotes you to Security Clearance RED. Welcome to *PARANOIA*.

Attention, player!

Obtain **paper** and a **pencil**. Obtain **one 20-sided polyhedral die**, available in hobby stores. Obtain **three to six other players**, one of whom will be the Gamemaster (GM) who runs the game.

Whether or not you are familiar with the concept of roleplaying games, read the **Non-example of play** later in this introduction. If you are already familiar with other roleplaying games, also read the **boxed text** titled 'What You Must Forget.'

Now you may begin to play *PARANOIA*. True, you know nothing about the game yet. This is acceptable and even desirable for *PARANOIA*.

If you insist, you may read all of the **Player section**, which begins on page 7 and ends on page 48. It teaches a bit about the *PARANOIA* setting, how to create your Troubleshooter character, and *nothing at all of any importance* about the rules of the game. The Player section section is classified Security Clearance RED. You are now a Troubleshooter with Clearance RED, so you may read this section without fear of execution.

The rest of this book—the **Gamemaster section**, **Sourcebook** and **Mission**—is classified Clearance ULTRAVIOLET. This is above your clearance, so you are not permitted to read it. Only the Gamemaster, the person who runs the game, may read it. If you read any Gamemaster material, or display any knowledge of its contents during play, you are a traitor and subject to summary execution.

Of course, you paid for this nice book and would like to get your money's worth, so naturally you'll read it anyway. Don't tell your Gamemaster you did. Pretend you haven't read it. If he asks, look him straight in the eye, cross your heart, spit over your shoulder and promise you have *never, ever* read the book and you have no intention of doing so. Of course he will believe you.

By the way—and this is for real—**don't read the mission!** No, really, don't. A mission is a story the Gamemaster will inflict—*run* for your characters. If you know all the plot details and surprises in advance, you'll have less fun when you play.

Attention, Gamemaster!

Oh fortunate one, most trusted of The Computer's servants, you are Clearance ULTRAVIOLET and therefore may read this entire book. Read the Player section first so you know what your players know, then read the rest. You don't have to memorize anything; *PARANOIA* is a game of freewheeling improvisation, and you can revise, upgrade, ditch or bluff about any rule as you go along. Players can't argue with you—they're not allowed to show they know the rules.

The Player section includes rules for creating Troubleshooter characters. However, the first few times you play, we suggest you give your players the pregenerated (ready-made) characters in the Mission section. Photocopy these characters and hand them out to your players before you begin their mission.

The first time you run *PARANOIA*, use the mission provided in this book. This is an unusual game, and by using the mission, you'll see how to do things. Later you'll devise your own missions to delight and torment your players.

Attention, longtime players and Gamemasters!

Citizen: Friend Computer!
The Computer: At your service!
Citizen: Please tell what happened when you Crashed in the *Crash Course Manual*, and how you came back, and what happened to Alpha Base.
The Computer: Your request is senseless. The Computer has never Crashed. There is no such place as Alpha Base. Any statement to the contrary is a rumor. Rumors are treason.
Citizen: But what about the Secret Society Wars, and MegaWhoops, and Reboot Camp?
The Computer: The *PARANOIA* products that refer to these fictitious events have never existed. They are now un-products. You have experienced bizarre hallucinations.
Be reassured! Due to highly advanced engineering and multiply redundant systems, your friend The Computer cannot Crash. It is impossible. The Computer cannot fatal exception error.
[Feedback squeal, followed by a long pause.]
Citizen: Um... Friend Computer?
Computer: *[Happy xylophone tune.]* Welcome to *PARANOIA* XP. Please press Control-Alt-Delete to log on.

The first edition (1984) and second edition (1987) of *PARANOIA* were, of course, perfect. The Computer says so. This edition is even *more* perfect. Entirely new character creation and rules systems make the game more like what it really is. To improve efficiency and fun, characters from previous editions

are completely incompatible with the new rules. Other (non-fun) games would offer a character conversion system. In *PARANOIA* XP no conversion is required, because older characters could not possibly have survived this long.

PARANOIA XP re-emphasizes the darkly humorous tone of the game's first edition while retaining the fast-paced, rules-light approach of the second. This edition also offers three play styles, each with its own tone and sometimes slightly different rules.

- ◉ If you've discussed your fondest memories of *PARANOIA*, did you speak of frenzied firefight fiascos in briefing rooms, elevators and sewers? Multiple deaths in Research & Design before the mission began? Did you use the phrase 'giant radioactive mutant cockroaches'? Of course you did. The *Classic* play style retains these elements.

- ◉ Experienced players may also like the more restrained *Straight* style, which gives Troubleshooters a halfway decent chance to survive (gasp!) through several missions.

- ◉ To initiate new players into the pleasures of Alpha Complex, try *Zap*, a fast and frantic shoot-em-up where no one gets out alive.

Non-example of play

Nearly every published roleplaying game (RPG) starts with an explanation of how an RPG works. We Famous Game Designers used to skip reading these, until we realized they tell a lot about the designers' philosophy. Many RPGs describe roleplaying as 'It's "let's pretend," but with rules.' Others call it a deeply emotional collaboration in storytelling. Some offer scholarly and arcane discussions of Gamist, Narrativist and Simulationist RPG philosophy. Some indie games even compare roleplaying to laying down tracks in a hot jazz band.

We like all these descriptions. *PARANOIA* is somewhat like all of them, in a non-jazz-band sort of way, but it's also different. *PARANOIA* is also something of a psychological exercise.

Because of this, we won't tell you how to play, unless you're cleared for it. We won't even show you an example of play for this game. Instead, here's an example from some other game.

PARANOIA is set in a high-tech future underground city of lasers, robots, cloned citizens and an insane Computer. This game has no character classes—no warriors, wizards, priests or rogues—no magic and, aside from the occasional giant radioactive mutant cockroach, no monsters.

Yet, that said, a good way to dramatize the unique nature of *PARANOIA* is to imagine another RPG's familiar dungeon crawl filtered through the paranoid mindset.

▌If *Popular Fantasy RPG™* worked like *PARANOIA*

Gamemaster: You're in a long dungeon hallway with a dirt floor, stone walls and an arching stone ceiling. There are burning torches in wall sconces every ten feet. You see one door.

Warrior player: What color is the stone?

GM: Sort of orange.

Rogue player: Aah! I'm only Clearance RED! Get me out of here!

Priest player: I'm casting *Mass raise security clearance* to make us all ORANGE. [Passes note to the GM: 'I'm also casting *Subvert to Communism on the warrior*.']

Wizard player: I'm using the Gem of Memory to document the priest's spellcasting. I, uh, may want to study his technique later.

Priest: Of course, of course. [Looks significantly at the rogue, whom he subverted earlier. The rogue nods and passes a note to the GM. The GM rolls a 20-sided die (1d20).]

GM: All right. You're all ORANGE for the moment and can pass safely down the hallway. Your orders, you recall, were to investigate the door. [Passes note to warrior: 'You feel a strange, treasonous impulse to overthrow the existing social order and restore power to the people.']

Warrior [Gulps]: Come, Comra— fellow heroes, let us break down the door!

Wizard: Wait! Did you almost call us 'Comrades'? That's a Commie word!

Priest: Of course he didn't. I heard nothing of the sort.

Rogue: Nor I. Are you leveling false accusations against our leader? That's treason.

Wizard: Don't anybody move! I'm not only leveling accusations, I'm leveling my Wand of Fireballs against all three of these traitors. By the way, I'm recording all this with the Gem of Memory.

GM: When you reach for it, you notice the Gem is missing.

Rogue: Uh-oh! You've lost a valuable magical item. That'll mean a heavy fine at the guildhall.

Wizard: I'm firing a fireball at all of them!

GM [Rolls a 20-sided die]: I'm sorry, it appears your experimental Wand of Fireballs has backfired. In a trice you are immolated in a ball of flame. Fortunately the fire is orange, so at least your charred body hasn't breached its proper security clearance. Scratch one wizard. Your next simulacrum has been dispatched from the guildhall and should arrive shortly.

Wizard: You bastards are gonna pay.

GM: No comments from the currently dead, please. Suddenly the door opens. A huge hobgoblin in leather armor stands there with his broadsword drawn. On his chest you see the mark of a silver hand.

Rogue: I attack him with—

Warrior: Wait! I wave my fingers at him from under my chin.

Priest and rogue: What?

GM: The hobgoblin nods at your recognition signal and lowers his sword. He waves you all inside. Who's going in first?

Warrior, priest and rogue [Pointing at each other]: Him!

...And so on. To repeat, none of the traditional fantasy elements in this example resemble anything in Alpha Complex, the underground city of *PARANOIA*. At this point you know nothing much about Alpha Complex.

Keep it that way. You may live longer.

▌What you must forget

If you have prior experience with other roleplaying games, this is regrettable but can be overlooked. However, it is mandatory to abandon the following notions, which interfere drastically with the *PARANOIA* experience:

1. Solidarity among characters or players. Other (non-fun) RPGs exhort you to do your part in the adventuring party, split the loot equally, avoid internal strife and generally play good little scouts. In *PARANOIA* this trusting behavior will get you killed six times in six minutes. Trust no one, especially your fellow players.

2. The quest for weapons and loot. Other games reward your efforts with treasure, cool new powers and ever more damaging attacks. Most powerful weapons in *PARANOIA* are experimental. You'll learn quickly not to trust experimental weaponry. You have a mutant power, but it too is hard to control and prone to backfires. The Computer rewards successful missions with credits, which you can spend on a variety of useful or gratuitous possessions—but only if you're cleared to own them.

3. Shaping a complex personality. In other games you can craft a highly individual character of emotional depth, who grows and changes over time in fascinating ways. In *PARANOIA* it is unwise to grow attached to your Troubleshooter, whose lifespan is typically measured in days, if not hours. The Computer prizes conformity; interesting or outlandish behavior is not actually illegal but always suspicious. Instead of plumbing depths of character, experience the game's atmosphere. You'll probably enjoy the game more if you treat your Troubleshooter as a stand-in for your own hopes, schemes and fears.

4. Comprehensive attributes, skills and combat options. Many other RPGs have elaborate character creation, movement and combat systems. These games offer a well-designed character a broad range of control in almost any situation. In *PARANOIA* you have no control. The Gamemaster decides all details of movement, combat and the environment. Your character survives entirely at the pleasure of the GM, who shields you from other players so long as you do entertaining things. Entertain or die.

The GM tells you what you see. You say what you want to do. The GM tells you what happens. You don't try to optimize your tactical advantage; instead, you want the best *dramatic* advantage. The most entertaining character wins; put on a good show and Fate will smile on you. You'll enjoy watching the boring characters die like—well, like Troubleshooters. Won't that be fun?

Of course it will. Fun is mandatory.

PARANOIA Player Section

Until today you were **just another Clearance INFRARED worker**, working a low-pay job for one of **The Computer's** service firms. For a hundred credits a month you did light drudgework in a food vat, bot maintenance facility, reactor control room or clone tank.

The work was dull. Meals consisted of microwaved Hot Fun pouchmeals, extruded ropes of Cold Fun and a bag of algae flakes, washed down with CoffeeLike, TeaSir or the occasional Bouncy Bubble Beverage. You slept in a different bunk each night in the communal barracks. It was loud as a boiler room. It smelled like turpentine. You got skin rashes and ringworm. Still, you drifted along blissfully in a haze of free HappiTime medication.

Then **you reported another INFRARED's treasonous behavior** to your friend The Computer. In recognition of your service, **The Computer promoted you to RED Clearance**, awarded you 1,000 credits and your own quarters, authorized a reduction in sedation, and granted a token treasure from the high-clearance hydroponic gardens: **an apple.** A *real* apple.

Security Clearance RED

WARNING:

Knowledge or possession of this information by any citizen of Security Clearance INFRARED constitutes treason punishable by summary execution

Eating that apple—the first time you'd ever tasted actual food!—you realized *people at higher clearances eat like this all the time.*

Thinking clear thoughts—the first time you'd done that, too—**you burned with a new desire:** to live better than you have. **To get ahead.**

The Computer told you the name of that variety of apple: Red Delicious.

Psst! Click <u>here</u>!

*You're on **HPD&MC Friendship Network!***
[http://RED.hpdmc.aaa/WelcomeTShooter.01]

Welcome, Lucky Troubleshooter!

Orig 1.0 date 3.11.16/14:15:04.6
Rev 843.7 211.06.30/22:56:09.1

Many Troubleshooters before you have loyally served Alpha Complex and The Computer. **I**t is now your honor to follow in their glorious struggle—stained with blood but never treason!—in helping The Computer achieve its imminent and inevitable victory over Communism.

   Keep the heroic sacrifices of your predecessors ever in mind. **E**mulate their bravery against overwhelming odds. **U**se every bone and sinew, every drop of blood in your struggle, as they did. **L**et their ultimate immolation on the pyre of steadfast devotion be your example.

   It will be fun!

Victory is Near!

Every Junior Citizen envies the exciting life of a Troubleshooter. **S**upporting The Computer's 'Great Complex' initiative *(replaces completed Happiness Initiative 'Trust Can Be Fatal' per HPD&MC dispatch HPD211.06.25/25 rev 6, Clearance RED)*, rooting out traitors and mutants, protecting helpless citizens from terror, corruption and subversion—this is more than the stuff of nightcycle vidshows. This is your high duty. This is why you are alive.

*Allotted reading time for this page: **90 seconds**. Excessive reading time subject to disciplinary action under Central Processing mandate 214.05.06.835 'Improve Efficiency Through Reductions in Reading Time'.*

♦ **Welcome, Lucky Troubleshooter!**
   (Clearance RED)
♦ **Troubleshooter Central**
   (Clearance GREEN)
♦ **Mission Status**
   (Clearance INDIGO)
♦ **Contact Troubleshooter Central**
   (Clearance ULTRAVIOLET)

Psst! Click here!

Heads up, flunky! Just wanted to hack in some secret notes about your upcoming hose-job in the Troublevictims. Don't let on to the high-colors (they like you stupid) but these tips may keep you alive long enough to spend your first mission bonus.
—*Norm-O, Leet Phreak*

Welcome, Luck

Orig 1.0 date 3.11.16/14:15:04.6
Rev 843.7 211.06.30/22:56:09.1

IF YOU ARE READING THIS YOU ARE ALREADY COMPROMISED. IntSec sniffers in the walls. Monitoring all transmissions of this text and receiver's coordinates. IntSec on your case is worse than bad Sandallathon. Ditch this readout, skip fast!

209.10.22 Hacked a sweetheart subroutine for IntSec sniffers, now logs bogus coordinates and UV clearance. Nobody smart checks them. —*HappyClone*

INTSEC PLANT DON'T TRUST HIM IT'S TRUE STOP READING THEY ARE ALREADY ON TO YOU

hey i know happy - probably did throw off intsec but he probably hacked this readout to steal your me card too watch out

Many Troubleshooters before you have loyally served Alpha Complex and The Computer.
It is now your honor to follow in their glorious struggle—stained with blood but never treason!—in helping The Computer achieve its imminent and inevitable victory over Communism. Keep the heroic sacrifices of your predecessors ever in mind. Emulate their bravery against overwhelming odds. Use every bone and sinew, every drop of blood in your body, as they did. Let their ultimate immolation on the pyre of steadfast devotion be your example.
It will be fun!

MIKE-U LIVES! Read first letter each sentence. Even Computer knows! Mike-U-BCE-5 finest clone ever / tried to overthrow Comp & free us all / join PURGE keep Mike-U-5 memory alive! I DREAMED I SAW MIKE-U LAST NIGHT—

Mike-U-5 and Mike-U-6 *both* led the revolt. Computer offed them both but needed 'hero'. Get truth in pamphlet *Lies The Computer Taught Me and Make Credits Fast Through Multi-Clearance Marketing*. Wear Teela-O pin on left overall strap. We will contact you.

Dear Vatslime Traitor and Total Nullwit With Lead-Brain Mutation. This code obviously refers to Mike-U-BCE-6, heroic defender of Alpha Complex, not Mike-U-5, damnable heathen apostate. Memorialize true heroes! Join First Church of Christ Computer Programmer, for The Computer maketh me to lie down in a soft haze of happiness.

Anyone who thinks putting an algae wafer on his tongue means he's gonna get 'saved' and uploaded to The Computer's databanks forever is a few bugs short of clean code. Corpore Metal offers us a clean practical path to the next stage of evolution. Give up your meat!

Victory is Near

Every Junior Citiz
exciting life
Supporting
Complex' in

Happiness Initia
HPD&MC dispa
Clearance RED
mutants, protecting helpless citiz
from terror, corruption and subve
sion—this is more than the stuff
nightcycle vidshows. This is your high
duty. This is why you are alive.

Oh yes indeed, toddle off and live forever as a scrubot and forget the negligible achievements of Old Reckoning humanity: Amadeus MossHart, Frank Loyola Wright, Pikasso, World War II of the Rings, Microangelo, King Stephen, Currier Ives, The Cowsills. One less uncultivated meatbrain merely makes life less stressful for Romantics who cherish our elevated past. For a delightful taste, check the attached file, a profound and enigmatic text that evokes the magic of centuries past. It's called *Webmaster in a Nutshell*.

oops think i deleted attachment. was hoping it told about new drugs. anyone got venslimamine? leave under NE table in mess hall 242 vcj sector. leave contact info, will pay you 1000 credits twosday. —must go head hurts—

Born in Crisis, Tested Under Fire

No matter how many stories you've heard at your current or previous security clearance about Mike-U-BCE-5 and -6, the truth about these legendary High Programmers and the origin of the Troubleshooters is more wonderful still.

Originally diligent INFRARED workers in the earliest years of The Computer, the Mike-BCE clone family earned The Computer's trust, and Mike-BCE-5 and -6 both rose in clearance to the illustrious ranks of the High Programmers. **H**eed their example! **E**arn The Computer's trust and you, too, may aspire to the highest service!

During his honorable early career, Mike-U-5 served The Computer loyally as Chief Supervisor of the Armed Forces. **O**nly after a dangerous mission into the Outdoors Sector did Mike-U-5 succumb to the traitorous influence of mutant mind control. **E**ven The Computer's most trusted servants are always vulnerable, so be constantly alert!

Mike-U-BCE-6

Subverted and compelled to commit treason, Mike-U-5 returned to Alpha Complex and foolishly attempted to lead the Armed Forces and Internal Security in an uprising against your friend The Computer.

Not corrupted as his brother had been, Mike-U-6 put down the abortive uprising, but Mike-U-5 and certain renegade forces escaped The Computer's justice. **T**he lingering threat of Mike-U-5 and the temporary reduction in the strength of Alpha Complex defenses led Mike-U-6 to propose to The Computer the formation of a new elite service unit, the Troubleshooters.

Mike-U-BCE-6 led the Troubleshooters loyally on many missions in The Computer's service. Ultimately he himself led the mission into Outdoors Sector to locate Mike-U-5. As you know from numerous vidshow adaptations, Mike-U-6 confronted his traitorous brother in a Communist stronghold and terminated him, but not before the treacherous brother mortally wounded the great High Programmer. The dying words of Mike-U-6 to his loyal Troubleshooters still hold true to this day: 'Serve The Computer as it works to protect our Great Complex!'
(Replaces and corrects previous last words per HPD&MC dispatch HPD211.06.25/25 rev 6, Clearance RED.)
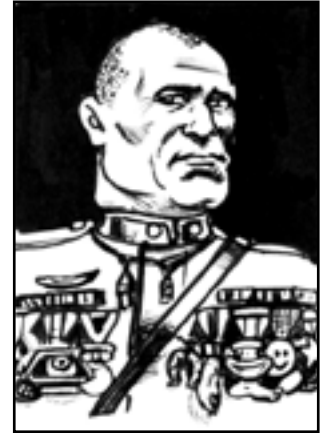
Your High Purpose and Great Opportunity

The Computer has already shown its trust in you by promoting you to Security Clearance RED. By recruiting you now to its elite Troubleshooter service unit, The Computer demonstrates its confidence that you can face any problem caused by any traitor in any sector of Alpha Complex. Total victory is now in sight. Do your part! Fulfill your mission! Serve The Computer and you will rise rapidly in its service.

Beware! Traitors are everywhere! The safety of your fellow Troubleshooters and the security of Alpha Complex depend on you. Immediately report any treasonous or insubordinate behavior or any suspicion of treason or insubordination to The Computer. Failure to do so is treason.

Some of your fellow Troubleshooters may serve The Computer as guardians of Internal Security. They are here to protect you. They diligently report every hint of treasonous or insubordinate behavior to The Computer. Rejoice to know any treason among your companions will be discovered and punished!

You may be asked to test experimental equipment or perform vital services for your own or other service firms. Honor these simple requests, for they help The Computer protect and serve Alpha Complex!

Your missions may take you to unfamiliar sections of Alpha Complex. The traitors you face may try to subvert you with unfamiliar and treasonous ideas. Be prepared! Know the enemy! Guard against treason!

When you are troubled or uncertain, always remember the honorable legacy of the Troubleshooters who perished before you. Do as they did. Serve The Computer. The Computer is your friend.

Born in Crisis, Tested Under Fire

No matter h[...] clearance a[...] Programme[...]

Originally diligent INFRARED workers in the earliest ye[...] The Computer, the Mike-BCE clone family earned The C[...] Mike-BCE-5 and -6 both rose in clearance to the illustriou[...] Programmers [...] ed their example [...] rn The Computer's [...] may aspire to the highest service!

During his honorable early career, Mike-U-5 served The [...] Chief Supervisor of the Armed Forces. **O**nly after a danger[...] Outdoors Sector did Mike-U-5 succumb to the traitorous inf[...] mind control. **E**ven The Computer's most trusted servants a[...] able, so be constantly alert!

Subverted and compelled to commit treason, Mike-U-5 re[...] Complex and foolishly attempted to lead the Armed Forces [...] against your friend The Computer.

Not corrupted as his brother had been, Mike-U-6 put dow[...] U-5 and certain renegade forces escaped The Computer's justice. **T**he lingering threat [...] reduction in the strength of Alpha Complex defenses led Mike-U-6 to propose to [...] of a new elite service unit, the Troublesh[...]

Mike-U-BCE-6 led the Tr[...] ly he himself led the mission int[...] w adapta-tions, Mike-U-6 confronted [...] ot before the treacherous brother m[...] to his loyal [...] rve The Computer as [...] Complex!'

(Repla[...] atch HPD211.06.25/25 re[...]

Mike-U-BCE-6

You[...] [...]tunity

The [...] by promoting you to [...] ecruiting you [...] e Computer demons[...] an face any p[...] Alpha Complex. Tot[...] ur part! Fulfil[...] will rise rapidly in its[...]

Be[...] our fellow Troublesh[...] a Complex depe[...] s or insubordin[...] son or insubordination to Th[...] son.

Some of your fellow [...] omputer [...] Security. They are here to protect you. T[...] reasonou[...] vior to The Computer. Rejoice to know any treason among your companions will be dis[...]

You may be asked to test experimental equipment or perform v[...] n or other service firms. Honor these simple requests, for they help The Computer protec[...] lex!

Your missions may take you to unfamiliar sections of Alpha Co[...] ace may try to subvert you with unfamiliar and treasonous ideas. Be prepared! Know the[...] treason!

When you are troubled or uncertain, always remember the hon[...] r is your frien[...]

Only IntSec would tell lies so bald[...] s they did.

Allotted [...]

'No he doesn't'! PROOF all the Mike-U family died long ago. Clone tank tech back then was bad, they decanted six copies at the same time and then NO MORE. No MemoMax, no reboots! Cloning breakthroughs by PRO TECH are the only reason you can hope to live forever. GO PRO, BACK PRO TECH.
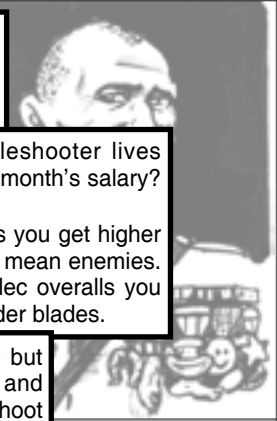
'Live forever'? Like a Troubleshooter lives long enough to collect his first month's salary? Please!
Newbie, you're vatslime unless you get higher clearance than your buddies, I mean enemies. Until you get nice GREEN reflec overalls you better have eyes in your shoulder blades.

Anyone with eyes anywhere but normal is a stinking MUTIE and Troubleshooters are right to shoot him!
Muties turned Mike-U-5. Muties killed Mike-U-6. Muties have killed me four times already and I'm getting seriously annoyed.

HPD&MC updates the Mike-U myth with every new Computer initiative. When I got drafted into the T-Shooters Mike-U-5 was officially subverted by Outdoors radiation after Commies sabotaged his armor.
Our team leader told me (just before I bumped him off, haha!) back when he was drafted, Mike-U-5 was getting corrupted by sinister secret society bureaucrats giving him fake drugs.
Hey newbies, if you get assigned to my team, lemme know the latest reason poor old Mike-U-5 went bad before I shoot you, OK?

MIKE-U IS A HOAX! Never existed! See suppressed MS *Proceedings of the Elders of the Brotherhood of Psion*, taped under Reactor Bay 4 in Tevatron Central Radiation Chamber, CXK Sector. This will open your eyes!

Mike-U-6's corpse is still preserved on display as a hero of The Computer in an INDIGO mansion. I know, I had to paint the thing with preservatives. After I got done the INDIGO had me declared a traitor and wiped my clone template. I killed him, at least for a while. (Hope his new clone cost a bundle!) Now I'm in hiding and recruiting warriors for an ultimate battle. Stand at NHN Sector Effluent Intake 473 and hold a bag of algae chips by one corner between thumb and index finger. I'll contact you. —*SewerRat*

INTERNAL SECURITY TRAP dont believe i nearly got caught and also lost my chips

Always burn your team leader first before he burns you. Smash his PDC and plant Commie propaganda on the body so you won't get hit with the cost of his clone. Kill him five or six times and Tech will eventually wipe his template.

Kill witnesses and smash their PDCs too! ALWAYS get to debriefing ALONE! ONLY WAY! ONLY WAY!

Sweat trace is fake IntSec propaganda, just like RFID tags they conceal in your daily

spy! Sweat is truth!

NONONO never plant anything you touched, they trace your sweat chemicals. Instead use glove soaked in a mild solution of dilute Cold Fun

Don't forget surveillan monitors! Disguised nowadays to look like

RFID TAGS ARE REAL DONT BELIEVE HIM THEYRE IN YR

Get bots to plant evidence, they're stupid.

REAL T-shooters would destroy all bots, humanity's curse!

Fry RFID with new microwave gun, now avail from Free Enterprise, only

No they're not!

Yes they are!

No they're not!

Yes they are!

1. Greetings, RED citizen!
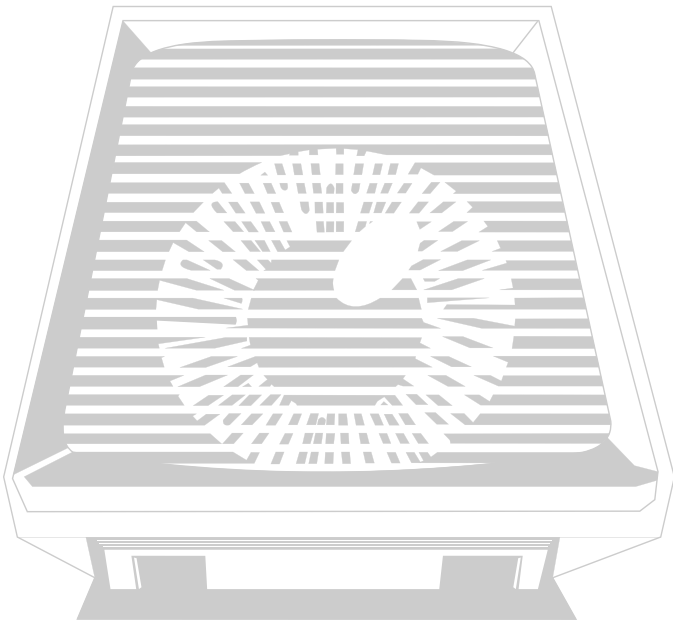
The Computer introduces you to your new security clearance with this comprehensive and entirely accurate guide to fun and success through service to **Alpha Complex**.

You are required to know and understand **all** contents or face summary demotion.

- ☉ You are **Security Clearance RED**.
- ☉ You are assigned to a **service firm** in one of eight **service groups**.
- ☉ You have **five backup clone bodies** and can purchase more.
- ☉ **Hunt traitors**: mutants and members of secret societies.

About your clearance

The Computer has promoted you from your previous INFRARED Clearance to your new and exciting RED Clearance. Your new **security clearance** signifies The Computer's benevolent trust in you. The Computer is your friend.

To review (*as specified in HPD&MC Directive NSC-RED-44A rev 4,675, 'Orientation for the Newly Trusted'*), The Computer's system of security clearances follows the colors of the electromagnetic spectrum: RED, your current clearance, followed in ascending order by ORANGE, YELLOW, GREEN, BLUE, INDIGO, and VIOLET. INFRARED is below RED, and ULTRAVIOLET (the clearance of the illustrious High Programmers) is above VIOLET. The higher a citizen's clearance, the more deeply The Computer trusts that citizen.

All citizens are required to wear clothing of the same color as their security clearance. As an INFRARED you wore black. With your new RED Clearance The Computer has thoughtfully provided a new red jumpsuit and boots. Wear them at all times. Failure to comply is treason.

(**EXCEPTION**: You may temporarily remove all or part of your clothing for hygienic purposes such as showering. Good hygiene is essential to good citizenship. Poor hygiene is insubordination.)

The Computer determines each citizen's clearance with complete impartiality. Higher clearance means greater responsibility; it also brings benefits. The Computer cares for the needs of all citizens, of course, but it rewards most greatly those who sacrifice the most for the sake of society and their fellow beings.

Citizens of higher clearance are not necessarily more knowledgeable or capable than you. They have advanced solely because they selflessly served the greater good and earned The Computer's trust. Admire, respect and defer to higher-clearance citizens. Failure to defer at all times is insubordination and may be treason.

If you serve The Computer well, you will earn its greater trust and thereby advance in security clearance.

Aspire to advance! Seek to serve Alpha Complex in ever greater ways! Failure to aspire may be considered insubordination.

To ensure that only citizens of the requisite competence and trustworthiness have access to restricted areas, The Computer has divided Alpha Complex 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.

Remember, The Computer is your friend!

Your service firm assignment

To review (*see previous citation for requirement and authority*), eight **service groups** administer Alpha Complex municipal functions, supervised by The Computer.

The service groups:

- ☉ **Armed Forces:** Protection against threats both external and internal.

- ☉ **Central Processing Unit (CPU):** Executive operations, regulations, records, justice, human resources and culture engineering.

- ☉ **Housing Preservation and Development & Mind Control (HPD&MC):** Education, entertainment, housekeeping, creche management and recreation.

- ☉ **Internal Security (IntSec):** Maintenance of good order; location and elimination of traitors.

- ☉ **Power Services:** Maintenance of nuclear and other energy sources and primary habitat systems—traffic, air, water and waste.

- ☉ **Production, Logistics & Commissary (PLC):** Food and industrial production and allocation of resources.

- ☉ **Research & Design (R&D):** Creation of new technology and equipment.

- ☉ **Technical Services:** Maintenance of bots, vehicles, cloning services, industrial and production systems, and electronic and mechanical service systems.

Well before you grew out of Junior Citizen status, The Computer ordered these agencies to outsource most of their duties for greater efficiency. The service groups now contract most municipal functions to a wide range of competing *service firms.*

A service firm is a for-profit company that performs duties for a particular service group. Any service firm can take on any contract for its supervising group. Each service firm is run by a Board of Directors, high-clearance citizens who selflessly direct its operations on The Computer's behalf for the good of all Alpha Complex. **Immediately report instances of service firm corruption and malfeasance to Internal Security.** Failure to report corruption is treason.

From the time you were decanted, your friend The Computer arranged your education to ideally suit you for a particular service group. When you reached age 14 and left your clone creche, you worked at one of that group's service firms as an INFRARED line worker. The Computer acknowledges and thanks you for your years of service there prior to your promotion to Clearance RED. Now that you have donned the red reflec overalls of the Troubleshooter, The Computer has graciously ordered your service firm to reassign you to a part-time position. You will still work there when not on a Troubleshooter mission.

As explained below under 'Cloning,' in the unlikely event you encounter terminal danger while on a mission, The Computer will order Technical Services to transfer your brain's recorded memories to a new, identical clone body. Unless you are currently on a mission and thus given high priority, Technical Services backlogs sometimes may keep you out of action so long your service firm must regretfully let you go. In these rare cases The Computer assigns you to another service firm in the same group.

If your career is particularly eventful, you may end up at a new service firm after each mission. Won't that be fun?

Cloning

Long ago, in Old Reckoning times before The Computer began guiding Alpha Complex—before Alpha Complex even existed!—humans once reproduced by rutting, like vile animals. Shudders and expressions of revulsion are permitted, though not mandatory.

Because The Computer cares deeply for all citizens, it now grows them in clone tanks. This is much less messy and disgusting than the old way, and far less random. The Computer ensures every human citizen is genetically perfect in all respects. Improved by a program of mandatory hormone suppressants, human citizens are no longer troubled by the bestial urges of past generations.

The Computer's researchers in R&D continue to pioneer stunning advances in cloning technology. Earlier generations of citizens were grown in 'clone families' of six genetically identical siblings, all decanted from the tanks at the same time. When they died, their precious genetic heritage was lost to Alpha Complex. Today, thanks to advances in forced-growth cloning technology, The Computer's loyal servants in Technical Services can now produce new clone copies of any citizen at will.

R&D's amazing **MemoMax** technology can copy and transfer the deceased citizen's memories to a new clone with speed and absolute accuracy. Tech Services installed your MemoMax circuitry before you were decanted, and it functions perfectly today.

The rare citizen of Alpha Complex who meets an untimely demise must sometimes wait for resources to become available to grow a new replacement body. In contrast, as a Troubleshooter you enjoy The Computer's fullest consideration.

Though you need not expect unusual hazards as you locate and terminate the last remaining vicious Communist enemies of Alpha Complex, The Computer has thoughtfully ordered for you five ready backup clones and a MemoMax **Constant Realtime Update Priority** link. The CRUP link ensures the highest priority for your return to action.

You may obtain more clone replacements, beyond the original five, from Tech Services at a regulated cost per set of six—though again, do not worry! Historically the number of Troubleshooters who have required more than five replacement clones is within acceptable margins, given prevalent situational circumstances.

Heroes and traitors

To maintain good order, The Computer has enlisted many loyal citizens like yourself. Those who serve with distinction are shining examples for all right-thinking people in Alpha Complex. In the ongoing 'Heroes of Our Complex' (HOOC) initiative The Computer periodically recognizes and honors meritorious individuals of all clearances. These lucky friends of The Computer see their smiling faces on evening vidshows, transtube loyalty posters and food containers.

For example, this month's HOOC honoree reduced waiting time by 22.3% on a per-line basis in her PLC subsector warehouse routing office through the simple yet ingenious expedient of subdividing the single line for each security clearance into three separate alphabetical lines indexed by weekday and devising a schedule designating visiting days for each alphabetical segment of customers. For this HOOC-worthy innovation, congratulations to *[NAME DELETED per IntSec corrective order following discovery of treasonous history]*.
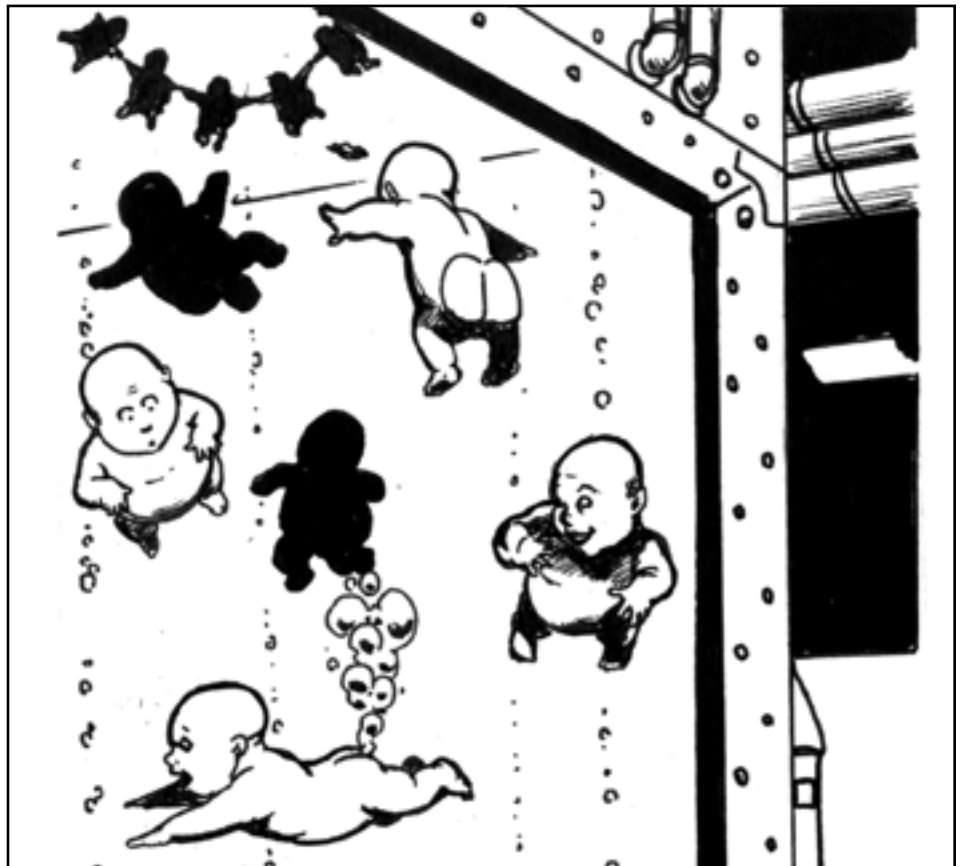
Junior Citizens in Alpha Complex need not suffer the indignities of historical childbirth.

Serve The Computer well, and you too may join *[NAME DELETED]*!

The Computer also attends regretfully to the pervasive presence of traitors. Traitors are everywhere! Though final crushing victory over Communist subversion is close at hand, the traitors' last shrill treason-laden gasps still endanger their innocent victims. Fight on, Troubleshooter, fight on for The Computer and all Alpha Complex!

◉ Locate and apprehend or destroy **unregistered mutants**. They endanger human genetic purity and must be terminated or enlisted in our great cause.

Do not terminate *registered mutants*, innocent citizens who realized they possess, through no fault of their own, a treasonous mutant power. These unwitting traitors promptly reported their power to The Computer. In its wisdom and benevolence, The Computer forgives those who make full confession,

and it permits registered mutants to live. However, The Computer requires registered mutants to wear a uniform with yellow stripes at all times. (YELLOW Clearance mutants wear a black-bordered yellow stripe.) Registered mutants are not subject to apprehension or termination when they use their powers. Encourage these former traitors to use their inhuman powers responsibly, for the good of all Alpha Complex, so they may someday overcome their unfortunate terrible stigma.

◉ Locate and apprehend or destroy **members of secret societies**. They are traitors, often terrorists, and must be brought to justice.

The existence of many secret societies is public knowledge. It is not technically illegal to discuss their treasonous doctrines and objectives, the better to enforce good order or promote greater sensitivity to danger. Remember,

though, as a Troubleshooter you are The Computer's trusted emissary. Discourage ordinary citizens from frivolously discussing these dangerous organizations.

Due to past isolated incidents of lax security, unsupervised thoughts and poor hygiene, traitors have infiltrated Alpha Complex from the lowest to the highest levels. It may surprise you to learn traitors have even been identified on Troubleshooter teams like yours! Be vigilant in guarding against these rare but troubling incidents.

Very soon The Computer will finally defeat the forces of Communism, terrorism and subversion and guarantee a loyal, stress-free Alpha Complex. With constant alertness and unwavering commitment you can help ensure freedom from worry for all citizens. The Computer is counting on you and your fellow Troubleshooters to help make this Year 214 the last year you need ever worry about anything.

2. How *PARANOIA* works

In a roleplaying game (RPG) you play the role of an important character in a story. A fun and friendly player called the Gamemaster (GM) generously describes the story's setting and events. Remember always to express your gratitude and admiration to the kind GM.

As the story's protagonists, you and the other players freely choose the actions of your *player characters* (PCs) as you solve the problems the GM benevolently throws in your path.

You depend on the GM for all knowledge about the story's setting and circumstances. The GM introduces the game session, describes the setting and plays the roles of the *nonplayer characters* (NPCs) you encounter during the story. When you want your character to do something, describe it to the GM. He determines your success using common sense and the game rules. Often he rolls dice, or asks you to roll instead. Because he interprets your success or failure in each action, he thereby determines your success or failure in the whole game.

How fortunate you are! For all his omnipotent power and unimpeachable authority, your GM is a fair and just referee, and not *in any way* a petty tyrant who will kill your character on the spot if he feels unappreciated or harrassed. Thank him for this, fervently and frequently.

Troubleshooting missions

In *PARANOIA* you play a Troubleshooter who undertakes *missions* for The Computer. A mission is a storyline, a sequence of episodes you and the other PCs experience. You might complete a mission in a game session a few hours long, or in a series of sessions.

You are a player character (**PC**) in a story. The Gamemaster narrates and guides the story, or **mission**.

When your character does something, tell the GM. He will tell you what happens. Sometimes the GM or you will roll a **20-sided die (1d20)** to find out.

You are secretly a **mutant** and a **secret society member**, and therefore a **traitor**.

Your fellow Troubleshooters want to **find and terminate traitors**. Accuse others before they accuse you.

Possibly you might not complete it at all. The other PCs may kill you first.

You are—we now cut to the chase—a traitor. You are a mutant and a member of a secret society. If your fellow Troubleshooters (the other players) find out, they will have you arrested or more likely shoot you. If you die, you'll have to pay for a replacement clone body, and this new body may have unfortunate drawbacks. The best way to avoid this fate is to shoot the other bastards first.

It is unwise to just start firing randomly. The Computer requires you to first obtain *evidence* of a target's treason. Otherwise you yourself will be convicted of unjust accusations and probably terminated. If you present adequate

evidence, The Computer will remand the convicted traitor to Internal Security or authorize you to terminate him. This authorization may be retroactive.

Evidence can be documents, video records, incriminating materials or, most often, corroborating testimony from other Troubleshooters. Consider forming temporary alliances with other players to gain or create evidence against a common enemy.

Your goals as a Troubleshooter

The Computer assigns Troubleshooters several duties:

2. CONCEPTS

1. **Serve The Computer.**
2. **Locate and eliminate traitors**, including (but not limited to) Communists, secret society saboteurs and terrorists, unregistered mutants, data pirates, WMD manufacturers and IR Marketeers.
3. **Investigate and eradicate corruption.**
4. **Remove dangers** to the good order and smooth operation of Alpha Complex.

Aside from these duties, your Troubleshooter has some personal goals. Many are universal among citizens of Alpha Complex. Most citizens prioritize them as follows:

1. *Survive!*
2. Rise in security clearance.
3. Get rich.
4. Further your secret society's goals.

In addition to these standard goals, your Troubleshooter may have other goals not shared by all citizens:

5. *(Optional:)* Locate and protect fellow mutants who share your power.
6. *(Optional:)* Find Old Reckoning artifacts to collect or resell.
7. *(Optional:)* Escape from Alpha Complex to freedom Outdoors.
8. *(Optional:)* Overthrow The Computer (good luck!).

Note that none of these goals, in themselves, require your character to lie, conspire, suborn, plant evidence, bear false witness or commit assault against your fellow Troubleshooters.

Still, in the right circumstances, all that can help.

PARANOIA play styles

You can play *PARANOIA* in several different styles—as pure comedy, frenzied slapstick or tense and fearful dark satire. The GM's chosen play style affects some game rules, including the rigor The Computer requires for an accusation of treason. The GM will divulge the style he has chosen before play begins, if this suits his worthy purpose.

Classic: Made popular in previous editions of the game, this is rapid-fire slapstick. Troubleshooters seldom live long enough to advance far. Alpha Complex suffocates in bureaucracy, perpetually on the brink of collapse. 'Laurel and Hardy get jobs with the IRS on the original starship *Enterprise*.'

Straight (also called **Dark**): Fear, suspicion, striving for power and advancement, occasional hard-won successes in a scarily functional Alpha Complex. 'Yossarian from *Catch-22* gets a job in Orwell's Ministry of Truth.'

Zap (also called **Excessive** or **Frantic**): Pop-culture parodies, cartoon physics, and frenzied firefights at the drop of a Bouncy Bubble Beverage can. Alpha Complex is generally irrelevant. 'Yosemite Sam gets a job in a factory that makes sledgehammers, nuclear warheads and glass unicorn figurines.'

Your character sheet

You have a *character sheet* that describes important game information about your character: skills, equipment and so on.

The GM usually gives you a ready-made (**pregenerated**) player character. He may instead ask you to create your own character.

To create a character you need a photocopy of the **character sheet** in the back of this book (pages 254-255). Record your character's abilities and equipment on this sheet.

The first time your Gamemaster runs *PARANOIA*, and at other times as it suits his high purpose, he will probably provide character sheets with ready-made (*pregenerated*) player characters. These prefab PCs, ingeniously crafted by Famous Game Designers, are ideally suited to every possible need.

Should the GM wish you to create your own Troubleshooter character, thank him excitedly for his kindness. Make a photocopy of the blank *character sheet* at the back of this book (pages 254-255). Mongoose Publishing grants you permission to photocopy this sheet for personal use only. Other uses are punishable by termination and erasure.

All your character's secret information is on the back of the character sheet. At the game table, consider weighting down the sheet so devious rivals can't peek. A screen of dice, rulebooks or snack bowls also guards against spying. However, we officially recommend against threats of physical violence.

With photocopy and pencil in hand, proceed to Chapter 3, 'Creating your Troubleshooter'.

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

3. Creating your Troubleshooter

You will now create your character. This will be lots of fun and not in the least anxiety-provoking. **Anxiety is forbidden.**

In the presence of your fellow players, be extremely careful to hide all confidential information, including your Secret skills, secret society and mutant power. **Hide *nothing* from the Gamemaster! Attempts to hide information from the GM earn immediate and dramatic reprisal!**

Be aware of other players' attempts to cheat, and report such violations instantly to the Gamemaster. Relax in the confident assurance the GM will chastise these cheaters appropriately. **Relaxation is mandatory! Failure to relax will be corrected instantly!**

Your Troubleshooter's character sheet records the following resources:

◉ Name and gender

◉ **Skills,** as well as optional **specialties** within those skills**:**

    Three **Action** skills (Management, Stealth, Violence)

    Three **Knowledge** skills (Hardware, Software, Wetware)

    Three **Secret** skills (classified as Uncommon, Unlikely and Unhealthy)

> To create your PC, photocopy the **character sheet** at the back of this book. Following the **checklist** on the next page, fill in the blanks on the sheet in pencil.
>
> Certain aspects of your character are **secret**. Don't let the other players find out your secrets!
>
> Some aspects of your character are known **only to the GM**.

A **vital specialty** in **Energy Weapons**, under the Violence skill

Up to six optional **common specialties** and six **narrow specialties** in the Action and Knowledge skills

◉ Employment in a **service firm,** which grants you one mandatory **service firm specialty**

◉ A **mutant power**

◉ Membership in one **secret society**

◉ 25 **Perversity points**

◉ Two recognizable **tics** of behavior that can earn you more Perversity points

◉ RED **security clearance** (the measure of how much The Computer trusts you)

◉ Two **attributes**: Power and Access

◉ **Equipment**—**personal** equipment you buy yourself, and equipment **assigned** by The Computer or its service firms

◉ 1,000 **credits** in savings (about a month of ordinary expenses)

You are authorized to read the explanation of all these resources in the following sections. All tables required for character creation are generously provided throughout the player section. Failure to study all relevant sections and tables is insubordination punishable by fines.

■ Your name

Citizens in Alpha Complex are named according to this scheme:

[Given name]-[clearance initial]-[home sector]-[clone number]

Given name: Some are drawn from databases of Old Reckoning names; others are wholly made up. Generally a single word; multiple-word personal names or names with internal capitals are discouraged but accepted. In some sectors The Computer selects names randomly; in others the teacherbots or human staff in the creche assign names. *Examples:* Billy, Sue, Ken.

Clearance initial: The first letter of your ROYGBIV security clearance. INFRAREDs use no initial, to avoid confusion with INDIGOs. High Programmers use U for ULTRAVIOLET. *Examples:* Billy (INFRARED), Sue-G, Ken-U.

Home sector: The three-letter code designating the sector where you grew up. Given the prevalence of duty reassignments, redistricting and sector-wide disasters, this is not always your assigned sector in later life. *Examples:* Billy-BCN, Sue-G-XTU, Ken-U-RON.

Clone number: The number of your current clone incarnation. You start the game with the original You, colloquially called 'the Prime' and numbered 1. Each time you die, increase the clone number by 1. *Examples:* Billy-BCN-1, Sue-G-XTU-4, Ken-U-RON-6.

Sabotage or software failure sometimes produces Junior Citizens with defective names: John-Paul-George-Ringo, Tra-LAH-LAH-LAH, Juan-2-B-U-LVA, 24-17-33-Hike. CPU procedures for renaming these citizens are intricate and lengthy; some citizens reach adulthood before gaining a correct name.

■ Name and gender

The tinted sidebar box at left describes the Alpha Complex naming scheme. So long as you conform to it, you may choose any name you wish. The Computer chooses citizen names at random, so your name need not sound plausible unless the GM requires it for his inestimable purpose.

Gender is not an issue in Alpha Complex. Low-clearance citizens (that is, the great majority) take daily hormone suppressants that minimize physical differences between the genders and absolutely annihilate all romantic or physical interest.

Your Troubleshooter team may someday undertake a mission to a ruined sector, or even go Outdoors, far away from Alpha Complex. After a day in such circumstances, equally far from the suppressant medication,

Troubleshooter creation checklist

You need a photocopy of the **character sheet** in the back of this book. Fill it out using a pencil, not a pen! Before you start, find out which **play style** your GM is using: Straight, Classic or Zap.

1. **Name and gender:** See the box on the previous page for *PARANOIA* naming conventions. Your character can be male or female. In Alpha Complex nobody cares, because their hormones are suppressed.

1. NAME/ GENDER

PG.16

2. **Skills**: You have three *Action skills* (Management, Stealth, Violence) and three *Knowledge skills* (Hardware, Software, Wetware). Usually you roll 1d20 for each skill and halve the number rolled to get its rating; for results under 4, the skill's rating is 4. Or you can allocate 40 points among the skills, or just make all the ratings 7.

You have a **vital specialty** in **Energy Weapons**, equal to your Violence rating plus 4.

[Optional:] Choose up to **six common specialties**, divided as you wish among the skills. A common specialty's rating is 4 higher than the governing skill. If you take a common specialty, take a compensating common weakness(es) in the same skill; write it under the specialty. The weakness rating is 1.

[Optional:] You have open 'slots' for **six narrow specialties**, one in each skill. Take any or all narrow specialties now, or keep slots open to define during play. Each narrow specialty has a rating 6 higher than the governing skill, and no compensating weakness.

2. SKILLS/ SPECIALTIES

PG.18

3. **Service firm:** Roll 1d20 on the Service Firm chart. (The GM may instead tell you your service firm.) Select one common specialty from the list for your service firm. The specialty rating is 4 higher than its skill's rating, and has no compensating weakness.

3. SERVICE FIRM

PG.21

4. **Mutant power:** Roll 1d20 on the appropriate Mutant Power table (Straight, Classic, Zap). The GM may instead determine your mutant power himself, and may or may not tell you what it is.

4. MUTANT POWER

PG.23

5. **Secret society:** Roll 1d20 on the Secret Society table for your service group. (The GM may instead tell you your secret society.) Your starting *degree* (rank) varies by play style. *Classic*: Roll 1d20 and divide by 4. *Straight*: Your degree is 1. *Zap*: Roll 1d20. Choose three *Secret skills* from the list on p. 25.

5. SECRET SOCIETY

PG.23

6. **Perversity points:** 25. You can get up to 10 more Perversity points by selecting up to **two recognizable tics**. A tic is a behavior that is *immediately identifiable* and *recognizable* as yours.

6. PERVERSITY/ TICS

PG.26

7. **Security clearance:** RED.

7. SECURITY CLEARANCE

PG.26

8. ATTRIBUTES (INFO ONLY)

PG.27

8. **Attributes:** This step is informational only; you do nothing. Your character has two attributes, *Power* and *Access*. Each attribute has a number rating, but only the GM knows what your attribute ratings are.

9. **Equipment:** Your *personal equipment*, which you own yourself, includes a red jumpsuit and boots, laser pistol (without barrel), red reflec overalls, Personal Digital Companion with built-in camera and stylus, and ME Card (identity/credit card). You start with 1,000 credits. With the GM's permission, you may buy more equipment from the Personal Equipment chart.

On a mission you will receive *assigned equipment* from The Computer's service firms. You do not own this, but are responsible for returning it in good working condition after the mission.

9. EQUIPMENT

PG.28

Attention!

Before beginning play, familiarize yourself with the **Acceptable Behavior** (Straight and Classic styles only), **Treason and Insubordination** and **Reward** charts for Clearance RED.

characters, especially those in mixed groups, may become aware of strange new feelings.

No player past puberty really needs guidance in roleplaying incipient lust. Some players enjoy displaying restive androgenated or estrogenized personalities through exaggerated stereotypical behavior: The ladies primp, giggle, stage impromptu TeaLike parties and coo over cute little bots, while the menfolk grunt a lot, pump iron, scratch themselves and go out in the woods and drum.

▉ Skills

When you were a Junior Citizen in the clone creches, The Computer generously taught you to read and write and educated you in six broad areas of competence called *skills*, each rated 1 (low) to 20 (high). The skills are grouped in two categories of three skills each: *Action* skills and *Knowledge* skills.

Determine your character's ratings using one of these methods, according to your GM's instructions. Should the GM assign you one way to determine ratings, and assign different ways to other players, you will of course congratulate his perceptive tailoring of the rules to your individual needs. Write each rating on your character sheet.

- ◉ **Flat**: Each of your six skills has a rating of 7.

- ◉ **Random**: For each skill, roll 1d20 and divide the number rolled in half to get the rating (round fractions up). If your result is below 4, record 4 instead.

- ◉ **Custom**: Each skill rating starts at 0 (zero), and you get 40 skill points you may allocate among the skills. You must allocate at least 4 points to each skill, but you cannot put more than 10 in any skill. For each point you allocate, the skill's rating increases by 1.

(Your Troubleshooter also has three *Secret* skills, but these aren't determined the same way. See 'Secret skills' later in this chapter.)

Descriptions of the six Action and Knowledge skills appear below. Each skill description includes a list of areas of concentration called *specialties*. To forestall bewilderment at these descriptions, you are first required to understand the nature of specialties.

▉ *Skill specialties and weaknesses*

A **specialty** is something your character is particularly good at—a specific emphasis within a skill. When a situation comes up that calls for your specialty, you are required to use the specialty's rating instead of the governing skill's rating. Omitting to employ a pertinent specialty in The Computer's service is insubordination.

Specialties can be *vital, common* or *narrow*.

- ◉ All Troubleshooters have one mandatory **vital** specialty: Energy Weapons—i.e., lasers. **Add 4 to your Violence skill rating to get your Energy Weapons specialty rating.** Write the Energy Weapons specialty and its rating under your Violence skill.

- ◉ A **common** specialty is useful in situations that crop up frequently in Troubleshooter missions—for instance, Projectile Weapons, Bootlicking or Surveillance. Common specialties are listed after their governing skill. **Add 4 to the governing skill's rating to get the common specialty's rating.** For instance, if you have a Management skill rating of 5 and you take Bootlicking (a Management specialty), your Bootlicking rating is (5 + 4=) 9.

Common specialties are listed in the table on the facing page. You may also invent your own common specialty with the GM's approval.

You are authorized to select up to **six common specialties** at your discretion. To take a specialty in any skill, write it under the skill's name. You can assign up to **three** of your six allotted common specialties to a single skill. You are never required to take a common specialty, but refusing The Computer's generosity can be construed as insubordination.

When you take a common specialty, you must also assign another common specialty in the same skill as your character's compensating **weakness**. A weakness is a particular blind spot, your area of incompetence. Write the weakness or weaknesses under the specialty. **Each weakness rating is 1.**

If, during play, it turns out your weakness does not limit you as often as the specialty benefits you, the fair-minded GM may assign you additional weaknesses to right the balance.

Your vital Energy Weapons specialty doesn't inflict a compensating weakness.

- ◉ A **narrow** specialty affects a single specific target character or small group (but not your fellow Troubleshooters or The Computer), a certain piece of equipment (not a type of equipment, but one particular item), or a highly specific situation. Examples appear after each skill. You are encouraged to make up your own narrow specialties. **Add 6 to the governing skill's rating to get the narrow specialty's rating.** A narrow specialty doesn't give you a corresponding weakness.

Your beginning character has 'slots' for **six narrow specialties, one in each skill.** Don't select them now; keep these slots *open* (undefined). During play, when a situation arises that seems to call for a narrow specialty, you may ask the GM's permission to use one of your open slots for that specialty. If the GM lets you put the suggested specialty in that slot, you have used up the open slot and keep that specialty thereafter. After you become familiar with *PARANOIA*, you can define any or all your narrow specialties when you create a Troubleshooter.

▉ *Action skills*

The **Action** group includes Management, Stealth, and Violence skills. Use these to affect or perceive the world and to interact with other people, bots, and The Computer.

Action skills may overlap (cover the same area of competence) in certain circumstances, but aren't intended to overlap routinely.

- ◉ **Management**: Nonviolent, nontechnical interaction with other characters who are aware of your presence. Management actions include bootlicking, bribery, confidence games, fast talk, intimidation, interrogation, oratory, and all other verbal actions. Management also

Character example: 1

The GM grants you the privilege of designing a *PARANOIA* character. After thanking the GM for his kindness, you decide to name your character Ben-R-GOX-1. Ben is Clearance RED, like all starting characters, and is on clone #1 (that is, he is a Prime).

You choose to roll randomly for your six skills. For Management you roll a 20-sided die and get 15. Dividing 15 in half and rounding up, you get Ben-R's Management skill of 8. Not bad!

For Ben-R's next skill, Stealth, you roll a miserable 2, which would give Ben-R Stealth 1. But for any result below 4, you record 4 instead. Ben-R has Stealth 4.

In the same way, you roll 1d20 and halve the results to get Ben-R's other skills: Violence 5, Hardware 7, Software 10 (!), Wetware 5.

Ben-R has a vital specialty in Energy Weapons (that is, lasers). You add 4 to his Violence skill of 5 to get his Energy Weapons specialty rating of 9.

Specialties list

If you don't see a specialty that covers the area you want, suggest a new specialty to the Gamemaster. He may allow it. If you suggest something cheesy like 'Infallible Enemy Detection', expect the GM's righteous condemnation. On the other hand, if you take something offbeat like 'Nutrition', you might get on your Gamemaster's good side.

Action skill specialties

Management

Bootlicking: How to ingratiate yourself with superiors.
Chutzpah: Getting others to accept doubtful statements through confident assertion, bluffing and unmitigated gall.
Con Games: Hoodwinking a citizen or bot through fast talk, spurious logic and persuasion. This isn't physical sleight of hand (see Sleight of Hand under Stealth).
Hygiene: Maintaining cleanliness in yourself, your surroundings, your teammates and innocent passersby.
Interrogation: Extracting useful information from Commie mutant scum.
Intimidation: This doesn't exactly ingratiate you with your inferiors, but it gets their cooperation.
Moxie: Streetwise smarts; canny assessment of a person, situation or statement.
Oratory: How to get a *bunch* of people to do what you want.

Stealth

Concealment: Hiding stuff on your person or in your surroundings; also, spotting stuff others have hidden.
Disguise: Wearing a higher-clearance jumpsuit or false mustache without looking idiotic.
High Alert: Sensing imminent danger or covert surveillance. Not really different from most Troubleshooters' typical state, except you only get alarmed over actual threats.
Security Systems: Jiggering locks and alarms.
Shadowing: Following someone without being noticed.
Sleight of Hand: Palming and pocketing small things without being noticed.
Sneaking: Moving around without being followed or noticed.
Surveillance: How to bug things. How to debug things.

Violence

Agility: Rapid or balanced movement, gymnastics, jumping.
Demolition: How to use TNT without killing yourself. At clearances below GREEN this skill is treasonous.
Energy Weapons: Hitting someone with a laser, sonic weapon or blaster. This is a **vital specialty.** You can't take Energy Weapons as a weakness, and it doesn't count as one of your six common specialties.
Field Weapons: Flamethrowers, gauss guns, tanglers and the ever-popular plasma generator.
Fine Manipulation: Lockpicking, watchmaking, cutting the red wire one second before detonation.
Hand Weapons: Hitting someone with a force sword, neurowhip or truncheon, or with primitive weapons.
Projectile Weapons: Hitting someone with a slugthrower, cone rifle or other aimed weapon that uses ammunition.
Thrown Weapons: Hitting someone with a grenade, brick or rock.
Unarmed Combat: Hitting someone when you don't have a hand, energy, projectile, thrown or vehicular weapon.
Vehicular Combat: Hitting someone with a weapon mounted on a vehicle.

Knowledge skill specialties

Just as all the Knowledge skills routinely overlap, one specialty can often bleed into another. Suggest something creative, and the ever-thoughtful GM may generously allow it.

Hardware

Bot Ops and Maintenance: How to operate and fix docbots, guardbots/warbots, jackobots, scrubots and vehicle autopilots.
Chemical Engineering: Lots of uses for this, but somehow PCs always want to use it to make explosives.
Electronic Engineering: How to string together circuits and microprocessors.
Habitat Engineering: Knowledge of the air, communication, transport, power, water and waste systems. Mighty handy when you need to find a ventilation shaft to escape incoming fire.
Mechanical Engineering: How to make really neat Rube Goldberg-type contraptions.
Nuclear Engineering: How to operate a reactor without flooding half the sector with radioactive waste.
Vehicle Ops and Maintenance: How to use and repair all vehicles: autocars, crawlers, flybots, copters and Vulturecraft.
Weapon and Armor Maintenance: Sabotaging others' weapons and armor, and keeping yours from being sabotaged.

Software

Bot Programming: Revising bot instructions.
C-Bay: Getting the best price buying and selling on Alpha Complex auction sites.
Data Analysis: How to understand Computer-generated stuff.
Data Search: Finding something useful using The Computer.
Financial Systems: How to transfer credits safely for legitimate or criminal purposes.
Hacking: Breaking into The Computer's systems. Really, what could go wrong? Treasonous at clearances below GREEN.
Operating Systems: Revising MemoMax clone backup tech. Rewriting The Computer's instructions. Treasonous at clearances below BLUE.
Vehicle Programming: Revising vehicle instructions.

Wetware

Biosciences: Knowing what's likely to mutate you and how.
Bioweapons: Engineering your own Black Death or weaponized anthrax. Treasonous at clearances below BLUE.
Cloning: Repairing and operating the tanks that grow new and backup citizens. Operating MemoMax backup devices so the new clone remembers his name and boot size.
Medical: How to heal the injured and cure the sick, or ensure they don't heal or get cured.
Outdoor Life: Telling a tree from a weed, or a bird from an elephant, when most citizens have never heard of these.
Pharmatherapy: Ensuring wakefulness, sleepiness, happiness or any mental state through the application of little pills.
Psychotherapy: Recognizing insanity; helping others recover from it or descend further into it.
Suggestion: Biochemical and psychological techniques of subliminal persuasion.

includes checking and correcting another character's hygiene, appearance or demonstrations of loyalty.

Management is also your generic ability to behave properly or make others behave improperly.

Management doesn't typically cover anything requiring specialized or technical knowledge, such as medical or psychological diagnoses, or equipment calibration or repair; these actions require Knowledge skills.

Common Management specialties: Bootlicking, Chutzpah, Con Games, Hygiene, Interrogation, Intimidation, Moxie, Oratory.

Example narrow Management specialties: Pump My Service Firm Office Mates for Gossip, Suck Up to Boss Judd-G-LKN, Work the 'Cup and Algae Pellet' Swindle.
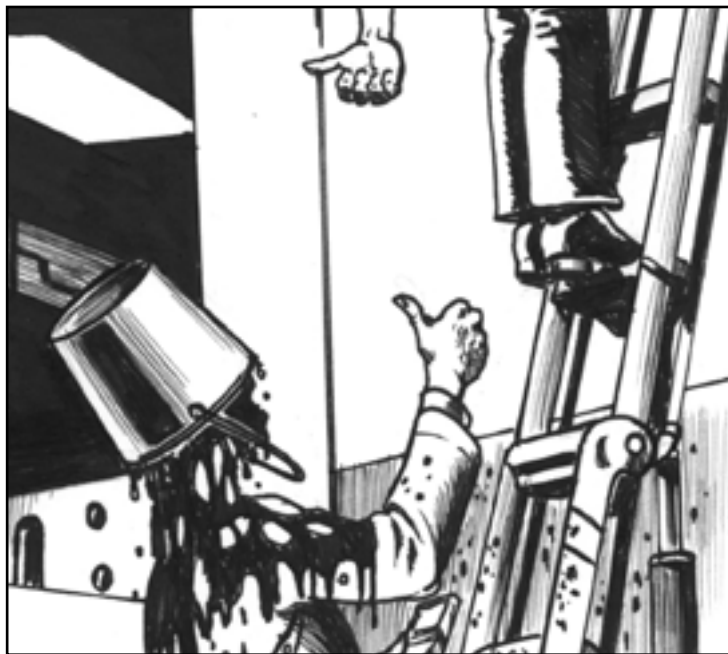
☉ **Stealth**: General sneakiness; any nonverbal attempt to detect or to physically evade detection, conceal physical objects or materials or locate them, misdirect another character's attention, or avoid being misdirected. Stealth includes security and surveillance.

A Troubleshooter employs his Bootlicking speciality in glorious service to The Computer

Stealth skill describes more than skulking silently down corridors; it also measures sensitivity to things you're not supposed to perceive. Thus Stealth is your generic alertness and perception skill.

Stealth doesn't typically cover subliminal messages or sabotage of equipment; these require a Knowledge skill.

Common Stealth specialties: Concealment, Disguise, High Alert, Security Systems, Shadowing, Sleight of Hand, Sneaking, Surveillance.

Example narrow Stealth specialties: Palm Pharmatherapy Pills, Leave My Workplace Undetected Through The Floor Air Conditioning Vent, Spot When the Malfunctioning Security Camera in My Quarters is Working.

☉ **Violence**: Physical, nonverbal attempts to hurt or kill characters, or destroy or break objects. Violence includes all weapon skills plus demolition. The vital specialty Energy Weapons falls under the Violence skill.

Violence is your generic physical activity skill, including running, jumping, and such fiddly activities as lockpicking, juggling and cutting the red wire just three seconds before detonation.

(Though this skill is named 'Violence,' as opposed to, say, 'Physical', you must not assume that gratuitous violent behavior is typical or even unavoidable in Alpha Complex. This idea would demoralize your fellow Troubleshooters.

Attempting to demoralize your fellow Troubleshooters is treason!)

Violence doesn't typically cover sabotage of equipment; such subtle actions require Knowledge skills.

Common Violence specialties: Agility, Demolition, Energy Weapons (vital), Field Weapons, Fine Manipulation, Hand Weapons (force sword, neurowhip, truncheon, knife), Projectile Weapons, Thrown Weapons, Unarmed Combat, Vehicular Combat.

Example narrow Violence specialties: Wield My Trusty Truncheon 'Nora,' Hit Gordon-VLK's Funny Bone in That Way He Hates, Eat Entire Bag of Algae Chips in Four Seconds.

■ *Knowledge skills*

The **Knowledge** group includes Hardware, Software and Wetware skills. Use these to determine if your Troubleshooter knows a given scientific fact or technical procedure; how to operate, maintain, calibrate, and repair stuff; or how to sabotage your companions' equipment.

All three Knowledge skills overlap routinely. For instance, suppose you want to 'adjust' a medbot so it detects your team leader as a monstrous, tentacled alien invader. This could involve Hardware (adjusting biosensor voltages), Software (inserting a new variable in the bot's interpretation subroutines) or Wetware (altering the bot's biosensor settings). You are authorized to try to convince the Gamemaster a skill applies if you can offer a plausible reason.

Character example: 2

You choose Ben-R-GOX-1's six common specialties. Because he's good at Software, you put three specialties under that skill: Data Analysis, Data Search and Financial Systems. Each has a rating equal to Ben-R's Software skill (10) plus 4, or 14.

Because you selected three specialties in Software, you must take three corresponding weaknesses in the same skill. You choose Bot Programming, Operating Systems, and Vehicle Programming as your weaknesses. Each rating is 1.

For Ben-R's other common specialties you choose Moxie (a Management specialty); Security Systems (Stealth); and Projectile Weapons (Violence). To get

their ratings you add 4 to each specialty's governing skill. So Ben-R has a Moxie rating of 12 (4 added to his Management rating of 8), Security Systems 8 (Stealth rating of 4 + 4) and Projectile Weapons 9 (Violence 5 + 4).

For Ben-R's three compensating weaknesses—one each in Management, Stealth and Violence—you choose Intimidation, Disguise and Unarmed Combat. In each, Ben-R's rating is 1.

For now you decide to specify only one of Ben-R's six narrow specialties: Jigger My Barrack's Cash Machine to Give Extra Credits. This is a Software specialty, so Ben-R adds 6 to his Software skill to get the narrow specialty rating of 16.

● **Hardware**: Mechanical or electronic devices and inorganic materials, including laser and projectile weapons, armor, battle suits, bots, autocars and other vehicles, monitors, electrical equipment, power generation, many kinds of engineering (chemical, electronic, habitat, mechanical, nuclear), clone tanks, actual tanks, etc.

Common Hardware specialties: Bot Ops and Maintenance, Chemical Engineering, Electronic Engineering, Habitat Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, Nuclear Engineering, Weapon and Armor Maintenance, Vehicle Ops and Maintenance.

Example narrow Hardware specialties: Increase My Lucky Laser Pistol's Power, Get Barracks Vending Machine to Stop Making That Funny Noise.

● **Software**: Anything data- or software-related, including bot and device programming, operating systems, communication protocols, data search and analysis, safe software, software viruses and worms, confession-booth lie-detector programs and (at the highest skill levels and security clearances) even the inner workings of The Computer itself. Some of these are treasonous at your clearance.

Common Software specialties: Bot Programming, C-Bay, Data Analysis, Data Search, Financial Systems, Hacking, Operating Systems, Vehicle Programming.

Example narrow Software specialties: Soothe Autocar SPD-1's Jangled Brain, Speak in Weird Voice That Keeps Confession Booth NDF-445 Lie Detector From Catching Me.

● **Wetware**: Biological and organic topics and devices, including health, bioweapons, disease, drugs, first aid, biochemical therapy, cooking, poisons, bacteria and organic viruses, cloning procedures, bioscience engineering, survival Outdoors and identification and understanding of specimens from Outdoors.

Common Wetware specialties: Biosciences, Bioweapons, Cloning, Medical, Outdoor Life, Pharmatherapy, Psychotherapy, Survival.

Example narrow Wetware specialties: Make Hot Fun Into Sticky Paste, Make Hot Fun Into Acidic Solvent, Make Hot Fun Into Low-Yield Explosive.

Character example: 3

For Ben-R-GOX-1's service group you roll 1d20 and consult the Service Group table on page 22. You roll 5—Central Processing Unit. Excellent! With Ben-R's strong Software skill, this should be a good match.

To find his service firm, you roll 1d20 and check the CPU firm table. 13—'Pocket Protector Refurbishers'. Huh. Well. Well, there's still an upside—you can choose a skill specialty from the CPU list. You decide against choosing a new specialty. Instead, you take this opportunity to bump up your existing Financial Software specialty by 4, from 14 to 18 (the maximum allowed). Ben-R is a finance wizard!

You're in a Classic game. For Ben-R's mutant power you roll 1d20 and check the Classic table. You roll 6, Energy Field—whatever that is. You write it on the secret side of your character sheet.

■ Service group and firm

At the time you were decanted, your friend The Computer designated you for a particular service group. When you reached age 14 and left your clone creche, you worked at one of that group's service firms as an INFRARED line worker. You worked there for years before The Computer recruited you as a Troubleshooter. You still work at your service firm when you're not on a mission and not currently dead. In this way Troubleshooting is like volunteer firefighting, just not voluntary and with more firefights.

Some service firms can be bitter towards their part-timers, treating them as slackers. Of course, you're sure your own firm wouldn't be so callous. At least, you hope not; your low-level connections in your firm may prove useful as sources of information or equipment.

To determine your service group, roll 1d20 and consult the Service Group table nearby. Find your die-roll on the left side of the table; the name printed on the same line is the service group your service firm services. Then, on the Service Firm table appropriate to your service group, roll 1d20 again to find your service firm. To learn more about your firm, talk to the Gamemaster.

The Armed Forces and Internal Security service groups limit service-firm outsourcing to non-security-related functions. The rest of the old service groups remain today as regulatory agencies supervising the appropriate service firms. These service group bureaucracies are absolutely not flagrantly corrupt sump-holes full of superannuated, impotent bureaucrats. Don't think that. No matter what they act like, don't think that.

■ *Service firm specialties*

At your job, your service firm trained you in one common skill specialty. After thanking The Computer for its customary generosity, you will choose your service firm specialty from the following list. **Choosing a service firm common specialty is mandatory. Any attempt to choose a service firm specialty outside your service firm's authorized list will be answered with appropriate countermeasures.**

Your chosen specialty must enhance your character in exactly one of these two permitted ways:

● **New and improved:** From your service firm's authorized list you choose a new 'free' skill specialty different from, and in addition to, the six you (optionally) chose earlier. The new specialty works like other common specialties, with a rating 4 higher than the governing skill. You don't suffer a compensating weakness for your new service firm specialty.

● **Bumped:** You instead choose to enhance one of the six common specialties you chose earlier. The enhanced specialty must be on your service firm's authorized list. Add 4 to the enhanced specialty's rating (maximum 18). The enhancement has no effect on existing skill weaknesses.

For your convenience service firm specialties are labeled with their governing skill (**M**=Management, **St**=Stealth, **V**=Violence, **H**=Hardware, **So**=Software, **W**=Wetware).

● **Armed Forces:** Demolition (V), Energy Weapons (V), Hand Weapons (V), Projectile Weapons (V), Thrown Weapons (V), Unarmed Combat (V); Vehicle Ops and Maintenance (H).

● **Central Processing**: Security Systems (St); Electronic Engineering (H); Bot Programming (So), Data Analysis (So), Financial Software (So), Data Search (So), Vehicle Programming (So).

● **HPD&MC:** Bootlicking (M), Chutzpah (M), Con Games (M), Moxie (M); Bot Ops and Maintenance (H); Pharmatherapy (W), Medical (W).

● **Internal Security:** Interrogation (M), Intimidation (M); Security Systems (St), Surveillance (St); Energy Weapons (V), Hand Weapons (V), Unarmed Combat (V).

Service firm tables

Service group

Roll 1d20 to determine your service group. Then, unless instructed otherwise, consult the table for your group to find your service firm type. The GM will tell you about your specific firm before play begins.

1 Armed Forces (group)*

2-3 Armed Forces (service firm)

4-5 Central Processing Unit

6-8 HPD & Mind Control

9 Internal Security**

10 Internal Security (service firm)

11-13 Production, Logistics & Commissary

14-15 Power Services

16-17 Research & Design

18-19 Technical Services

20 Industrial spy or saboteur***

* You serve in the Armed Forces proper, not as an outsourced civilian contractor. Don't roll for a service firm.

** Write 'Internal Security' on the back of your character sheet. Roll again for another service group. You are a spy for Internal Security in that group. The second group is your 'cover', the group everyone thinks you work for. You learn a service firm specialty from Internal Security, not your cover group.

*** You've been assigned to spy on or sabotage another service firm in your group. Roll again to determine your group, then roll twice on its firm table to get two service firm types. Your first roll determines who you're spying for, the second whom you're spying on. (If you roll the same firm type both times, you're spying on a direct rival.) You learn a service firm specialty from your original group, not your cover group. You'll collect a salary from both firms, assuming you survive a month.

Armed Forces

Workers for these service firms are civilian contractors, but often were assigned to their firms after an early stint as an Armed Forces grunt.

1-2 Ammunition Fresheners
3-4 Armed Forces Friends Network
5-6 Bodyguard Communications Liaisons
7-8 Blast Shield Maintenance
9-10 Crowd Control (Armed Forces)
11-12 Sensitivity Trainers
13-14 Threat Assessors (Armed Forces)
15-16 Tool & Die Works
17-18 Vulture Squadron Recruiters
19-20 Other (see Gamemaster for details)

Central Processing Unit

1-2 116 Emergency Systems
3-4 Credit License Checkers
5-6 Facility Surveillance Control
7-8 Form Facilitators
9-10 Form Inventory Officers
11-12 Form Disposal Advisors
13-14 Pocket Protector Refurbishers
15-16 Security System Installers
17-18 Volunteer Collection Agencies
19-20 Other (see Gamemaster for details)

HPD & Mind Control

1-2 Entertainment Scouting Agencies
3-4 History Purifiers
5-6 News Services
7-8 Public Hating Coordination
9-10 Sector Expansion Surveyors
11-12 Semantics Control
13-14 Singalong Agents
15-16 Subliminals Police
17-18 Trend Identifiers
19-20 Other (see Gamemaster for details)

Internal Security

1-2 Crowd Control (IntSec)
3-4 Forensic Analysis
5-6 Glee Quota Adjutants
7-8 Re-Education Client Procurement
9-10 Surveillance Operatives
11-12 Termination Center Janitorial
13-14 Thought Surveyors
15-16 Threat Assessors (IntSec)
17-18 Treason Scene Cleanup
19-20 Other (see Gamemaster for details)

Production, Logistics & Commissary (PLC)

1-2 Armored Autocar Escorts
3-4 BLUE Room Caterers
5-6 Equipment Assembly Control
7-8 Field Logistics Advisors
9-10 Food Vat Control
11-12 Inventory System Updaters
13-14 Printing Office Field Checkers
15-16 Storage Media Integrity Assessors
17-18 Warehouse System Inspectors
19-20 Other (see Gamemaster for details)

Power Services

1-2 Battery Backup
3-4 Burn Radius Assessors
5-6 Circuit Maintenance
7-8 Fuel Cell Replenishment (Power)
9-10 Fuel Rod Disposal Consultants
11-12 Odor Fresheners
13-14 Power Oscillation Professionals
15-16 Safe Atoms Initiative
17-18 Wire Supply Checkers
19-20 Other (see Gamemaster for details)

Research & Design

1-2 Biological Niceness Indexers
3-4 Bot Processing
5-6 Drug Interaction Testers
7-8 Field Data Collectors
9-10 Goo Cleanup
11-12 RoboPsych Auditing
13-14 Scientist Sanity Checkers
15-16 Vehicle Therapists
17-18 Weapon Effectiveness Assessors
19-20 Other (see Gamemaster for details)

Technical Services

1-2 Bedding Inspectors
3-4 Clone Tank Support Services
5-6 Consolidated Motorized Transport (CMT)
7-8 Fuel Cell Replenishment (Tech Svcs)
9-10 MemoMax Quality Assurance
11-12 Medical Services
13-14 Paint Control
15-16 Slime Identification
17-18 Tech Support
19-20 Other (see Gamemaster for details)

◉ **PLC:** Chutzpah (M), Con Games (M); Bot Ops and Maintenance (H), Habitat Engineering (H), Vehicle Ops and Maintenance (H); Data Search (So); Biosciences (W).

◉ **Power Services**: Data Analysis (So), Data Search (So); Chemical Engineering (H), Electronic Engineering (H), Habitat Engineering (H), Mechanical Engineering (H), Nuclear Engineering (H).

◉ **R&D:** Chemical Engineering (H), Mechanical Engineering (H), Nuclear Engineering (H); Bot Programming (So), Vehicle Programming (So); Bioweapons (W), Cloning (W).

◉ **Tech Services:** Chemical Engineering (H), Electronic Engineering (H), Habitat Engineering (H), Vehicle Ops and Maintenance (H); Bot Programming (So), Vehicle Programming (So); Pharmatherapy (W).

▌ Mutant power

Due to treasonous sabotage of The Computer's otherwise faultless cloning process, certain clones are decanted with innate mutations that grant them inhuman or superhuman abilities. Because these genetic impurities present an uncontrollable threat to The Computer's hard-won social order, possession of a mutant power is treason punishable by execution.

Unknown (probably) to your fellow Troubleshooters, you possess a mutant power.

You have known about it for some time, but kept it secret from everyone.

The GM may determine your mutant power himself, and may decide not to tell you. If he asks you to determine your own mutant power, thank him profusely and consult the Mutant Powers table nearby. Roll 1d20 and find the number you rolled in the left column of the table appropriate to your GM's play style (Classic, Straight, Zap). The mutant power on the same line is your power. Write the power name on the secret part of your character sheet, protected from other players' prying eyes.

During the game, when you want to use your mutant power, tell the Gamemaster—preferably in secret conference, via note or prearranged signal, by waving coded flags, etc.

To learn about your mutant power, ask the Gamemaster.

▌ *Registering your mutation*

Some mutants have patriotically registered their power with The Computer's Internal Security service group. After you know what your power does, decide whether or not to register it. However, if your power is **Machine Empathy**, *don't reveal it!* The Computer considers that power so dangerous it immediately executes anyone who possesses it.

A registered mutant isn't executed just for being a mutant. If you register your mutation, you can use your power whenever you like without being accused of treason. However, you must wear a yellow stripe on your uniform at all times (citizens of YELLOW Clearance wear a stripe with black borders). As a registered mutant you will certainly face

anti-mutant prejudice. Registered mutants get passed by for promotions, are the butt of jokes in service firm advertising and—most important for your purposes—are frequently the handiest scapegoat when anything goes wrong.

Registered mutants are second-class citizens, if that. The Computer tolerates you and assigns you to Troubleshooter teams in hopes of helping their odds. The Computer assigns responsibility for your safety to the Team Leader. Your fellow citizens can't just shoot you without the Leader's permission, or they risk getting recycled for destroying The Computer's 'equipment'. They can't execute you unless they can *prove* you did something treasonous. Yet citizens still hate and despise you publicly, though members of certain secret societies may look on you with pity.

▌ Secret society

Long ago The Computer wisely started several of Alpha Complex's secret societies as harmless outlets for citizens' repressed urges toward insubordination. Other, more dangerous secret societies formed independently or as offshoots from the originals. Most of the societies developed many feuding factions, all competing for resources or even locked in internecine warfare. These societies survive today, and though talking about them is insubordination, their existence is widely known among citizens of all clearances.

Because even the oldest secret societies now evince dangerous ideas of self-determination, The Computer has rightly condemned all secret society membership as treason punishable by

Mutant power tables

Classic

1	Charm
2	Corrosion
3	Detect Mutant Power
4	Electroshock
5	Empathy
6	Energy Field
7	Hypersenses
8	Levitation
9	Machine Empathy*
10	Matter Eater
11	Mental Blast
12	Polymorphism
13	Puppeteer
14	Pyrokinesis
15	Regeneration
16	Slippery Skin
17	Telekinesis
18	Teleportation
19	Uncanny Luck
20	X-Ray Vision

* Having this mutant power is grounds for immediate and lasting execution.

Straight

1	Adhesive Skin
2	Adrenalin Control
3	Bureaucratic Intuition
4	Charm
5	Death Simulation
6	Deep Thought
7	Electroshock
8	Empathy
9	Energy Field
10	Hypersenses
11	Machine Empathy*
12	Matter Eater
13	Mechanical Intuition
14	Mental Blast
15	Pyrokinesis
16	Regeneration
17	Rubbery Bones
18	Toxic Metabolism
19	Uncanny Luck
20	Ventriloquist

* Having this mutant power is grounds for immediate and lasting execution.

Zap

1	Absorption
2	Chameleon
3	Charm
4	Desolidity
5	Electroshock
6	Energy Field
7	Growth
8	Levitation
9	Machine Empathy*
10	Matter Eater
11	Mental Blast
12	Polymorphism
13	Puppeteer
14	Pyrokinesis
15	Regeneration
16	Shrinking
17	Telekinesis
18	Teleportation
19	Transmutation
20	X-Ray Vision

* Having this mutant power is grounds for immediate and lasting execution.

execution. This is unfortunate for you, because you are a secret society member.

All secret societies recruit aggressively among the INFRARED laborers of Alpha Complex. One such society recruited you several years ago, and you are now familiar with its goals and doctrines. You know its friends, enemies, methods and possibly even a few contacts. Because you recognize your society as a potentially powerful tool for your advancement, you work sincerely and aggressively to further its goals.

The Gamemaster may tell you your secret society, or may ask you to roll a die to determine it. In this case, thank him for his graciousness and consult the Secret Society table appropriate to your service group. Roll 1d20 and find the number you rolled in the left column of the table. The society on the same line is your affiliation. Write it on the secret part of your character sheet.

If you roll an entry with an asterisk, consult the table key below.

To learn about your secret society, ask the Gamemaster.

Secret society degree

Like other institutions in Alpha Complex, most secret societies are strictly hierarchical. The higher your degree (rank) in your society, the more you can exploit your connections to procure restricted equipment or information, gain contacts, borrow funds, or many other kinds of perks. Your secret society designates your degree by a number from 1 (low) to 20 (high). This isn't (just) an abstract game rating but a literal status number tracked by your superiors in the society. Generally the higher your degree number, the greater the authority you can exert over those of lower degree. However, this varies; in some societies, high degree may indicate only prestige or, worse, the magnitude of your administrative drudgework.

Secret society table key

* Write 'Illuminati' on the secret section of your character sheet. Roll the die again to find a second, 'cover' society. You are an undercover agent for the Illuminati in this society.

** You've been assigned to spy on another society. Roll twice more. Your first roll determines who you're spying for, the second whom you're spying on. If you roll a 20 again, the group you're spying on assigns you to spy on a third society. Roll enough 20s and you could be spying on the entire Complex. Good luck keeping your cover stories straight.

Secret society tables

Roll 1d20 and find the table for your service group. The entry beside the number you rolled is your secret society. If the entry has an asterisk, see the key at lower left.

Armed Forces

1-3	Anti-Mutant
4-6	Death Leopard
7-9	Frankenstein Destroyers
10-12	PURGE
13	Communists
14	FCCC-P
15	Free Enterprise
16	Pro Tech
17	Psion
18	Illuminati*
19	Other (see GM for details)
20	Undercover agent**

Central Processing Unit

1-4	Computer Phreaks
5-8	Corpore Metal
9-10	FCCC-P
11-12	Sierra Club
13	Anti-Mutant
14	Communists
15	Pro Tech
16	Psion
17	PURGE
18	Illuminati*
19	Other (see GM for details)
20	Undercover agent**

HPD & Mind Control

1-2	Anti-Mutant
3-4	FCCC-P
5-7	Humanists
8-11	Romantics
12-13	Sierra Club
14	Communists
15	Mystics
16	Psion
17	PURGE
18	Illuminati*
19	Other (see GM for details)
20	Undercover agent**

Internal Security

1-3	Anti-Mutant
4-6	Death Leopard
7-9	FCCC-P
10-12	Frankenstein Destroyers
13	Communists
14	Free Enterprise
15	Pro Tech
16	Psion
17	PURGE
18	Illuminati*
19	Other (see GM for details)
20	Undercover agent**

Production, Logistics & Commissary (PLC)

1-5	Free Enterprise
6-9	Humanists
10-11	Mystics
12-13	Romantics
14	Communists
15	Pro Tech
16	Psion
17	Sierra Club
18	Illuminati*
19	Other (see GM for details)
20	Undercover agent**

Power Services

1-2	Computer Phreaks
3-4	Death Leopard
5-6	FCCC-P
7-8	Frankenstein Destroyers
9-10	Free Enterprise
11-12	Mystics
13-14	Pro Tech
15-16	PURGE
17	Communists
18	Illuminati*
19	Other (see GM for details)
20	Undercover agent**

Research & Design (R&D)

1-3	Computer Phreaks
4-6	Corpore Metal
7-9	Pro Tech
10-12	Psion
13-15	PURGE
16	FCCC-P
17	Communists
18	Illuminati*
19	Other (see GM for details)
20	Undercover agent**

Technical Services

1-2	Computer Phreaks
3-4	Corpore Metal
5-6	Death Leopard
7-8	Frankenstein Destroyers
9-10	Mystics
11-12	Pro Tech
13-14	Psion
15-16	Sierra Club
17	Communists
18	Illuminati*
19	Other (see GM for details)
20	Undercover agent**

Your beginning secret society degree depends on your GM's chosen play style.

Classic: Roll 1d20 and divide the number rolled by 4 (round fractions up). The result is your degree.

Straight: Your degree is 1, meaning you are a low-level flunky. Further your society's goals and succeed in its secret missions, and advancement will surely follow.

Zap: Roll 1d20. The result is your degree. Do you think it unlikely a powerful degree-20 potentate in a secret society would become a lowly RED Troubleshooter? True. Propose an explanation for this predicament to your GM. Using his incontestably unbiased judgment, he may see fit to give your imperiled character some secret perks.

▮ *Secret skills*

Contacts in your secret society have taught you things The Computer's teachbots never mentioned. These areas of knowledge or practice, not covered by the Action and Knowledge skills, are **Secret** skills.

Secret skills are grouped in these categories:

- 👁 **Uncommon** in Alpha Complex but not necessarily treasonous: Swimming, Rock Climbing, and other Outdoors skills; craft skills such as cooking or glassblowing; conceivably (among citizens whose hormone suppressants have worn off) even seduction. Knowing how to drive a non-automated vehicle is Uncommon; each vehicle type is a different skill. To

Secret skills

If your secret society requires you to learn a specific Secret skill, it appears in **bold print** on the society's line in this table. Skills not in bold print are recommended but not mandatory. If you don't like a recommended skill, pick one from another society, or invent your own skill and submit it to the GM for approval.

Society	Uncommon	Unlikely	Unhealthy*
Anti-Mutant	Power Studies	Comic Book Trivia	Twitchtalk
Computer Phreaks	Cash Hacking	Jargon	Hacking, programming skills
Communists	Demolition	Tractor Maintenance	**Propaganda***
Corpore Metal	Cyborging	Botspotting	Bioweapons
Death Leopard	**Demolition**	Action Movies, Partying	Gambling
FCCC-P	Alpha Complex History	priestly skills	Meeting Machine Empaths
Frankenstein Destroyers	Demolition	toolmaking skills	programming skills
Free Enterprise	Haggling	Advertising & Marketing	Bribery, Forgery
Humanists	Marital Arts *[sic]*	hobbies, languages	Old Reckoning Cultures
Illuminati	———— skills taught by your cover society ————		
Mystics	**Drug Procurement**	Meditation, Partying	Old Reckoning Drugs
Pro Tech	Experimental Equipment Repair/Maintenance	Video Games	WMD
Psion	Power Studies	Comic Book Trivia	Twitchtalk
PURGE	**Demolition**	Gloating	Bioweapons, Twitchtalk
Romantics	Archival Studies	Cooking, Knitting, Music	**Old Reckoning Cultures**
Sierra Club	Survival, Wild Lore, Travel	Birdwatching, Botany, Spoor Recognition, etc.	Bioweapons

* Each society also has a specific Propaganda skill, an Unhealthy skill that is unique and differs from all other societies' versions of the skill.

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

justify your character's Uncommon skill, offer the GM a convincing rationale. ('I became a bookbinder to repair a High Programmer's treasonous Old Reckoning book collection.')

◉ **Unlikely** to figure significantly in a mission: Knitting and other hobby skills, Whistling, Teela-O-MLY Trivia, Video Games, etc. However, by roleplaying these skills during the game, you can earn *Perversity points*, described later.

◉ **Unhealthy**: Treasonous skills such as Communist Propaganda, Digital Image Manipulation, Filesharing, foreign languages, etc.; knowledge of Old Reckoning Cultures; criminal skills (Twitchtalk, Fraudulent Accounting, Gambling); also skills legally available only at a higher clearance than yours (highly advanced science or mathematics, etc.).

Some secret societies mandate that you learn certain Secret skills. Other societies couldn't give a used algae chip which skills you learn. Find your society's preferences in the table nearby. If a skill appears in **bold print**, you must learn that skill. If the skill name isn't in bold, or no skill is listed, you may learn any Secret skill you wish. If you're undercover, learn your cover society's skills.

Unless the GM informs you otherwise, you are required to choose exactly **one Secret skill in each category** (Uncommon, Unlikely, Unhealthy). The GM, that paragon

of fairness, can veto your choices or assign them to a different category. Never choose something like 'Unerringly Destroy Fellow Troubleshooters' or you risk alienating the GM's tender affections.

Write the skills on the secret side of your character sheet. For Secret skills not on the regular non-secret list, roll 1d20; the result is the skill's rating. For specialties from the regular non-secret list, like Demolition, determine their rating normally from the governing skill's rating. If you already have that specialty or weakness, don't change the existing rating.

▋ Perversity points and tics

You, the player (as opposed to your character), start play with 25 *Perversity points*. You can use these points for many desirable things explained later. You now have a valuable opportunity to earn bonus Perversity points! You will of course embrace this chance with a joyous heart.

You may earn up to 10 valuable Perversity points by choosing one or two identifiable *tics*: examples of your character's individual quirks, quiddities and habits.

A tic is any *obvious and recognizable* behavior or condition that seldom, if ever, directly affects the game—for example, humming absently, twiddling your thumbs when you're nervous, or twitching when anyone mentions 'the sewers'. Perhaps you acquired your tic while working at your service firm, or because of your mutant power. For instance, if you worked all day for years shuffling rods of enriched uranium from one Power Services reactor to another,

wouldn't you expect to have an odd rash or persistent sores or faintly glowing hair?

A tic is never secret. Anyone in your presence for more than a few minutes observes it. The tic doesn't inhibit your ability to do anything useful; it's just a way strangers might describe you. A database query for some generic description like 'tall male Troubleshooter, black hair, crewcut, shifty features' would bring up more hits than a Google search for 'sex'. A description that includes a few tics ('He had bow legs and a monitor-shaped mole on his jaw, he snuffled through his nose and when I offered him a bag of algae chips he screamed like a girl') could pull you out of a police lineup with 99% accuracy.

Possibly you see no worth in this notion. Why, then, take a tic? First, it helps you roleplay a distinctive character. If that doesn't motivate you, consider this: For each tic you take during character creation (up to two tics), you earn Perversity points. The number of Perversity points is determined when all players have created their characters and, in unison, present their character sheets to the Gamemaster. The GM reads aloud all tics. For each of your tics the GM considers basically similar to another player's tic(s), you earn 1 point. For each of your tics that differs from all other players' tics, you instead earn 5 Perversity points.

Though you only earn Perversity points for the first two tics you select, you can add more tics if you wish, making your character still more identifiable. Why, look, your fellow players are encouraging you! Don't you want to please them?

▋ *Tics in play*

Like Secret skills, Tics can earn you Perversity points not only during character creation but in the course of play. Tics are your roleplaying cues. When you play your tics effectively, in a fun and entertaining way, the GM may award you a Perversity point bonus. He may reward you for a particularly fun tic use during the game, but more often he'll make the award at the end of a play session. **Beware!** Boring or repetitive tics won't earn you points, no matter how many times you sniff your underarms or jerk your head to the right.

▋ Security clearance

With its customary wisdom The Computer has arranged all Alpha Complex society using an unbreakable system of security clearances. The security clearances are ranked by color, low to high: INFRARED, RED, ORANGE, YELLOW, GREEN, BLUE, INDIGO, VIOLET, ULTRAVIOLET. INFRARED-clearance citizens wear black, and ULTRAVIOLET citizens (also known as *High Programmers*) wear white. Everyone else wears clothing of the color appropriate for their clearance. Rooms and corridors in Alpha Complex are painted in varying hues of their clearance colors. To pass

Character example: 4

Next you roll 1d20 to determine Ben-R-GOX-1's secret society. You're not sure what the societies do, but with your great Financial Software rating, it sounds like you'd be a natural for Free Enterprise. Because Ben-R is in the CPU service group, you rub your lucky die, roll a 15, and check the CPU secret society table. 'Frankenstein Destroyers'—whoever they are, they don't sound particularly businesslike.

Looking at the Secret skills available in the Destroyers, you don't see anything attractive to a financial software guru. None of their skills are mandatory. You skip Demolition and the toolmaking skills. For Unhealthy you don't want programming; you like Twitchtalk instead.You could create your own Uncommon and Unlikely skills, but you like the Free Enterprise entries in these categories: Haggling and Advertising & Marketing.

For each Secret skill you roll 1d20. Your Twitchtalk skill is 13, Haggling is 6, and Advertising & Marketing is a dismal 1.

You start the game with 25 Perversity points—and those are *your* points, you the player, not Ben-R-GOX-1's points. You want more, so you choose two visible tics for Ben-R. All his software duties in CPU have left him with twitchy fingers (carpal tunnel), and he often clacks his teeth together in a fashion some might find annoying. If no other player chooses these same tics for his character, you'll earn 5 more Perversity apiece for them.

Ben-R is Clearance RED. He has two attributes, Access and Power, but you don't know what his ratings are.

Nothing looks good on the Equipment chart, so you keep your 1,000 starting credits for now.

When you show your character to the GM, he notes your strong Free Enterprise inclination despite putative membership in the Destroyers. He decides the Destroyers have assigned you to spy undercover on Free Enterprise. A chance to use that Financial Software skill after all!
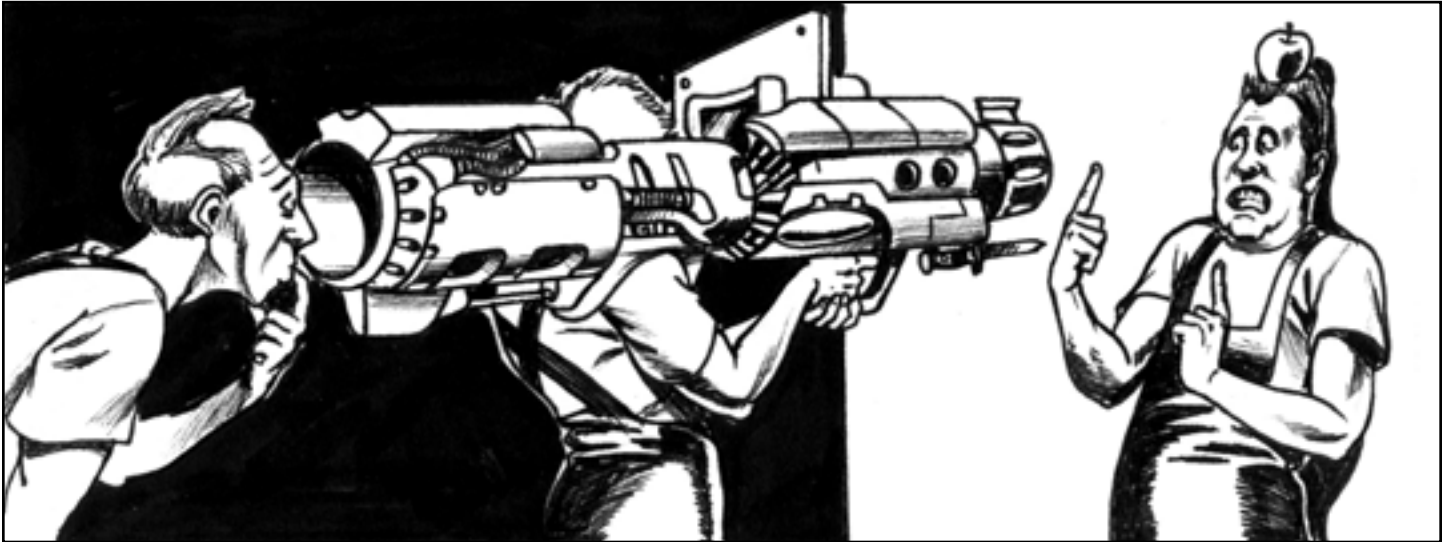
A Troubleshooter practices his weapon skills in cooperation with an enthusiastic INFRARED volunteer.

through a corridor or enter a room beyond your clearance is treason.

Your clearance measures nothing less than The Computer's expressed trust in you. If The Computer trusts you not at all (as with most citizens), you are a common INFRARED. At the other extreme, if The Computer trusts you to revise the very code it runs on, you are a High Programmer, Clearance ULTRAVIOLET. All citizens in Alpha Complex, whatever their current rank, began as INFRAREDs. As the game starts, you have been promoted from the teeming masses of INFRAREDs to Clearance RED. The Computer encourages all citizens to aspire to higher clearance, so they may serve Alpha Complex more effectively.

Armed with The Computer's trust, those of high clearance can exercise great authority over everyone of lower clearance. Thus some selfish individuals may have a different motive for rising in clearance: so they can lord it over their fellow citizens. Of course, you and your fellow Troubleshooters are certainly immune to such selfishness.

Note: Players who ascend to *PARANOIA* after playing other (non-fun) RPGs sometimes mistake a rise in security clearance for what some games might call 'going up in level'—an increase in the character's abilities or general competence. **This is incorrect!** Security clearance simply measures The Computer's current regard for the character.

The Computer's regard for you, and hence your security clearance, might change often, both up and down. This absolutely doesn't imply that the GM is running the game capriciously, without due respect for your character's careful career plans. Nonsense. Who could imagine such a thing?

▌ Attributes

Your Troubleshooter, like every human character in Alpha Complex, has two innate *attributes: Power* and *Access*.

Warning! Each of your attributes has a numerical rating, but at Clearance RED you are not permitted to know your attribute ratings. You are only allowed to know, in a general way, what each attribute measures. **Displaying knowledge of your own or any character's attribute ratings below Clearance ULTRAVIOLET is treason.**

👁 **Power** measures the strength of your mutant power. The higher your Power rating, the more effectively you can use your power.

👁 **Access** describes how smoothly you can get things done in the Alpha Complex bureaucracy. It measures your awareness of intricate clerical procedures and your ability to pull strings to get favors from influential people.

Access is different from security clearance, which measures The Computer's trust in you. Access is not trustworthiness, but streetwise efficiency. The higher your Access, the more smoothly you can (for instance) get that disgruntled clerk behind the counter in PLC to have a broken showerhead repaired promptly.

In this way Access is better than security clearance. A high security clearance just moves you to the front of the PLC line and lets you threaten the clerk—but if the clerk doesn't have the replacement showerhead, threats won't help. The Access attribute lets you realize you need Plumbing Supply Requisition Form 2214-PLC-5632 rev. 12, in sextuplicate. Or Access can instead ensure that a friend in Free Enterprise lines up an INFRARED-market showerhead pronto.

▌ *Draining attribute points*

You are not cleared to understand how the GM uses your attribute ratings in play. In general terms, he tracks these ratings as a pool of points, which he may spend to let your character accomplish tasks.

👁 If you are using your mutant power, the GM may drain Power points from your current rating to represent the energy you expend swallowing uranium or setting your supervisor on fire.

👁 If you want to get something done in the bureaucracy, the GM may drain Access points from your rating to represent your cashing in favors to locate your briefing room or repair your showerhead.

Do not ask the GM how many points you have, nor how many he has drained to accomplish a given task. These questions are prohibited and punishable by stern measures.

After draining your points, the GM will tell you the result of your action. He may or may not divulge whether the drain had any effect, as it suits his mysterious purpose.

If you run out of attribute points, you won't find out. You can perhaps deduce it from repeated failures, but this is mere guesswork. The kindly GM usually replenishes your points at the start of the next scene or play session. **Do not ask when the GM will next replenish your attribute points. This question is forbidden and will incur reprisal.**

▉ Equipment

By making Alpha Complex an all-embracing command economy drawing on the collective effort of all loyal citizens, taking from each citizen according to his ability and giving to each according to [CLASSIFIED], The Computer has fought off the Communist menace. In recent years The Computer's High Programmers have reshaped the Complex economy to encourage greater concentration of wealth in those best able to spend it wisely: the High Programmers. To this end many new service firms manufacture a wide range of consumer goods that you, as a loyal citizen, are extremely strongly encouraged to buy. Buy often! Spend freely! Spend to the limit of your means, for the good of the High Programmers and hence of all Alpha Complex!

You have both *personal equipment* you buy yourself with your own credits, and equipment *assigned* by The Computer's service firms as part of your mission.

Your personal equipment includes one standard-issue red jumpsuit with boots, a month's worth of REDdiMeals, and all the approved happiness drugs you want. You may also purchase more personal equipment using the chart nearby. If anything happens to your personal equipment, you must buy it again if you want replacements, and you may earn The Computer's disapproval for flagrant waste of property.

Your assigned equipment includes:

- ❧ One laser pistol body, minus the barrel.

  N**ote:** Your assigned laser pistol lacks a barrel. It won't fire without a barrel. Laser barrels are color-coded by security clearance and are issued at PLC when you pick up your mission-related equipment. (To get a barrel without proper PLC authorization is absolutely impossible, no matter what your secret society contacts tell you. It's impossible, so don't even think about it. PLC thanks you.)

- ❧ One suit of red reflec armor overalls in (more or less) your size.

- ❧ A Series 1300 Personal Digital Companion (PDC).

  Your PDC is a helpful, friendly phone and AI contained within a cellphone-sized, easily concealable plastic case. The PDC has a small color display touchscreen, a stylus, a standard telephony keypad, and a built-in camera that can document still or video pictures of any treasonous behavior you might happen to point it at. The PDC also includes built-in online forms for reporting said treason quickly and conveniently.

  On your PDC you can call The Computer at any time, as well as mission personnel if they are willing to take your call. All images, data, and voice messages from your PDC are copied instantly to your personal, pass phrase-protected online file storage area, made available to you free as a public service by Internal Security. (Your End Citizen License Agreement gives IntSec the right to peruse at will the contents of your file area.)

You don't own your assigned equipment. You use it at the pleasure of the service firm. You are financially responsible for these items; if anything happens to them, you must reimburse the service firm for the items' cost, and you may earn The Computer's official disfavor.

You also own, as personal equipment, one *ME Card*.

▉ *The ME Card*

The Computer requires every citizen to carry a Mercantile Enterprise card—universally known as the **ME Card**. Though it looks and works much like Old Reckoning credit cards, your ME Card is far more. Loaded with your biometric data, credit history, property inventory, and authentication codes, the ME Card is, in a sense, your identity.

Sadly, the card's built-in sensors don't test whether the individual carrying your card is the rightful owner. The Computer, in its analysis of economic systems, has determined it doesn't matter who is spending the money so long as someone is. So if you lose your ME Card, the thief can become Officially You until you recover, destroy, or cancel your Card.

Because cancelling an ME Card is a slow, all-day ordeal at Central Processing (though nothing compared to the three-day hell of getting a replacement), it's far more practical to try tracking down your stolen Card—and in the meantime even to 'borrow' someone else's Card and become Offically Him for a while.

Identity theft in Alpha Complex has thus become not just a concern but an everyday event. Wise citizens go to extremes to protect their Cards.

Still, take heart! Theft of one's Card doesn't always mean immediate financial ruin. The ME Card's resources are highly unreliable, varying in their buying power and perquisites by sector, time of day and database availability.

Character creation complete!

You have successfully negotiated the character creation process. **You have not yet completed the entire orientation process.** Continue promptly to the next chapter.

▉ Equipment

This chart lists many common and sought-after items and their typical costs. Prices vary with current production quotas, The Computer's current inflation policy and other, even more boring reasons.

Every item has a security clearance below which it is illegal to possess the item without specific authorization from The Computer. Possessing an item marked with a double asterisk (**) below the listed clearance is treason. In Straight games possessing an item without the double asterisk is merely insubordination punishable by a fine. In Classic or Zap games possessing the item is treason.

Note: If the Gamemaster doesn't like something on this list, he'll change it.

▉ Bots
[cost; clearance]
Bot brain, used: 500; varies
Combot**: 30,000; B
Docbot 1: 1,000; R
Docbot 5: 10,000; B
Guardbot: 8,000; G
Jackobot: 10,000; O
Petbot: 400; any
Robutler: 2,500; Y
Scrubot: 1,000; R
Teachbot: 1,000; R
Warbot Model 425 Mark 4**: not for sale

▉ Coms and multicorders
Com 1: 100; R
    2: 500; Y
    3: 1,000; G
    4**: 5,000; I
Multicorder 1: 600; R
    2: 1,000; G
    3**: 5,000; I
    4**: 10,000; V
Multicorder programs: 100; varies
PDC: 250; R

▉ Vehicles
Vehicle prices and availability vary. Rebates possible. Dealer prep and options not included.

Autocar: 15,000; R
Copter: 75,000; G
Crawler: 50,000; Y
Flybot: 125,000; B
Transbot: 50,000; O
Vulturecraft**: you can't afford this; B

See the IR Market chart at the end of the Player section (p. 48) for more cool and potentially treasonous stuff to buy.

4. Spending your credits

You start your career as a Troubleshooter with a generous reward from The Computer of 1,000 credits. At Clearance RED, this is about a month of ordinary expenses.

Your salary of 1,000 credits a month is paid directly by The Computer and not from any service group budget, so no boss or overseer will demand a kickback. This lets you husband your credits to pay mission-related expenses. Troubleshooter missions, though they pay generous completion bonuses, do tend to incur expenses.

You won't *necessarily* die multiple times and have to buy new clones. You won't *inevitably* terminate some victim without sufficient evidence and thus be liable for the cost of his replacement clone. You aren't *inherently* likely to destroy property without authorization and be billed for the damage. You won't *absolutely, beyond any doubt* offend some high-clearance citizen who punishes you with a breathtaking fine.

It won't *necessarily, inevitably, inherently, absolutely, beyond any doubt* happen that way.

However, keep the possibility in mind. Thank you for your cooperation.

◼ Salary and living expenses

The higher your clearance, the more it costs to maintain your existence in the manner to which you hope to become accustomed.

The monthly salary you earn depends on your security clearance. By a remarkable coincidence, this is the same amount as your average monthly living expenses. Here are typical salaries, by clearance, and the standard of living they buy. Because vidshows exhaustively document the lifestyles of the famous high-clearance citizens who have earned The Computer's trust, every citizen in Alpha Complex knows many perks available at every clearance. The Computer encourages tasteful expressions of desire for these perks, to the extent they signify one's greater service to Alpha Complex. Expressions of outright envy are impolite.

INFRARED (100 credits/month)

Food: FunFoods (Hot and Cold), many kinds of algae, Bouncy Bubble Beverage on special occasions. INFRAREDs can live without cost indefinitely. The Computer pays them a small monthly stipend to aid the Alpha Complex economy.
Housing: Communal barracks.
Transport: Feet. Transtube.
Staff: None.
Authority: None.
Perks: Perpetual happy drug haze.
Typical INFRARED citizens: Line workers and grunts of all service groups; over 80% of the population is INFRARED. The Computer

officially regards INFRAREDs as the admirably sturdy foundation of Alpha Complex. Nearly all higher-clearance citizens emerge from their teeming ranks; Alpha Complex has no hereditary aristocracy. Privately, many of RED Clearance and above (generically called 'trusted citizens') hold INFRAREDs in contempt as drugged drones.

Still, INFRAREDs tend to live longer than trusted citizens below, say, GREEN Clearance, because as a group they seem less prone to treason. For this reason, and because of their huge numbers, INFRAREDs are subject to much less surveillance than other groups.

RED (1,000 credits/month)

Food: FunFoods, REDdiMeals with Soylent Red, Bouncy Bubble Beverage occasionally, real food a couple of times a month.
Housing: Room shared with up to five other citizens.
Transport: Feet. Transtube. Transition.
Staff: None.
Authority: None. Even Infrareds aren't likely to listen to you, as they're doing jobs for the higher-ups.
Perks: You're not drugged all the time, and you're not INFRARED.

Typical RED citizens: Troubleshooters, senior clerks, low-level technicians, Armed Forces grunts; about 10% of the population.

ORANGE (2,000/month)

Food: FunFoods, ORANGEyouGladMeals with Soylent Orange, all the B3 you want, real food weekly.
Housing: Room shared with one other citizen.
Transport: Feet. Transtube. Transition. Autocar hack once in a while.
Staff: None.
Authority: You can coerce the occasional INFRARED.
Perks: Well, you're not RED. Some free time.
Typical ORANGE citizens: Technical supervisors, managers, mundane programmers, vidshow sidekicks, Armed Forces corporals; about 6% of the population.

YELLOW (3,000/month)

Food: FunFoods, MelloYELLOWMeals with Soylent Yellow, real food once daily.
Housing: Your own room (under camera surveillance). Shared bathroom.
Transport: Transtube. Autocar hack.

> As a **RED Clearance citizen**, you receive a salary of **1,000 credits per month**. As a Troubleshooter, you are paid directly by The Computer.
>
> Your **living expenses** at RED Clearance cost 1,000 credits a month. Higher clearances have higher monthly expenses. **Live at the level appropriate for your clearance** or risk loss of status.

Citizens of all clearances show admirable zeal in service to The Computer.

Staff: Whomever you can threaten.

Authority: You manage a small group at your service firm.

Perks: You set your own schedule (subject to higher-clearance demands). You can request changes in your pharmatherapy.

Typical YELLOW citizens: Mid-level bureaucrats, R&D project leads, vidshow hosts, Armed Forces sergeants, PLC artisans crafting handmade trinkets for High Programmers; about 2% of the population.

GREEN (10,000/month)

Food: Real food each meal, supplemented with GREENGood and various Soylents.

Housing: Private one-bedroom apartment.

Transport: Hack. Shared private autocar.

Staff: A housebot servant.

Authority: May assign on-the-spot insubordination fines. May demote RED citizens. You manage a large division of your service firm.

Perks: Noticeable jump in status (and, often, body weight). Lower levels may engage in spontaneous bootlicking—that is, not at laserpoint. Pharmatherapy optional.

Typical GREEN citizens: Senior supervisors, managing directors, elite artisans, Armed Forces lieutenants, IntSec goons. All citizens of GREEN Clearance and above (sometimes generically called 'administrators' or 'managers') collectively comprise about 2% of the population.

BLUE (40,000/month)

Food: Nothing but real food all the time! At last!

Housing: Opulent suite in safe and prestigious subsector.

Transport: Private autocar.

Staff: Full bot staff and bot programmer. Seldom if ever do you encounter Infrareds.

Authority: May promote to Clearance ORANGE or lower. May demote from GREEN or lower. May assign Merit awards and penalties. You manage an entire service firm.

Perks: You go to the front of any line; invitations to vidshow award ceremonies;

exclusive club memberships; underlings grovel routinely. Your private life is exempt from routine surveillance.

Typical BLUE citizens: Junior executives on the rise, vidshow producers, Armed Forces captains and majors, IntSec officers, Central Processing managing directors.

INDIGO (100,000/month)

Food: Gourmet meals and rich desserts.

Housing: A lovely big corridor all your own.

Transport: Several vehicles with chauffeur or pilot.

Staff: Full staff of humans and bots. You can go a month without seeing an ORANGE citizen.

Authority: May promote to GREEN or lower. May demote from BLUE or lower. You serve on the Boards of several service firms.

Perks: Obsessive coverage on celebrity vidshows, assuming you like that; always a table open or a room ready; you skip the lines completely and go directly to the manager. You pull lots of strings at Internal Security. If you offer sufficiently good reasons to The Computer, you can openly collect and study achievements of Old Reckoning Cultures.

Typical INDIGO citizens: Senior executives, Armed Forces colonels, IntSec deputy supervisors, Central Processing chief director, HPD&MC vidshow studio chiefs, most secret society chiefs.

VIOLET (600,000/month)

Food: Huge Hollywood-scale dinner parties catered by a GREEN master chef. (You fought hard to get your chef, and you constantly fend off marauding rivals who want to spirit him away.)

Housing: A subsector or two.

Transport: Many autocars, truckbots, private flybots and maybe a sub; full motorcade with IntSec escort.

Staff: Full human staff. (Bots are so working-class.) You hardly ever encounter anyone YELLOW or lower.

Authority: May promote to and demote from INDIGO or lower. May order summary

executions and erasure of clone templates. 'Service firms? Oh, you mean my investment portfolio.'

Perks: You see this sector? It's yours. You don't go to managers; they come to you. You can freely say almost anything short of outright Commie propaganda. 'Internal Security? Oh, you mean my staff police.'

Typical VIOLET citizens: CEOs, generals, IntSec chief supervisor, Free Enterprise secret society chiefs, Machine Empaths. A typical INFRARED citizen may see a VIOLET once or twice in his life.

ULTRAVIOLET (if you have to ask, you can't afford it)

Food, Housing, Transport, Staff, Perks: If they can't have it, it not only doesn't exist, it probably can't.

Authority: Nobody knows exactly what they do or where they live. High Programmers are either famous throughout the Complex or, if they prefer, totally anonymous. Mere knowledge of their activities is potentially treasonous.

Typical ULTRAVIOLET citizens: This information is not available at your security clearance.

■ *Underspending*

In times of tight cash you can decide to save credits by living at a lower clearance level than you're entitled to. You can even return to living free at an INFRARED level of squalor, eating food out of a tube and bunking in a big echoing barracks that smells of acetone and formaldehyde. This costs nothing, except to the prestige and influence you enjoyed. However, your frugal ways will attract attention from The Computer.

The Computer tracks the amount each citizen spends every day. A citizen who spends notably less than average obviously must be doing something illegal: stealing what he should be buying, spending money on the IR Market, or even (gasp!) funneling funds to subversive organizations.

5. Clones

You need credits for many expenses, including (in Straight games) new clones.

In the old days of Alpha Complex, The Computer created citizens in families of six identical clones, all born from the tanks at the same time. When they died, their precious genetic heritage was lost to Alpha Complex. What a treasonous waste of resources! Today, thanks to advances in forced-growth cloning technology, The Computer's loyal servants in Technical Services can now produce new clone copies of any citizen at will, and can copy

In the old days citizens were decanted in families of six identical clones. Now you are just You, alone—the **Prime**.

If you die, your memories are transferred to a **clone backup body**. You have **five clone backups**. If your GM allows it, you can purchase new six-packs of backups.

and transfer a clone's memories with absolute accuracy.

Most citizens who meet an untimely demise must wait months for Tech Services to get around to downloading their recorded memories into a new replacement body. Because Troubleshooters have a twenty-seven-thousand-percent higher fatality rate than average, The Computer has thoughtfully ordered Tech Services to prepare a number of ready backup Yous. Unfortunately, this costs money—and it comes out of your salary.

When you start a new Troubleshooter, Tech Services grants you six clones for a regulated minimal cost. You begin as Clone #1 in your line, the so-called *Prime*, which costs nothing. The value of the remaining five clones in your first six pack is 2,000 credits—a value of 400 credits per clone, yours free! Thank you, Friend Computer.

What happens when you run out of clones? That depends on your GM's play style.

Zap: You're gone. Generate a new character.

Classic: The Gamemaster chooses whether clones work like Zap games or Straight games.

Straight: If you have exhausted your six allotted clones, all is not lost. You can buy new 'six-packs' of six more clones. Still, things get unpleasant for two main reasons: cost and genetic defects.

First, cost. To discourage frivolous dying, The Computer has decreed that your first additional six-pack (Clones 7-12) costs 6,000 credits—1,000 per clone. The price goes up for each subsequent six-pack. The price progression after the twelfth clone is not available at your clearance. To pay for your fifth or sixth six-pack, you may need to take an odd job on the side. Maybe two odd jobs. Maybe two hundred.

If you lack the credits to pay for a new six-pack, your credit balance goes negative. If your negative credit balance dips too low, your clone bank forecloses and wipes your template. Once your deadbeat Troubleshooter dies, start a new character. The threshold for this catastrophe is 10 times the monthly living expenses associated with your clearance, described under 'Living Expenses'. For example, if you're Red clearance, with expenses of 1,000 credits a month, the clone bank forecloses when your balance hits –10,000.

Your first additional six-pack of clones costs **6,000 credits—1,000 per clone**. The cost of later clones is not available at your clearance.

Backup clones beyond your original five are prone to cumulative imperfections called **genetic drift**.

The bright spot here is if someone else kills you without having adequate evidence of your treason, the impetuous murderer is liable for the cost of your new clone—assuming you can find the killer. (Remember, this applies to Straight games only.)

A more serious problem is genetic drift. Tiny imperfections in the cloning process enter your clone template and accumulate with each clone after the sixth. The seventh might have a minor speech impediment or be missing a finger. The eighth has the same problem and could also be nearsighted, partially deaf, or color-blind (a grave hazard in Alpha Complex). The ninth has both of these problems and might also have a pronounced limp, twitch, or hump. By the tenth or eleventh clone, think Quasimodo.

At Clearance BLUE and higher you can spend 10,000 credits to get Tech Services to clean up and correct your clone template, so that your next six clones are as perfect as the original. The only means of template cleanup at lower cost or clearance is an illicit deal made through a secret society. Generally the society requires you to do it a favor at some unspecified time in the future. Perhaps the society will never call in that favor, perhaps they will never need you...

Does your clone replacement always have the same mutant power as its predecessor? Not necessarily. If you want to keep the same power, tell the GM. Otherwise, he may give you a new power or ask you to roll again on the Mutant Power table in this section.

In earlier times citizens were decanted simultaneously in 'clone families' of six. How wasteful of resources! New technology gives you new clones on demand.

6. Mandatory Bonus Duty (MBD)

The Computer assigns fun and interesting duties to specific members of your Troubleshooter mission team as rewards for their continued service. These **Mandatory Bonus Duties** (MBDs) enhance the team's chances of success and provide many exciting and educational experiences. Your added responsibility will make you feel loved, wanted and secure, and not at all paranoid.

For instance, your MBD might be *Communications and Recording Officer*. As such, in addition to your normal duties during a mission, you'd operate a valuable multicorder to record every action by your fellow

Each Troubleshooter on the team has a special duty. You may be **Team Leader**, **Loyalty Officer**, **Hygiene Officer**, **Communications Officer**, **Happiness Officer**, or **Equipment Guy**.

Troubleshooters. You could get all your fellow Troubleshooters to smile and demonstrate their loyalty to The Computer right there on camera as they execute their mission. Wouldn't that be fun?

Mission briefing officers may assign you an MBD based on detailed analysis of your past achievements, your performance on HPD&MC Mandatory Bonus Duty Determination Test 88-9b, your core competencies or your place in alphabetical order.

The Duties

◉ **Team Leader**: Offers guidance and sound advice to other team members; acts as tactical situation commander in combat

◉ **Loyalty Officer**: Discourages treasonous thoughts; looks for early warning signs of Commie sympathy.

◉ **Hygiene Officer**: Monitors the personal hygiene level of other team members, preventing poor morale, substandard performance and halitosis. CPU performance tracking statistics show [CLASSIFIED] percent of Troubleshooter missions fail due to poor hygiene.

◉ **Communications and Recording Officer**: Chronicles the mission using advanced video technology, extremely sensitive microphones and gripping color commentary. Good lighting and innovative camera angles produce excellent training material and possibly even footage for popular evening vidshows like *Bake That Commie!*

◉ **Happiness Officer**: Ensures everyone has fun on the mission; knows jokes, sings, leads citizen-instruction games; authorizes and administers biochemical supplements needed to guarantee a fun time is had by all.

◉ **Bots/Weapons/Vehicles/Sundry Equipment Repair and Maintenance Officer (Equipment Guy)**: Controls bots and vehicles assigned to the team; monitors each Troubleshooter's equipment maintenance level. The Equipment Guy is responsible for assigned mission equipment that gets lost, stolen or damaged.

7. Doing things

When you want your Troubleshooter to do something—use a skill, your mutant power, certain equipment, secret society contacts, etc.—tell the Gamemaster what you want to happen.

The GM sometimes simply tells you what happens. He may instead roll dice to determine the outcome of your action, or may ask you to roll a d20 and compare it to one of your skill numbers, your mutant power, or your secret society rank. In making the roll, you are 'rolling against' the skill.

Sometimes the GM tells you the skill you are rolling against, sometimes (in his undeniable wisdom) not. Sometimes the GM will let you suggest an appropriate attribute or skill. The skill areas overlap, so be creative.

In general, if the die roll is equal to or less than the designated number, your action succeeds. Sometimes the roll must be over the rating to succeed. Sometimes the GM may tell you which one you want. Or not.

Sometimes the GM may allow you and other players to spend *Perversity points* (explained below) to adjust the number you need to roll, thereby adjusting your chance of success. These adjustments, called *General Perversity Modifiers*, are described in the section 'Scenes'.

▌ Scenes

A **scene** is the basic unit of play. Typically it begins when the Troubleshooters arrive at a location directly important to the mission's main storyline. Typically it ends when everybody gets ki– when the Troubleshooters resolve the scene's objectives.

The GM will tell you when a scene starts or ends. The start and end of a scene are each marked by a game event.

- ❧ **Perversity point ration** (scene start): The GM awards you a number of Perversity points. Perversity points are explained below.

- ❧ **Congeniality award** (scene end): The GM may optionally offer a bonus award of Perversity points to the Troubleshooter who most needs a morale boost.

The GM might ask each player in turn to say aloud which player most deserves the Congeniality award. It is entirely permissible to vote for yourself, but there is no secret ballot. You voice your opinions to all. The GM may give the top vote winner(s) the award, may give it to a different player, or may give no award at all.

Rule #1. The GM is right!

Rule #2. Know nothing.

Rule #3. Be entertaining.

To do something, tell the GM. He tells you what happens. He may roll 1d20 or ask you to roll.

Play proceeds in **scenes**. At the start of each scene you get **Perversity points**. Use poker chips to represent Perversity.

Sometimes the GM may let you **spend Perversity points to affect a roll's success chance.** Each point spent increases or decreases the chance by 1.

▌ The Prime Rules for Players

Player Rule #1. The Gamemaster is right!
Player Rule #2. Avoid knowing the rules.
As a Troubleshooter, you are Security Clearance RED. Displaying knowledge of rules of higher clearance than RED is treasonous. Arguing with the Gamemaster is incredibly treasonous (see Player Rule #1).
Player Rule #3. Entertain everyone.
Your fellow Troubleshooters want to kill traitors, that is, you. Repeatedly. You can gain some protection by spending Perversity points. You earn Perversity points by being entertaining. The best protection lies in the good will of the Gamemaster. You earn his good will by being entertaining. To put it another way:

▌ Entertain or die!

Amuse the Gamemaster and the other players, or you are in for a short and frustrating career. Here's why:

1. Your Troubleshooter's path to success involves capturing traitors and creatively betraying, gloating over and terminating fellow Troubleshooters.

2. Often, doing this requires treasonous behavior, especially during the gloating and terminating parts. Treason is punishable by fines, demotion, censure, medication, brainscrubbing or summary execution, possibly all at once.

3. So while committing treason, how can you protect yourself? When it really counts, your actions must succeed. You must successfully hit your target or jigger a security camera or alter a video record.

4. You increase your chances of success by spending *Perversity points* on *General Perversity Modifiers*. (Perversity points and Perversity are explained in this section.)

5. You get Perversity points by doing stuff that surprises, amuses or pleases everyone, furthers your mission, or otherwise improves the play experience for everybody. Sometimes unctuously flattering the GM works too.

So: By being entertaining, you can get away with treason—or at least it improves your chances.

Scenes and non-scenes

Examples of scenes directly relevant to the mission's main storyline:

- The Troubleshooters are summoned to go to a briefing. *Objective*: Find the briefing room.

- They get the mission briefing. *Objective*: Accept the mission and set out.

- They receive assigned 'service service' duty, such as testing valuable R&D equipment, taking part in an HPD&MC loyalty parade or transporting plutonium for Power Services. *Objective*: Accept the service service and set out.

- They go to the mission site and investigate. *Objective*: Resolve the situation. (This may take several scenes.)

- They report for individual confessions, group debriefing and dispensation of rewards and punishment. *Objective*: Take it with a steely grin.

By contrast, the following incidents aren't part of the mission's main storyline and would not usually be scenes:

- You break off from the group to meet your secret society contact in a supply closet.

- Learning a fellow Troubleshooter has the treasonous Machine Empathy mutation, you draw him into a boiler room for a fast confab exploring possible blackmail and extortion schemes.

- For unknown reasons the team leader orders the team to stop at the recreation center to watch the premiere of the reality vidshow *My Dream Bot*.

Perversity points

Perversity points are the Gamemaster's reward to you for entertaining everyone. You can earn them in both scenes and non-scenes, whether or not your character is actually present on the scene. All you have to do is be amusing, help the storyline along or really roast a fellow Troubleshooter—roast him with *style*.

The GM rewards you yourself, not your character, with Perversity points. If your Troubleshooter dies for good, you still keep your current Perversity point totals and can spend them with your next character.

You and the GM can track Perversity points on paper, but it works better to use poker chips. Use different colors of chips, if available, to represent 1, 5, and 10 Perversity points.

How you earn Perversity points

Using incontestably fair judgment, the GM may decide to award you Perversity points in these situations:

- At the start of each scene.

- When you do things the others finds entertaining. This may happen many times during a scene, if you're playing well.

- At the end of a play session, if you've played your chosen tics and Secret skills entertainingly.

- When you alert the GM to another player's treasonous behavior or rules violations—in particular, to displays of rules knowledge above the character's security clearance.

- When you perform a valuable or interesting service that improves the game (say, creating a fascinating new rumor), gets a stalled play session moving, or helps lighten the GM's load and mood (playing an NPC for a scene, bribing the GM with munchies or beverages, paying the pizza delivery guy, etc.).

- When you **stylishly** and (in most cases) fatally betray a fellow Troubleshooter to fulfill the dictates of The Computer, a secret society mission or even a personal rivalry. The key word here is *stylishly*. Any old Troubleshooter can earn good standing with The Computer by terminating a traitor, but to earn Perversity points, you must terminate your enemy with panache—with gumption and avowed self-satisfaction—in short, with style.

A stylish termination typically requires you to inform your victim beforehand. Separate your target from all support, reduce him to helpless panic, take a few delicious moments to explain—even, if you're bold, to explain *in painstaking detail*—exactly what he did to deserve your imminent meting of justice, and finally off him as you would a rabid Commie.

Does your breath quicken at this prospect? Do your fingers already tremble on your laser trigger? You understand, then, the meaning of style.
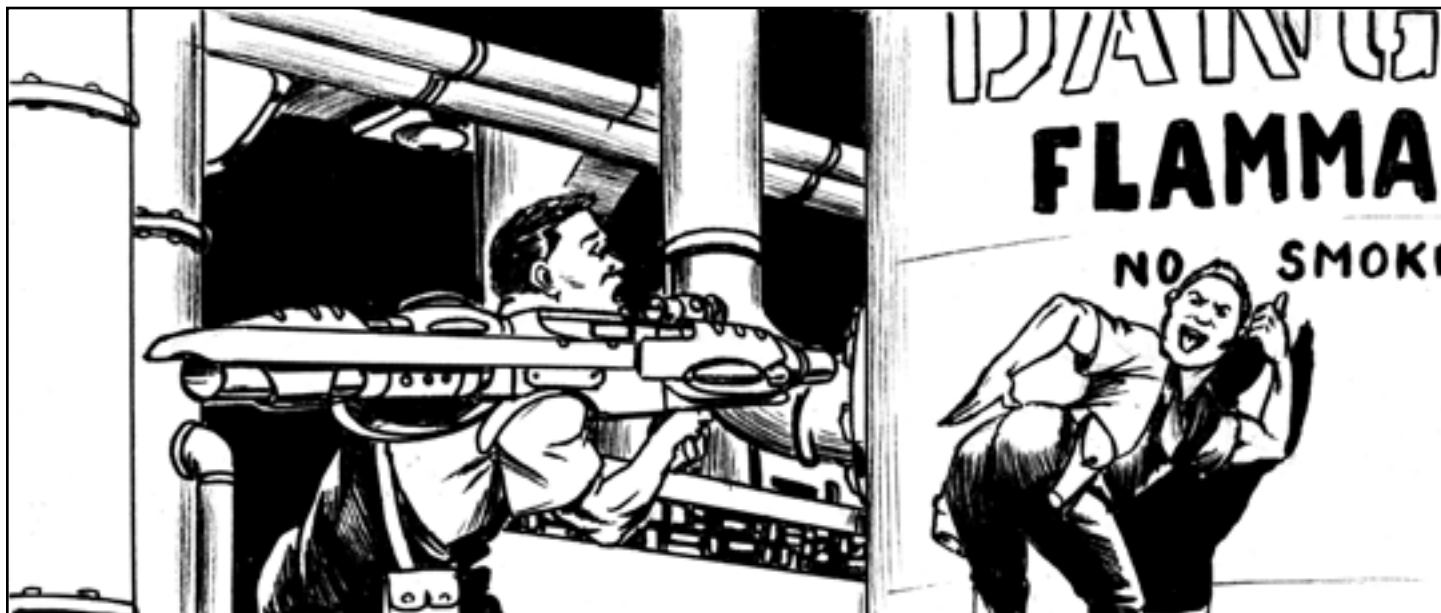
This Troubleshooter is learning the true meaning of the term Perversity.

How you spend Perversity points

You can spend Perversity points to improve your position in life or to undermine another's position. Here's what you can buy:

- 👁 **General Perversity Modifiers:** When the GM generously allows it, you can spend points to adjust the success of your own or others' die rolls. See the next section.

- 👁 **Increased skill and specialty ratings, and new specialties and Secret skills:** You can spend Perversity points to improve your Troubleshooter's competence. See Chapter 12, 'Going forward'.

- 👁 **Social perks:** Perversity points are not really intended as currency among players, but you may find that a generous donation of points gets you the seat near the GM that makes note-passing easier. Perhaps a few points will get you a roll of the GM's lucky die, a cold can of bubbly beverage or first choice of the munchies. Use your imagination.

▪ General Perversity Modifiers

You'll probably spend most of your Perversity points on *General Perversity Modifiers*.

Other (non-fun) roleplaying games use lots and lots of modifiers. You apply them to figure out what number you need to roll.

Non-Fun game player: I aim my rifle and fire it at the lead goon.

GM: Okay, your rifle skill is 10, +3 for aiming, –2 for the range to the target, –4 for his armor, but he doesn't see you so that's +3, and you're using the targeting scopebot and depleted-uranium ammo for +4, so you need to roll... wait, what was your skill again?

PARANOIA makes this process easy by reversing cause and effect. When the GM allows it, you and your fellow players can spend Perversity points as General Perversity Modifiers to influence your roll's success chance for better or worse. After all points are spent and the final success chance is determined, the GM interprets the circumstances of the roll to fit all the modifiers.

In many cases you'll spend points secretly. Sometimes, especially in momentous encounters, the GM will require you to announce how you're spending points. For example:

PARANOIA **Player #1:** I aim my cone rifle and fire it at the lead traitor. I have Violence 10, so I need a 10 or less to hit.

Player #2: No you don't. I'm spending 2 Perversity points on a General Perversity Modifier to reduce the number you need to roll down to 8.

Player #1: Bastard!

Player #3: Three more points to reduce it from 8 to 5.

Player #1: Betrayer!

Player #4: Two more to reduce the hit roll to 3.

Player #1: I'll get you in the mess hall!

Player #5: Uh, I'll pass.

Player #6: Well, I support this heroic action. *[Player #6 secretly knows Player #1's target is the high secret society official Player #6 has been ordered to assassinate.]* I'll spend 5 to raise the hit roll back up to 8.

Player #1: Good. I'm spending 5 to raise it to 13.

GM: All right. Plus 3 to hit, let's see... *[Thinks.]* Your malfunctioning rifle scopebot blinks back on just as the traitor's foot slips on a stray NiceLife empty. The scopebot says, 'Hey, what's up? Did I miss anything?'

Player #1: 'Scopebot, target that traitor!'

GM: The scopebot says, 'Ready!' Okay, roll.

Player #1: Here goes....

If the players' collective Perversity points expenditures had instead reduced Player #1's success roll to (say) 6 or less, the GM might instead retrofit the in-game situation as follows:

GM: All right, you're 4 down. *[Thinks.]* The cone rifle's broken scopebot suddenly yells drunkenly, 'Lubricant for everybody!' The traitor's head whips around. Even though he couldn't possibly have heard you at this range, he heard you. *[The GM has spontaneously decided to give the target the Hypersenses mutation.]* He dives for the ground. Roll.

See? Perversity Modifiers work like ulcers. People used to think you got ulcers from worrying too much. They had it backward; it turns out you get ulcers from bacteria, and your stomach pains make you worry. In exactly the same way, sort of, *PARANOIA* takes other games' arduous combat process (assess circumstances to figure out the modifiers) and reverses it for smooth and easy retrofitting (get the roll and then figure out the modifiers that caused it).

Your fellow players may ask something like, 'If the GM interprets one set of Perversity modifiers so my cone rifle gives me a bonus, how can I not get the same bonus in later attacks, even when Perversity goes against me?'

You, a wise player, can gently correct them in the characteristic *PARANOIA* way, as follows:

'Quiet, or the GM will let me kill you.'

▪ *Perverse details*

Spending limits: If the GM allows Perversity spending, you can usually spend up to 5 Perversity points on Perversity to affect a roll, and you usually only get one spending chance per roll.

Sometimes the GM will let only the acting player (the one rolling the dice) spend points on Perversity. Other times, the GM will go around to each player in turn, solicit Perversity spending, and move on. When everyone has spent once or passed, the acting player rolls. In truly climactic—not to say 'chaotic'—situations, the GM may allow you and everyone else to spend freely, without limit, as many times as you like until your points (or you) are exhausted.

Rationalizing the perverse: You can spend on Perversity whenever the GM allows it, whether or not your Troubleshooter is present at the scene. If your character is present, etiquette (or maybe the GM) requires you to do something in the game to reflect your spending. ('I'm poking him in the ribs as he aims, –2 Perversity.')

Public or silent: The GM may ask you to declare your Perversity spending publicly, or—more characteristic of *PARANOIA*—ask each player in turn to silently mark '**+**' (plus) or '**–**' (minus) on a sticky-note and pass it to him, along with poker chips representing the number of Perversity points spent. These cryptic glyphs indicate the two possible kinds of Perversity spending. A plus increases the player's success chance; a minus reduces the chance.

YOU WOULDN'T LIKE ME WHEN I'M ANGRY.

8. Treason and commendation

Survival, let alone advancement, requires clear understanding of what constitutes treason and insubordination, and what you can do that might possibly earn favor from those in power.

What is treasonous? The charts on the facing page summarize the most common behaviors.

The first chart, **Acceptable behavior**, lists activities you might think are treasonous but are not. Before you fry that traitor, be sure what he said was actually traitorous, or you're stuck with the bill for his replacement clone. (Applicable only to Straight and Classic games. In Zap games there is no acceptable behavior.)

The **Treason and insubordination** charts list offenses against The Computer, Alpha Complex, and proper etiquette. Insubordination is punishable by credit fines. Treason is punishable in many severe ways, including termination. In Zap games, treat insubordination as treason.

The Treason and insubordination charts include some out-of-game offenses, such as displaying knowledge of the *PARANOIA* rules. If you, the player, demonstrate this unwelcome behavior, the penalties you receive transfer to your character.

Treason and insubordination

In Straight and Classic games (but not Zap games), The Computer distinguishes between **treason** (gross disobedience, threats to Alpha Complex or The Computer) and **insubordination** (minor rulebreaking and transgressions of polite conduct).

Treason incurs penalties such as probation, medication, brainscrub, and termination. Insubordination incurs monetary fines.

Only The Computer, mission officials and citizens of Clearance GREEN or higher can assign treason and insubordination penalties. In practice these entities assign treason penalties mainly during formal proceedings, such as briefings, debriefings, and confessions. They assign insubordination penalties on the spot and freely.

Penalties are cumulative. Worse, if one GREEN citizen hits you with insubordination for being out of uniform, and 30 seconds later another citizen hits you with another penalty for the same offense, both penalties stick, even though you had no time to remedy the first offense. Complaining about the second penalty is a great way to get more.

Troubleshooters cannot assign treason penalties. The Troubleshooter team's loyalty officer assigns fines for insubordination; the team leader fines the loyalty officer. Other team officers can assign insubordination fines related to their duty (hygiene officer for failing hygiene inspections, equipment guy if you carve your

name in your cone rifle barrel, happiness officer for frowning, etc.). Fines are paid to The Computer, not to the officer levying the fine.

■ Accusations of treason (Classic games)

To earn commendation from The Computer, an accusation of treason must be credible. The more reputable the target of your accusation, the less likely The Computer and its agents will regard your charges as credible.

To credibly accuse a target individual of treason, you need corroborating testimony or, even better, have (or be able to fabricate, after the termination) clear, documented evidence. Documented evidence includes still photos, video clips, and audio recordings. A treasonous act is 'documented evidence' for one of these reasons:

1. The GM says it is.
2. You have a convincing in-game reason for having documented the act, and the GM accepts it (see reason #1).

It doesn't matter how much time elapses between the treasonous act and your report. There is no statute of limitations in Alpha Complex. However, if the target has already been accused and penalized in the past for a given act, that act won't weigh heavily in your accusation.

If you can produce the required quantity of evidence for The Computer or its authorized representatives, and if the evidence happens not to mysteriously disappear shortly thereafter, The Computer may convict the target of treason. If you are making the accusation after you already killed the target, the GM tells you how much time you have to fabrica– *assemble* the required evidence.

Given the high (if unevenly distributed) technology of Alpha Complex, you may

wonder: Could some felon take video footage of a known Communist blowing up an IntSec station, then undetectably map a heroic Troubleshooter's face onto the traitor's?

Nonsense. As Internal Security experts loudly proclaim on reality vidshows (*Catch That Traitor!, CommieStopper*), The Computer's incredibly sensitive state-of-the-art software infallibly detects fraudulent image manipulation. All those experts say it is impossible, and who can doubt experts?

■ Accusations of treason (Straight games)

This works much as in Classic games, except The Computer requires greater standards of evidential rigor. These are the differences in Straight games:

1. The Computer is less lenient about letting you assemble a case against a target after the fact—that is, post-termination. Evidence should be presented while the target is alive. The Computer gives high-clearance targets an opportunity to defend themselves, which may be troublesome for the accuser.

2. The target's past reputation confers some protection.

3. Unlike in Classic or Zap games, if The Computer decides the termination was unjustified, you are liable for the cost of your victim's replacement clone.

■ Accusations of treason (Zap games)

Say 'You're a traitor.' Fire.

The behavior charts on the facing page list behavior that is **meritorious**, **acceptable**, **insubordinate** or **treasonous**.

Meritorious behavior is rewarded with **credits** or **promotion**. **Secret societies** give **IOUs** for favors.

Insubordination is punishable by **fines**. **Treason** is punishable by **medication**, **brainscrub**, **termination** or **worse**.

Acceptable behavior

(Straight/Classic only)

The following behaviors are acceptable (non-treasonous) anywhere in Alpha Complex:

Understanding of this chart and the Treason, Insubordination and Meritorious Conduct charts and their contents. (Drummed into every INFRARED from decanting onward.)

Knowledge of the current Year of The Computer (214) and general awareness The Computer hasn't always been here; knowledge that a corrupt, destructive Old Reckoning culture existed before the rise of our friend The Computer. (However, curiosity about that benighted time is very impolite.)

Mere knowledge of the existence of specific secret societies, mutant powers, the Outdoors or Outdoor plant and animal life. (None of this is polite conversation, but it's not treasonous.)

Mere knowledge of various kinds of real food and drink; expressions of envy and the general living conditions of higher-clearance citizens. (Portrayed daily on glamorous vidshows.)

Expressions of ambition; desire to rise in clearance, get rich, live in luxury, etc. (The Computer encourages aspiration to greater service, though blatant greed is impolite.)

Casual joking or warnings about service firms, service groups, or higher-clearance citizens in general, as opposed to specific individuals or agencies. (Impolite and likely to draw suspicion, but not technically insubordinate.)

Unauthorized vandalism or destruction of property of equal or lower clearance, in line of duty.

Asking questions directly relevant to a mission or duty (these questions are grudgingly condoned).

Asking whether a particular hypothetical question would be considered directly relevant to a mission or duty.

Insubordination

(Straight/Classic only)

This is a set of guidelines, not an exhaustive list. Lots of other things are treason and insubordination, too. The GM assigns their fines or other penalties. In Zap games all these behaviors count as treason.

Asking a question irrelevant to a mission or duty.

Asking whether a particular hypothetical question unrelated to a mission or duty would be considered insubordinate or treasonous.

Asking whether a particular hypothetical question, if it were hypothetically directly related to a mission or duty, would be considered insubordinate or treasonous (nobody likes a smartass).

Being out of uniform or sloppy.

Being unhappy.

Bringing bad news.

Curiosity about or postulation of supposed virtues of Old Reckoning times.

Curiosity in general, undue.

Evading Internal Security or Computer surveillance.

Excessive impoliteness.

Failing a hygiene inspection.

Jokes, insolence, or disregard for the importance of a mission or duty.

Jokes, insolence, or disrespect for a specific higher-clearance citizen.

Jokes, complaints, or warnings about a specific service firm or group.

Questioning the ability or judgment of a higher-clearance citizen.

Questioning the ability or judgment of The Computer.

Turning off one's PDC (communicator) during a mission.

Unauthorized vandalism or destruction of property of equal or lower clearance, not in line of duty.

Treason

Accusations of treason
Being accused of treason.
Falsely accusing a citizen of treason.

Conduct and bearing
Arguing with the Gamemaster.
Assaulting a citizen.
Being present in a location of higher security clearance.
Damaging, destroying, or losing assigned equipment.
Demonstrating knowledge of the *PARANOIA* rules above your own clearance.
Failure to defer to a citizen of higher security clearance.
Framing a citizen of lower clearance for a crime.
Lying to the GM.
Possessing a treasonous skill.
Possessing unauthorized food, information, or equipment.
Refusal to take a prescribed drug.
Theft of equipment, possessions or files, including filesharing.
Threatening the physical or financial safety of another citizen.
Unauthorized destruction of higher-clearance property.

Missions
Disobeying an order.
Failure to complete a mission or service service, or failure to file a proper report of the completion.
Refusing the assignment of a service service.
Refusing to accept a mission.

Mutation
Banned mutation registration.
Suspicion or proof of mutation possession.

Secret society membership
Confessing to, suspicion of, or proof of secret society membership.
Knowledge of Communist doctrine.
Being a Communist.

Terminations
Terminating a citizen without sufficient evidence.

Meritorious conduct

This is close to an exhaustive list. It includes entries an Alpha Complex citizen would not actually see; we leave identification of these lines as an exercise for the reader.

A given act may qualify for more than one reward. The GM will probably use the lowest. Nyaah.

Acts deserving rewards
Being extremely happy.
Completing a mission.
Completing it successfully.
Completing a service service and filing a report.
Doing a favor spontaneously for a higher-clearance citizen.
Doing a favor for a secret society friendly to your own.

Risking your life to serve or rescue a higher-clearance citizen, to save Alpha Complex or to serve The Computer.
Terminating a traitor with sufficient evidence.
Turning a traitor over to Internal Security.
Unctuous flattery.

Meritorious conduct

The Computer recognizes meritorious accomplishments such as protecting Alpha Complex and apprehending traitors. For great service of this kind you may earn credit bonuses and promotion. Unusual good behavior and flattery earn you credit bonuses and lesser rewards, such as real food.

In most roleplaying games characters try to (1) stay alive and (2) gain status and power. In **PARANOIA** the first goal is likely to require all your attention, at least initially. 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 you, with weapons of ever-larger muzzle aperture.

■ Credit bonuses

The Computer generally rewards successful completion of a mission with a bonus payment of credits. A rich reward (thousands of credits) indicates The Computer's favor. A puny reward (3 credits) is a subtle sign of The Computer's disappointment. All credit bonuses are automatically added to the balance on your ME Card.

Though no rules for standard compensation are available at your clearance, you may hope to earn as much as a month's standard salary for each successful mission. Because a typical Troubleshooter team (if such exists) completes about one mission a week, on average, you may hope to earn four bonuses a month, along with your regular monthly salary. Quintuple your standard salary! Thank The Computer!

In addition, you may earn bounties for capture or authorized termination of The Computer's most hated enemies: notorious Commie agitators and saboteurs, powerful unregistered mutants, high secret society officials and fugitive Troubleshooters who failed to destroy all of the above.

There is the troublesome matter of reimbursing expenses incurred during your mission. For unexplained reasons over [CLASSIFIED]% of Troubleshooter missions involve unauthorized property damage, loss of assigned equipment, reimbursement of cloning expenses for unauthorized termination of targets (in Straight games), and in extreme cases vaporization of whole subsectors. Troubleshooters responsible for gratuitous damage have expenses deducted from their credit bonuses, salary and future earnings unto the millionth clone generation.

■ IOUs

Powerful individuals and secret societies—both your own society and those it regards as friendly—may recognize great services you have done for them. You are required to track favors earned from you and owed you as **IOUs**. Each IOU is good only for the organization or individual who owes it.

If you have an IOU, you can use it to demand a favor from the organization or individual. Tell the Gamemaster you're spending your IOU, and make your plea. The GM tells you whether or not the favor is granted. If the favor is treasonous, you may wish to talk to him in private.

IOUs are valuable. Don't ask for too much when you cash one in. You'll only get what you want if the group is able to grant the favor, if the service you rendered was of roughly equal value, and if it suits the GM's elevated purpose. Otherwise the response to your request may be a mixed blessing.

■ Promotion

If you perform particularly well and earn The Computer's trust, you may expect to be promoted to a higher security clearance. Conversely, poor performance may bring summary demotion. Especially at low clearances, a Troubleshooter with an active career may leap up and down in The Computer's esteem with dizzying rapidity. Trusted citizens who reach GREEN Clearance or higher typically enjoy a slightly more stable existence.

9. Proper behavior for players

Most roleplaying games pit player characters against opponents and obstacles posed by the Gamemaster. These games encourage players to cooperate in pursuing a goal.

PARANOIA provides opponents and obstacles without encouraging cooperation. In fact, your fellow player characters *are* the principal opponents and obstacles. To succeed, you must terminate them. Repeatedly. With style.

Vicious, deceitful backstabbing is fun. You'll feel no remorse as you shaft your fellow PCs, because you know they tried to shaft you first.

But it's important not to let the paranoid atmosphere of the game bleed into the real world. Distrust and betrayal among *characters* is fine, but not among *players.*

Many activities that wouldn't raise an eyebrow in other RPGs are bad form in **PARANOIA**. Looking at another player's character sheet is an unfair way to obtain evidence against him. One Troubleshooter character eavesdropping on another PC is fine, but eavesdropping on a private conference between player and GM is cheating.

> **Don't read the mission.**
>
> **Don't monopolize the GM** with private conferences. Pass notes instead.
>
> **Don't look at other players' secret information.** It's rude.
>
> **Don't automatically shoot a known mutant's clone backup** on the assumption he has the same mutation. It's rude and not necessarily true.
>
> **Don't be paranoid** in the real world—only **in the game**.

Meetings and notes

Speaking of conferences, you'll often want to communicate with the GM privately, to keep other players in the dark about your activities. In a private conference you can speak freely, but you are monopolizing the GM's attention. Do this too much and the other players will resent it. Moreover, they'll start doing it too, and you'll spend most of your time waiting for the latest chat to end. Conferences slow things down, so ask for them sparingly.

More efficient methods of secret communication include note-passing and, if you all have networked laptop computers, instant messaging. These don't interrupt play.

On the other hand, writing a note is slow work and requires terseness. Instant messages are faster but may distract the GM from his estimable purpose. Still, they're both better than conferences.

ULTRAVIOLET information

Many games divide rules into Player and GM sections. **PARANOIA** depends more than most on keeping players in the dark. That's why much of this book is classified ULTRAVIOLET Clearance. Only Gamemasters are cleared to read that part. Naturally, it would be silly to sell you this game and tell you not to read it, but listen, seriously, really:

1. **Don't read the mission!** Only the GM is supposed to know what happens in a mission. Reading the mission will ruin your enjoyment when you play it. If you can't resist temptation, try not to take 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. Otherwise you'll ruin *their* enjoyment.

2. **Don't reveal your knowledge of the rules.** Lots of Alpha Complex citizens know more than they should. In fact, knowing treasonous things is probably vital to survival. However, citizens always do their utmost to hide this knowledge. Make that your own rule.

Go ahead. Read the ULTRAVIOLET sections, if you must. But any time you *reveal* your knowledge of their contents during play, your Troubleshooter will get into trouble. Even if you don't read the GM sections, over time you'll develop a knowledge of the rules—but if you talk about them, you'll soon find yourself staring down the barrels of large weapons.

Killing and dying with style

We encourage you to terminate your fellow Troubleshooters with style, and a certain amount of gloating. In the same way, if they get you first, you yourself should perish with style. If you expect to be rapidly transferred to a clone backup, demonstrate a generous, charitable forgiveness toward the traitor, exit more in sorrow than in anger, and on revival prepare a cold revenge. If repeated treason has gone against you, and your clone template is about to be erased permanently, etiquette dictates your last clone should go down fighting, shouting secret society slogans and defiantly mocking the other PCs for their cowardly servitude to The Computer.

If another Troubleshooter dispatches you, it is exceedingly poor form to trot up in your new body and start firing back. Instead, enact a cool, calculated revenge, delayed for maximum suspense. Plant evidence; concoct deathtraps; get him in trouble with his secret society. The game plays much better this way, and everyone has more fun.

Likewise, if you terminate Martin-R-TSD-1 for having the mutant power of Slippery Skin, don't start firing immediately when Martin-R-TSD-2 arrives. You, the player, may know his skin is still slippery, but your *character* doesn't. Making every clone identical is a game convenience; it saves a lot of time creating new characters, and is the basis for some cheap jokes. However, the idea that all backup clones have the Prime's mutant power is unknown in Alpha Complex or to The Computer. Act accordingly.

For that matter, you don't necessarily *know* the mutant power stays the same. The GM may give the new clone a different power. Don't assume anything based on the rules. The GM can adapt the rules to his exceptional purpose.

Nothing personal

PARANOIA often purposefully blurs the line between you and your character. However, be aware of the differences, and don't let your feelings control your character's actions. Conversely, don't let your Troubleshooter's attitude toward Joe's Troubleshooter character affect your good feelings toward Joe himself. If Joe's character betrayed yours, don't get upset—betrayal is 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, in extreme cases) by a stringent requirement to buy pizza for the entire group for the next six sessions, and no arguments.

10. A solo mission

Usually **PARANOIA** missions require one Gamemaster and three or more players. A special kind of mission, called a 'solo', lets you play by yourself. This solo mission introduces you to some basic concepts of **PARANOIA**.

To run this mission you need pencil, paper and a 20-sided die (1d20). Begin reading with the section numbered '1'. Each numbered section describes a situation, then asks you to choose between two or more courses of action. When you choose your action, follow its instructions, then go the numbered section indicated by your choice and keep reading there.

As you go through the mission, you will record certain codes. Write these on a piece of paper. At the end of the mission we explain the codes you recorded.

After you complete this mission, try it again, making different choices to see how they affect the outcome. Even if you succeed, try the mission again to see what happens if you do foolish things. The mission will give you an idea

of the problems, decisions and consequences a Troubleshooter must face in performing missions for The Computer.

■ 01

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

MISSION: Surveillance systems check, Sector NHB. Rendezvous at NHB Troubleshooter Dispatch at 1300 hours. Investigate suspected surveillance systems malfunction in residence quarters of INFRARED citizens Lonnie-KKD-3 and Virgil-KKD-4. Residence coordinates F6-117/KKD.

Do you accept the mission? If yes, go to **07**. If no, go to **14**.

■ 02

She keeps her weapon trained on you until the morgue bot and the Internal Security squad arrive to get Joshua's body. When they arrive, she accompanies you to IntSec sector

headquarters where they interrogate you thoroughly but release you. Go to **54**.

■ 03

Joshua-R fires at Edith-O and misses, leaving himself open. Edith-O fires and doesn't miss. Joshua-R drops, shot right between the eyes. Edith-O 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 the morgue bot and the Internal Security squad arrive for Joshua's body. Go to **09**.

■ 04

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**.

05

It is a bad idea to turn your back on Edith-O, Internal Security agent. Edith-O is a crack shot with a laser. You take a few steps to the door and a searing pain rips through your back and into your chest. You regain consciousness in a RED sickbay under guard. Go to **19**.

06

A tiny note is written in dye on a CruncheeTym algae chip lying on the booth floor. It reads, 'Edith-O IntSec. Terminate.' You notice no one observing you. You eat the message and proceed to the rendezvous. Go to **43**.

07

An experimental anti-personnel device is available for field testing. Will you accept assignment of this device for this mission? If yes, go to **26**. If no, go to **44**.

08

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 **03**.

09

Internal Security agents arrive immediately, with docbots not far behind. The bot attends promptly to your wound as Internal Security GREEN goons question you. They send you to a RED sickbay, where The Computer gives you a 200-credit reward and enters an Official Commendation in your permanent record. IntSec apprehends and terminates Joshua-R within minutes of your prompt report. *Record an M code* and go to **54**.

10

Your laser shot burns a hole in the wall. In the confusion no one could tell your target. *Record an N code.* Joshua-R fires at Edith-O and misses, leaving himself open. Edith-O fires and doesn't miss. Joshua-R drops. Edith-O turns to you, covering you with her pistol. If you shoot at her, go to **47**. If you holster your weapon, go to **02**.

11

Joshua-R 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-O 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-O holsters her laser. *Record an H code* and go to **36**.

13

You're not exactly sure how the device operates. As you were opening the case, a couple of red, green, and blue wires became detached. You're not 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 mission is treason. Repeat: Do you accept the mission? If yes, go to **07**. If no, go to **51**.

15

Joshua-R turns to you with a fanatic gleam in his eyes and says, 'Freeing Humanity from the Machine! One day we'll all be free!' He points his laser at you. Go to **33**.

16

You made it past Joshua-R through the door and into the corridor. Joshua-R fires once more in your direction, wounding you in the hand. He panics and dashes away. Pursuit is impossible in the frenzied crowd. If you immediately seek a terminal and report these events to The Computer, go to **09**. If you try to flee and find a place to hide, go to **46**.

17

(At this point your Gamemaster would determine the effect of your shot on Edith. Here we graciously assume David-R is terrifically lucky) Joshua's shot at Edith-O misses and hits the wall. Edith-O finishes Joshua-R off with a single well-aimed shot. However, because 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.*

You have a problem: dead Troubleshooters. If you try to escape, go to **45**.

If you give yourself up, saying the two Troubleshooters killed each other, you are using the Management skill to persuade your interrogators to accept your story. David-R's Management skill is 5, which means you must roll 5 or less on the 20-sided die to successfully use your skill. In some cases the Gamemaster might allow you to spend Perversity points to influence your success roll, but in this case you can't. Roll 1d20. If you roll 5 or less, go to **53**. If you roll 6 or more, go to **53**.

18

With your mutant vision you can see Joshua-R clamping a green-ringed barrel onto his laser pistol. A green barrel should not be available to a Clearance RED citizen like Joshua. You have no armor against green laser weapons, and Edith-O probably doesn't either.

If you shout a warning aloud, *record an I code* and go to **30**. If not, *record a J code* and go to **11**.

10. SOLO MISSION

19

Edith-O, Internal Security agent, has taken you into custody and reported your behavior to The Computer. David-URK-1 is no longer a Troubleshooter. You are now a low-status INFRARED laborer in the foul-smelling food vats with a record of treasonous behavior.

Your mission is over. The Computer is your friend.

20

You might learn more about the device by taking it apart and examining it. If you attempt this use of your Hardware skill, you must roll a 7 or less on the 20-sided die to succeed, because your Hardware skill of 7. Roll 1d20. If you roll 7 or less, go to **32**. If you roll 8 or more, go to **13**. If you don't try 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-R turns and smiles at you, 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 **08**; otherwise, go to **35**.

24

You overhear a woman's voice: '—for information of that nature is highly inappropriate. For the present I'll content myself to report your request to The Computer. If you show any further suspicious behavior, I shall remove you from this mission. Do you have any idea of the consequences? 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. When you touch Edith-O's toolkit, it immediately sounds a beeping alarm. The voice in the next room stops instantly. If you try to silence the alarm using your Hardware skill, go to **37**. If you leave the room immediately, go to **05**.

26

You have been assigned Experimental Anti-Personnel Device X324-09: a 'neurostunner'. It works like a laser pistol, but requires less skill to target—or so your supervisor tells you. 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 solo mission. Therefore, if you are reading this you have not followed The Computer's instructions. Return from whence you arrived.

28

You duck Joshua-R 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 Junior Citizen.
David-R is dead. Internal Security swiftly apprehends Joshua-R and terminates him. Edith-O receives a hero's funeral and a ten-minute spot on the evening vidshow.

That is all. The Computer is your friend.

29

Joshua-R has red reflec laser armor; your shot hit but didn't harm him. However, you distracted him enough to let Edith-O 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 help. However, she keeps an eye on you as you both wait for the morgue bot and the 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 **54**.

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-O ducks for cover.

If you duck out of sight, go to **48**. If you draw and ready a weapon, go to **04**. If you do nothing but continue to observe, go to **03**.

31

The skill to persuade someone is Management. David-R has a Management skill of 5, meaning you must roll a 5 or less on the 20-sided die to successfully use that skill. Roll 1d20. If you roll 5 or less, go to **12**. If you roll 6 or more, go to **49**.

32

You're not exactly sure how this thing 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 you have not damaged it. *Record a D code* and go to **50**.

33

Joshua's laser blast catches you right in the chest. You feel searing pain, then see blackness. Somewhere a distant voice says,

---

'There, you poor devil, at least you're finally free of the Machine.' Then silence.

David-R is dead. Internal Security swiftly apprehends Joshua-R. The charges are treason and destruction of Computer property. An IntSec GREEN goon terminates Joshua-R on the spot. The Computer your friend.

34

Joshua-R fires and misses. If you can just 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 use your Violence skill, the all-purpose 'physical actions' skill. David-R's Violence is 9, meaning you must roll 9 or less on the 20-sided die to dodge. Roll 1d20. If you roll 9 or less, go to **16**. If you roll 10 or more, go to **28**.

35

The neurostunner releases a powerful blast of energy. The device suddenly grows hot in your hand and explodes before you can release it, showering you with bits of hot metal and plastic.

To see whether you hit with the energy bolt, you'll *roll against* (that is, check for success using) the Energy Weapons specialty of your Violence skill. Your Energy Weapons specialty is 4 more than your Violence skill of 9, so you must roll 13 or less on the 20-sided dice to hit your target. Roll 1d20. If you roll 13 or less and fired at Edith-O, go to 22. If you roll 13 or less and fired at Joshua-R, go to **40**. If you roll 14 or more, go to **08**.

36

'David-R? This is Joshua-R and I'm Edith-O.' Coldly Edith-O says, 'I'm in charge of this operation, and don't either of you forget it.'

Edith-O directs Joshua-R and you to pick up your toolkits and follow her. She leads the way to the residence barracks of Lonnie-KKD-3 and Virgil-KKD-4 at coordinates F6-117/KKD. She produces a magnetic key and opens the door. She sends Joshua-R into the common room to check the master unit. She sends you to examine the remote unit in the sleeping room. Edith-O checks on Joshua-R and you, then turns her attention to searching 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. Joshua-R doesn't appear to notice you looking. Joshua-R pulls something from a pocket of his coveralls and looks to be fiddling 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

You can't shut off the alarm quickly or easily. A woman appears at the door to the next room. She holds a laser pistol, pointed right at you. If you raise your hands and surrender, go to **49**. If

you try to fast-talk your way out of the situation, go **31**. If you run from the room, go to **05**. If you try to attack the woman with a weapon or hand-to-hand combat, go to **42**.

■ 38

I'm sorry, that information is not available at your 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-R can fire again at point-blank range. If you can just 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 use your Violence skill, the all-purpose 'physical actions' skill. David-R's Violence is 9, meaning you must roll 9 or less on the 20-sided die to dodge. Roll 1d20. If you roll 9 or less, go to **16**. If you roll 10 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 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 the Internal Security Squad to come pick up Joshua's twitching form. As the docbot bears you away, she salutes you for your courage and assures you The Computer will reward your faithful service. Her final handshake is a little warmer than is strictly proper between Troubleshooters. Go to **09**.

■ 41

To see whether you hit with your laser blast, you'll *roll against* (that is, check for success using) the Energy Weapons specialty of your Violence skill. Your Energy Weapons specialty is 4 more than your Violence skill of 9, so you must roll 13 or less on the 20-sided dice to hit your target. Roll 1d20 and select a victim. If you roll 13 or less and fired at Edith-O, go to **17**. If you roll 13 or less and fired at Joshua-R, go to **29**. If you roll 14 or more, go to **10**.

■ 42

Edith-O has already drawn and aimed her weapon; you must 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. (Because you attempted to attack, she felt no obligation to bring you in alive.)

David-R is dead. Edith-O will get an Official Commendation 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 each 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, 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

Field testing of 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 paper and go to **26**. If no, *record a B code* and go to **50**.

■ 45

Because records clearly indicate 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.

A squad of IntSec agents tracks and terminates David-R. The Computer awards the agents Official Commendations for 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 their sector, quickly apprehend you. In the absence of contradictory testimony, The Computer finds your flight to avoid apprehension sufficient evidence of treason. You are terminated.

David-R is dead. Several IntSec agents 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 red reflec armor. Your shots don't affect her. She finishes you off casually.
David-R is dead. Edith-O receives a commendation for dispatching two traitors. That is all.

■ 48

You hear the sound of several laser discharges, then silence. Edith-O steps into the room where you are and sees you are unarmed. She keeps her weapon on you until the morgue bot and the Internal Security squad come for Joshua's body. Go to **54**.

■ 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 sector dispatch, a passerby gives the Pro Tech secret society recognition signal and whispers, 'Pro Tech 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 **06**. If you do not stop, proceeding

---

■ Mission code key

A: No correction because you accepted the experimental device.

B: Censure for declining the experimental device. For a week, everyone you meet must officially scold you on that point.

C: Probation for inquiring about classified information. IntSec has many ways of tracking probation. You'll find out.

D: R&D notices your tampering with the neurostunner. For unauthorized examination of a device in search of information not cleared for RED Security Clearance, The Computer fines you 100 credits.

E: You have damaged experimental equipment in the process of unauthorized examination of the device. The Computer fines you 200 credits.

F and **G**: No one has observed either your contact with the secret society member or your 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: The Computer grants you an Official Commendation for quick action in protecting a trusted agent. However, because Internal Security later determines you couldn't have known what was going on in the other room without a mutant power, The Computer puts you on probation. It doesn't explain its suspicions you have an unregistered mutation.

J: Indicates no effect on treason or commendation points, because you can't be blamed for something you didn't know about (Joshua-R's hidden weapon).

K: Though Edith-O had some suspicions about you, she nonetheless felt you deserved a commendation for trying to help. You receive a 100-credit bonus.

L: You will receive a secret society promotion for Edith-O's death, whether or not you killed her (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: Your prompt action leading to the apprehension of a traitor earns you an Official Commendation.

N: Edith-O is not sure who you were going to shoot at. She reports your suspicious behavior and failure to assist her to The Computer. The Computer places you on probation.

directly to the rendezvous, *record a G code* and go to **43**.

51

Failure to accept the mission is treason. David-URK-1 is assigned to food vat service. Possession of RED security clearance equipment is treason. The Computer revokes the assignment of red reflec armor and a laser pistol to David URK-1.

Your mission is over. You are now a low-status INFRARED 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-R 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

You have survived the mission.

Now, to help you understand the world of *PARANOIA*, we'll explain the commendations, corrections and other consequences of your choices during this mission. Compare the codes you recorded as you proceeded through the mission with the annotated list in the box on the previous page. The codes explain the consequences of your choices, and the reasons for those consequences.

11. Tips for traitors

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

This information is of most use to experienced Troubleshooters who have undergone, if not survived, several PARANOIA missions. They understand the kinds of snafus, insanity and general mayhem that can be expected. Don't feel compelled to read it the first time you play. (On the other hand, this advice will give you a signal advantage over other novices.)

The manuscript is a compendium of maxims, collected and annotated by an anonymous citizen with the assumed pen name of One-Clone Charlie. In the absence of more tangible evidence, the sheer size of this manuscript (over 600 handwritten pages in tiny, crabbed script) attests to the author's longevity and, therefore, the presumed utility of his advice. Imagine the difficulty of scribbling even one page of such treasonous wisdom while evading the ever-vigilant eyes of The Computer and its loyal servants and toadies.

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: Its citizens are safe and happy, treason has been rooted out and destroyed, and the citizens are endlessly grateful to The Computer for its bountiful generosity and compassionate concern.

Never tell anyone (or anything) something that he, she, or it does not want to hear. If this compels you to misstate yourself, and you are caught creatively interpreting the facts, immediately and humbly 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.

It pays to hone your Bootlicking skill.

'Gosh, how could I have ever forgotten 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

computer terminal with a hammer. Oh, woe is me! Surely 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 citizens.'

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 the 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 for 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/ cooperated with that registered mutant/ tested the experimental matter imploder]. Who could have dreamed that your orders might be unwise or ill-considered?'

- 👁 'Of course, for my own protection, that important information about [the flybot's operation/the weapon's destructive capacity/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 making 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 their 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, like so:

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

Or:

'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 to useful tasks that they will not survive. However, a shrewd bootlicker may have schemed a way to survive the task you have assigned, planning to exploit his actions to further his ambitions or to bring about your demise. Assign him to the task for which he has volunteered, 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 regret you will have to leave all your equipment here with us in the bunker. Yes, I'm afraid that means your tool kit, too.'

◼ Accidents will happen—the sooner, the better.

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

- 👁 First, fewer Troubleshooters means fewer weapons aimed at your back.

- 👁 Fewer Troubleshooters also 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 the commendations are handed out. (If you are the only

survivor of a successful mission, you can certainly dramatize your crucial role without argument.)

The unsophisticated method of reducing mission staff is the summary execution. This technique is effective if well-planned and executed, but, if no more than an impulsive bit of gunplay, the executioner 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. A properly staged accident, even if it fails, does not prompt the victim to pull his weapon and start firing away. A well planned accident may not alert a victim that he has been the target of an attack; even if he suspects 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.

◼ Whoever heard of a trustworthy citizen?

A good position in the mission deployment is vital to survival. Since the mission leader usually has the power to order the group deployment as he likes, a discussion of best choices is properly addressed to mission leaders. 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 at the rear of the group. Normally, this position is preempted by the mission leader. (Oh, fortunate mission leader!) If you are the mission leader or the ranking citizen, demand this privilege. Do not be swayed by transparent tactics like, 'Say, my combat skills and training make me the perfect one to guard against attack from the rear,' or, 'Because 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 transparent tactics. Some inexperienced or dimwitted 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 Communications Officer or some other technician, you can usually make a good case for being back with the mission leader; without a drawn weapon, you present a less immediate threat to his security. (Note, however, a prudent mission leader arranges to eliminate any recordings of the mission, and thus the Comm Officer 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 for its superior range of fire and the safety it affords from backstabbing; it is also the place where fewest eyes are trained. Those who wish to do things that go unnoticed will find this is the ideal position.

Conversely, not only is the point man the focus of all weapons on his own team, as well as the weapons of any opposition, he is also constantly subjected to the scrutiny of his companions. This position should be assigned by the mission leader to the Troubleshooters 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 considerate 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 of the group where you can keep an eye on him.

Power armor appears to be an advantage equivalent to rear guard. However, the risk of equipment malfunction is serious — no leader wants to get caught helpless in a powerless power suit. A compromise is to assign the weakest, most docile, low-status dolt to the power armor, then position him directly in front of you as you assume the rear position. This way you have the indirect protection of his armor and still have enough warning to get out of the way if he becomes obstreperous.

■ Shoot only from a position of total superiority.

Inexperienced Troubleshooters haul out their lasers and open fire the moment someone says or does something that might be construed as an excuse for a summary execution. **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, 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 their armor, the chances of acing 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 against your prospective victim, then plug him when he is relatively unable to return your fire—when he has his hands full of some other kind of trouble, like attacking hostiles or a malfunctioning weapon or a berserk bot. At the least, his weapon should be still in its holster and his attention elsewhere. Ideally, he should never even know it is you attacking him. Whenever possible, attack when you have sup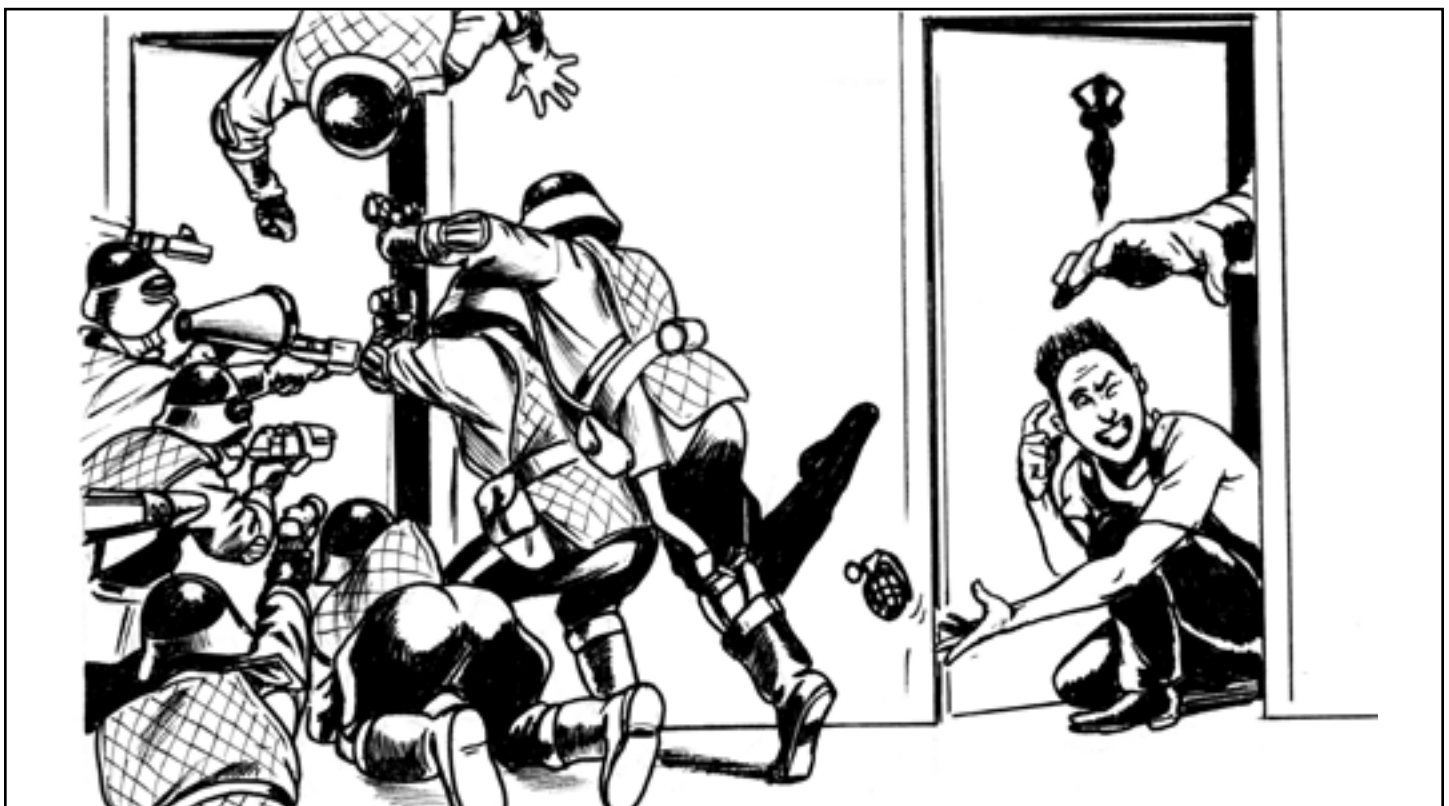erior firepower or when circumstances ensure you will hit your target—for instance, when standing behind him with your slugthrower pressed against his torso.

Often, resorting to weapons is unwise. The 'accident' is more effective at eliminating a rival and claiming a commendation. 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, a scapegoat for every crime.

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

Scapegoats should be of a lower status, permitting you to give them orders setting them up as fall guys for any of your schemes that 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, then obviously the tech damaged it during his inspection. (Of

The coveted position in mission deployment is at the rear.

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 that conjures sinister images: evil agents hidden under benign, loyal smiles; demonic criminals hovering behind every back; tiny, gremlin-like presences of unimaginable malevolence with 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.

Nothing is more deadly than experimental equipment.

Though fatalities involving experimental equipment seem less memorable because they do not include the thrill of plotting, backstabbing, and gunplay, a quick survey of Troubleshooter records indicates a very large percentage of clone deaths are directly or indirectly related to malfunctioning experimental equipment.

Directly related equipment deaths include such typical misadventures as explosions, suffocation, incineration, poison, and brain-frying. Indirectly related deaths include secondary effects like distraction in combat (shrieking danger alarms that deafen listeners painfully), weapons that fail in crucial situations,

horribly expensive or otherwise valuable devices that cannot be abandoned when they break down in the midst of life-threatening disasters, and execution for failure to carry out stringent, unrealistic and impossibly deadly testing programs devised by proud R&D wizards.

Normally some pretext is made of offering a choice of devices for volunteers to test. Volunteer promptly, in best bootlicking style, for the least harmful-looking device under consideration. Jump in before anyone else and bubble over with enthusiasm. Thereafter, when other devices are offered or pressed on you, confidently assert that your complete attention must be given to the device you have already been assigned in order to properly test and evaluate it.

If no safe-looking item seems available, go for a portable weapon. Though such devices often present serious direct and indirect threats to your health, other non-weapon devices often present equally serious threats, but without the potential benefits of a first-class weapon. If the rest of the mission group is 'accidentally' killed before you realize the weapon's true destructive potential, such news is likely to excite and please, rather than dismay, R&D.

Avoid bots at all costs. No other experimental device is so unpredictable, expensive in fines for loss or damages, heavy and difficult to recover if damaged or malfunctioning, and capable of perversely independent action that may either implicate you in treason or force you to follow it into certain death to avoid abandoning it.

Never accept cumbersome items that have to be strapped onto your person by lots of tricky buckles and fastenings. These are often the devices with loud malfunction-warning alarms that go off at inappropriate times —like, whenever you use them.

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 they are as likely as anyone else to be executed for being traitors, whether they behave treasonably or not.

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

As for secret societies, no one ever uses their 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 society drop point and get the inside scoop from some highly placed lodge brother. Or I wangle a special, secret society assignment that promises a big payoff in INFRARED-market information or equipment. 'Er, excuse me, mission leader, but it appears my laser barrel has only one shot left in it, 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 new ones so I'll be primed for this important mission.'

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 indicates ambition and enthusiasm they can channel into bootlicking, profitable for all parties concerned.

Debriefings go better when you are the only survivor.

'I speak without fear of contradiction...' is the opening sentence of the ideal debriefing. You get dinged for being the only one to make it back alive, but this is a minor inconvenience compared to the alternative. A creative dramatist can transform a disastrous mission replete with treasonous crimes into a heroic narrative with the speaker as the modest model of a loyal, courageous citizen serving The Computer with all his heart.

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

Recording devices, like bots, multicorders and PDCs, must be eliminated, sabotaged or distracted wherever possible. Such records represent hard evidence—'hard,' that is, to explain away, and far harder 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 ensure PDCs

are turned the other way while you perpetrate nefarious deeds.

If you volunteer or are chosen as Communications Officer, your problems are more complicated. First, you wish to survive, which is not consistent with carrying something others are eager to destroy. Further, you are the one who gets fined if the device is damaged or destroyed. To improve your chances of survival, stick close to the mission leader; he's usually in the rear and less subject to outright attacks. Further, make it known that for a few credits you can ensure the mission record features a Troubleshooter's finest moments and overlooks his egregiously 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 Don-R as he searches for the source of the jackobot's malfunction.' (Don-R is in fact reprogramming the bot to respond to a remote control self-destruct device. This will obviate the need for an extensive de-briefing by obliterating the other party members and the briefing personnel.)

▌ When disaster looms, keep stalling.

When I'm called upon to perform the impossible in the face of certain death, I always politely ask The Computer if I can go to the bathroom first—and if I can have a glass of water—and if I can check just one more reference by data search—and if I can field-strip the electron howitzer to stop 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 you will be tarrying behind just a bit. Once the rest of the group catches 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 security superiors: 'Of course, sir, right away, I'm right on top of it, just have to get my tools ready, yessir—er, could you stand back a bit so I can spread these out on the floor and make sure all of them are neatly assorted 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 foot-dragger has one 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 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 daycycle.'

12. Going forward

As described in Chapter 7, 'Doing things', the Gamemaster may award you Perversity Points when you do something especially entertaining, move a scene along or otherwise improve the game. You'll probably spend most of your Perversity points on General Perversity Modifiers to adjust the success chance of die rolls. You can also spend Perversity to increase your character's competence.

- 👁 **Increased skill ratings:** Increasing one of your six basic skills by 1 costs 5 times the new rating number in points. For example, raising Violence from 9 to 10 costs (10x5=) 50 Perversity points. You can spend points this way only at the end of a mission in Straight games, or at any time in Classic or Zap games. Increasing a skill rating doesn't increase the ratings of its related specialties.

- 👁 **Increased specialty or Secret skill ratings:** A specialty or Secret skill rating increase of 1 costs 5 points, regardless of the new rating number. You can spend points when the GM allows it.

- 👁 **New specialties:** Each common specialty costs 20 Perversity points and starts at a rating equal to the governing skill rating plus 4. Each narrow specialty costs 20 points and starts at the governing skill's rating plus 6. You don't incur a compensating weakness when you buy a new specialty. You can spend points when the GM allows it.

> **You can spend your Perversity points** to increase your Troubleshooter's **skill** and **specialty ratings**, or to buy **new specialties and Secret skills.**
>
> **You don't know how to increase your Access and Power attributes. Only the GM knows.**

- 👁 **New Secret skills:** Each new Secret skill costs 20 points. In Straight games the new skill starts with a rating of 1. In Zap games, roll 1d20 and halve the score (rounding up). For Classic games, the GM will tell you which method to use, depending on how keen he is to encourage characters with tremendous skill in Knitting or Chartered Accountancy.

Go forth and serve, citizen!

This completes your orientation. When you have completed your Troubleshooter character, submit your character sheet to the Gamemaster for approval. He may revise it or ask you to revise it. When play begins, the GM may ask you to introduce your character to the other players; **divulge no secrets** to them, or risk early termination!

You now know how to create a character, a little about Alpha Complex and The Computer, and enough about the rules to play. Actually you don't know much, but that is the key to maintaining *PARANOIA*. Life is exciting when you don't know your enemies. A successful Troubleshooter develops a healthy sense of insecurity.

However, you can't let paranoia paralyze you. You must survive. You must use wit, intution and daring to rise to higher levels of access and prestige. At higher clearances you may learn secrets currently forbidden.

Remember: From the start, other players are interested in your PC. Granted, they want to terminate him, but that counts as interest. They help determine the adversity your PC faces, and they make creative suggestions that shape your PC's situation.

These players are focusing on your actions. Take their interest and play with it. Keep it. Be entertaining.

IR Market goods and services

Now that you've been promoted to RED Clearance and joined the ranks of the Troubleshooters, just think what you can buy! You share an assigned apartment with just five or six other citizens, instead of crashing in a generic INFRARED barracks rife with smells and loud with snoring. You can afford literally all the Cold Fun you could ever want (and we know how much that is, don't we?), plus Bouncy Bubble Beverage more than a few times a month. Now you can venture down into the sewers and stairwells—down where the IntSec patrols are paid never to go and the cameras are ordered never to work—down to the local Free Enterprise **IR Market**. Down here you can buy all kinds of lucky charms, heisted high-clearance goods and ointment guaranteed to make you invisible to lie detectors. No, really, it's *guaranteed!* Would I lie to you?

   What else can you buy? How much is it? At what clearance is it (legally) available? Here's a small sample, but really, you can get anything you want. *A-ny-thing.* Remember, nothing has a warranty, the legality of the purchase is your own problem, all payment must be in hard-currency plasticreds and trust me, I'm not making a half-credit on the whole deal.

■ KEY

IR=INFRARED, (**R**)ED, (**O**)RANGE, etc.   **cr** = credits

FOOD, DRINK AND CONSUMABLES

Bouncy Bubble Beverage (choice of flavors):
   Plain (IR) 1cr
   Extra Classic (R) 2cr
   Tastes Just Like Something Orange! (O) 2cr
   R&D Experimental Flavor #71 (illegal) 10cr
CruncheeTym Algae Chips (choice of flavors):
   Plain (IR) 1cr
   Not Quite As Plain (R) 1cr
   Trippple Cheeze (Y) 3cr
   Vague Hint of Guacamole (G) 3cr
Cold Fun (available in three fun flavors: Pink, Brown, and
   Vanilla)
   Single-serving cup (IR) 2cr
   Single-serving cone (R) 3cr
   5-gallon tub (O) 200cr
Vita-Yum Meal Substitute Bar (plain) (R) 2cr
Vita-Yum Meal Substitute Bar Substitute Pill (O) 5cr
Chocolyke Puff Crunchers, per can (O) 10cr
Minty Breath-O-Fresheners, per tin (O) 10cr

DRUGS & RECREATION

Cancer-Lite Cigarettes (R) 6cr
   Cancer-Free Cigarettes (O) 8cr
Xanitrick (Wakey-Wakey) tablet (IR) 1cr
Visomorpain (Little Black Friend) tablet (IR) 1cr
Gelgernine (Inner Happiness) tablet (R) 2cr
Gelgernine aerosol spray (G) 200cr
Sandallathon (Sleepy-Sleepy) tablet (R) 1cr
Pyroxidine (Wide-Awake) tablet (R) 20cr
Pyroxidine capsule (R) 100cr
Asperquaint (Tireless Servant) tablet (Y) 6cr
Rolactin (Happy Life) tablet (B) 50cr
Smoking Boots gag—fool your friends! (R) 150cr
 Smoke refill for boots (G) 90cr
PlastiLaser—realistic zap noise! (R) 50cr
FunFun Firecrackers—safe for all ages! (R) 5cr each
Yo-yo, lasts for hours! (G) 20cr

HYGIENE & MAINTENANCE

Teela-O Pocket Mirror (R) 5cr
Hottorch (R) 100cr
Instant Cleans-O-Spray (R) 50cr
Comb, red (R) 5cr
Lemonie-Moistened Towelettes, 20 count (R) 50cr
Hammer (O) 10cr
Dental floss, 10m (O) 1cr
Crowbar (Y) 10cr
Bandages, self-stick, box of 25 (Y) 25cr
Chapstick, Dyno-mint flavor (G) 100cr
Nail (I) 1cr
Chainsaw, electric (I) 100cr

CLOTHING & ACCESSORIES

Pen (plastic, black stick, black ink) (IR) 3cr
Pen (metal, black w/gold trim, red or black ink) (R) 10cr
Ink refills:
   Black (IR) 1cr
   Red (R) 1cr
   Orange (O) 3cr
   Invisible (illegal) 25cr
   Invisible revealer (G) 160cr
Gas mask (R) 50cr
Sneakers, black w/red stripes (R) 120cr
Sneakers, red w/black stripes (R) 220cr
Shoelaces, spare (O) 1cr
Heat-resistant mittens (O) 35cr
FastDraw Executive laser holster (O) 90cr
Sunglasses (O) 2cr
Pencil, disposable (O) 1cr
Notepad (G) 1cr
Hiking boots (B) 75cr

SURVIVAL & TECHNOLOGY

Bullhorn, with MegaBooster! (R) 50cr
Plasticord, per meter (R) 1cr
Binoculars (O) 50cr
Stopwatch (Y) 15cr
Slide rule (Y) 10cr
Magnifying glass, bifocal (G) 5cr
Collapsible travel bag (G) 50cr
Box of matches (B) 1cr
Lantern, electric (B) 20cr
Geiger counter (B) 100cr
Utility knife multi-tool (B) 50cr
Nightvision goggles (I) 300cr
Disposable lighter (I) 4cr
Calculator (I) 10crS
Umbrella (V) 10cr
Fake RED laser barrel, non-op (illegal) 12cr
Fake ORANGE barrel, non-op (illegal) 18cr
Fake YELLOW barrel, non-op (illegal) 27cr

PROMOTIONAL MERCHANDISE

[Listed price is for logo mug; x2 for T-shirt, x3 for poster]
 Teela-O (IR) 15cr
 Funbot (R) 10cr
 Mark IV Warbot (R) 35cr
 Best Good Happy Sector Hour (Y) 25cr
'Death from Above' Mark IV collector patch (O) 110cr
Toothpaste Disaster 'hoodie' sweatshirt (V) 300cr
   w/ 'I survived' logo—very rare, few made (UV) 12,000cr

PARANOIA Gamemaster Section

Player: I try to stop my PDC from squawking so loud.

GM: As you punch the buttons, you accidentally turn on the phone. You hear a strange voice coming from it. Sounds like a conversation in progress.

Player: On *my* phone? Uh—I listen quietly, just long enough to see if I recognize the voice.

GM: You recognize the rasping voice of your mission briefing officer, Larry-I-NQW-4. He's talking with someone you haven't heard before, a deep growling voice.

Player: Do they know I'm— I mean, are they talking to me?

GM: Doesn't sound like it. Larry-I sounds nervous. The other voice is speaking with total authority. Something about guaranteeing the headquarters goes up in flames before anyone finds out.

Player: 'Headquarters'? What headquarters?

GM: They don't say. Larry-I says, 'I made sure he has the evidence to plant on the team leader.'

Player: *I'm* the— Oh, crap!

Security Clearance ULTRAVIOLET

WARNING:

Knowledge or possession of this information by any citizen of Security Clearance VIOLET or lower constitutes treason punishable by summary execution

GM: They both hang up. There's no more sound from your phone. Do you want to report the conversation to your fellow Troubleshooters?

Player: *NO!*